

recipes for success

Four internationally renowned chefs, four very different styles. We discover what drove Gordon Ramsay, Rachael Ray, Ferrán Adrià and Jamie Oliver to excel in the kitchen

Words by **Kathryn Custance**



JAMIE OLIVER

Jamie Oliver's no-nonsense style of cooking and campaigning is popular with television viewers all over the world.

INSPIRATION

Born on 27 May 1975, Jamie was raised in his parents' pub in Essex, England, and by the time he was eight was already preparing vegetables for the pub restaurant. As soon as he could, Jamie left school for catering college with dreams of following in his father's footsteps.

EVOLUTION

Jamie says Ruth Rodgers and Rose Gray were the biggest influences on his cooking. It was in 1997 while working as a sous chef in their Italian-inspired River Café in London that Jamie was first spotted by a top TV producer, who signed him up for his own TV series *The Naked Chef* (a reference to his simple, stripped-down recipes, not his sartorial habits!).

ETHOS

Jamie's philosophy is that you don't need 'posh' ingredients because, he maintains, 'the best cooking in the world is peasant cooking'. He likes nothing better than to throw together a dish with whatever fresh ingredients he has to hand.



EXTRA CURRICULUM

Jamie makes headlines for his campaigning on food issues, including pushing for better school dinners and the end of intensive farming. He founded Fifteen in London, a restaurant staffed by disadvantaged youngsters that now has branches as far afield as Melbourne and Amsterdam. He is currently working on an international TV series called *The Ministry Of Food*, which he hopes will encourage families to get back to good home cooking or, as he would say, 'pukka nosh'. ►

RACHAEL RAY

Quick-meal queen Rachael Ray has transformed the way her legions of fans cook with her *30-Minute Meals* television series, a string of best-selling books, her own magazine and an Emmy award-winning daily chat show.

INSPIRATION

Born into a restaurant-owning family in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, on 25 August 1968, Rachael's style of cooking was influenced by her mother's Italian and father's Louisiana Cajun roots, as well as the variety of foods she later came across working in the gourmet food department of New York's Macy's store.

EVOLUTION

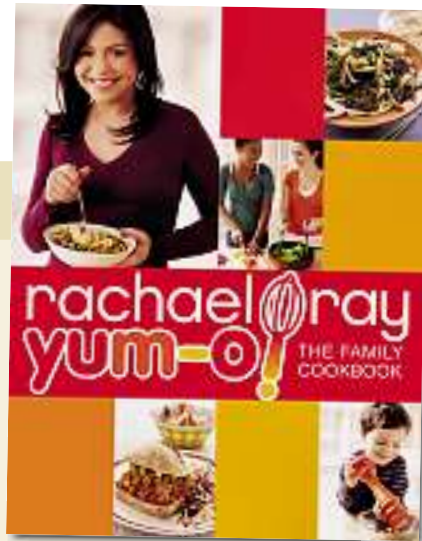
Rachael's big break came when she was spotted giving shoppers classes in quick and easy recipes at a food market in Albany, and offered a regular weekly cookery slot on her local TV news.

ETHOS

Rachael's unfussy approach to cooking, her use of shop-bought short-cuts and cheery 'can-do' attitude have been sneered at by many celebrity chefs, but the fact that Rachael spent her early career working in food stores rather than fancy restaurants means she understands how her audience of inexperienced home cooks shop and eat. Her catchphrases such as 'easy-peasy' and 'oh my gravy' have swept America, with one of her acronyms, 'evoo' (extra-virgin olive oil), making it into *The Oxford American College Dictionary*.

EXTRA CURRICULUM

Rachael's mission to get ordinary people to ditch junk food and get back into the kitchen led to her launching Yum-o, a non-profit-making organisation that encourages children and their families to cook healthy meals and funds cooking education projects. To keep herself grounded, Rachael likes to retreat to her cabin in the Adirondack mountains with her family and pit-bull terrier Isaboo.



PREVIOUS PAGE: CHRISTOPH OLBERZ, THIS PAGE: RANDOM HOUSE

GORDON RAMSAY

Gordon Ramsay is famed as much for his strong language and charismatic TV persona as for his empire of Michelin-starred restaurants.

INSPIRATION

Born on 8 November 1966 in Johnstone, Scotland, as a teenager Gordon's dream of becoming a professional footballer ended with a knee injury. After a course in hotel management he was soon working for the acclaimed Marco Pierre White, moving on to work with Albert Roux at Le Gavroche in London, and in the Guy Savoy and Joël Robuchon kitchens in France. These great chefs helped to hone Gordon's modern French style of cooking.

EVOLUTION

In 1998, Gordon set up his first wholly-owned restaurant, Gordon Ramsay, in London where within three years he became the first Scot to win three Michelin stars. His next restaurant, Petrus, gained notoriety when six bankers spent over £44,000 on wine in one sitting. In 2003 Gordon started opening restaurants outside the UK, beginning with the Dubai Hilton Creek Hotel.

ETHOS

Gordon's fiery temper and foul language have both horrified and fascinated viewers since his fly-on-the-kitchen-wall TV documentary *Boiling Point* in 1998 – so much so that he was voted TV's most terrifying celebrity. But although he makes headlines for his confrontational behaviour, he's really a softy at heart, commanding huge respect from all who work with him. As a result, his restaurants have one of the lowest turnovers of staff in the business.

EXTRA CURRICULUM

When not jetting between his restaurants in Europe, America, Japan and Dubai, the marathon-running chef is writing cookery books or recording TV programmes on one or other side of the Atlantic.





FERRÁN ADRIÀ

Ferrán Adrià is the alchemist of world cooking, the man who can turn asparagus into bread and almonds into cheese. His restaurant El Bulli on the Costa Brava tops the list of gourmet destinations in Europe, and is consistently voted one of the best in the world.

INSPIRATION

Born on 14 May 1962, in Barcelona, Spain, Ferrán had no career plan when he started washing dishes in a local restaurant to pay for a holiday. But after a stint of military service in the kitchen brigade, Ferrán was won over and at 22 joined the staff of El Bulli, then a traditional French restaurant on the remote coast of Catalonia.

EVOLUTION

Realising his potential, the manager encouraged Ferrán to travel to France in search of new ideas and techniques. Within 18 months he was appointed head chef and his creative talent was unleashed.



El Bulli,
Costa Brava,
Spain



ETHOS

Ferrán's cooking is often dubbed 'molecular gastronomy' because of the scientific techniques he uses to create his extraordinary tastes and textures – such as freeze-dried foie gras or pumpkin oil capsules – but he prefers the description 'deconstructivist', with every recipe broken down into its key components and then reconstructed. His aim, he says, is 'to provoke, surprise and delight the diner'.

EXTRA CURRICULUM

Fine dining chefs throughout the world ape Ferrán's innovative flavoured foams and savoury ice-creams, but he is always several steps ahead, closing his restaurant for six months of the year so he can travel the world in search of new ideas to experiment with back in his lab in Barcelona. Fancy a table? With several hundred requests for each place you may have some wait. ●

Restaurant Gordon Ramsay, London

