



## Lisa Allen, Head Chef, Northcote

Born in Lancashire in 1981, Lisa very quickly realised that food was her passion in life as she excelled at Home Economics in school. In her pursuit of excellence Lisa attended Lancaster and Morecombe College to study catering and upon graduation she secured her first position in an established kitchen; she joined the Michelin starred *Holbeck Ghyll* in the Lake District as a Commis Chef in 2000. Lisa recalls of her first experiences in the real world:

*“I think at that age it is quite daunting coming out of college because you don’t understand all the ins and outs of the kitchen. But it gave me a good understanding of what to expect in the real world, as well as a good grafting, and made me realise what kind of catering I wanted to go into.”*

Over the next two years Lisa honed her culinary skills as she moved onto the remarkable two Michelin starred *Le Champignon Sauvage* in Cheltenham to learn from David Everitt-Matthias and his team, again as a Commis Chef. Lisa’s ambition to be the best at what she does continued and it was here that she realised that in order to succeed in the industry she would have to go above and beyond her male counterparts.

*“It’s a little harder for a woman to succeed in this industry, but you’ve got to get out there and prove yourself, and once you’ve gone and done that you’ve just got to keep on going.”*

Wanting to return to her roots and having developed a strong working relationship with Nigel Haworth, of the famous *Northcote*, through her part-time job for his outside catering company during her college years, it felt right for Lisa to take up a position at his Michelin starred restaurant as a Demi Chef de Partie. Under the pupillage of Chef Patron Nigel, Lisa, after only four years and at the tender age of 23, was promoted to Head Chef becoming one of the youngest females to hold this position at such a high calibre restaurant, and in doing so joined a very small club of female chefs at the helm of a Michelin starred restaurant. *Northcote* has successfully retained the star ever since.

Lisa and *Northcote's* passion for local produce and regional cooking has led her to win such as accolades as *Best Chef Of The Year at the 2008 Northern Hospitality Awards*, a title that she modestly accepted as "*fortunate*". She has reiterated this philosophy by arranging stages for her team and through her own impressive showings in major competitions, such as *Young Chef Young Waiter* and the *Roux Scholarship*. Not content with all of this, she has got involved in her community by assisting in cookery demonstrations at local schools in a bid to encourage young, talented individuals to enter the industry.

With *Northcote's* eyes firmly set on a second Michelin star and with Lisa having reached the finals of the hugely coveted BBC2's *Great British Menu* for 2010, Lisa Allen is well and truly on the path to becoming one of the most respected chefs currently plying her trade.

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