



LIFESTYLE

The Answers With... Andrew D'Ambrosi

We meet a man at the vanguard of take away food's image overhaul.



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Brooklyn-born chef Andrew D'Ambrosi came to America's attention as a finalist on Bravo's Top Chef, while New York's foodies have since become attuned to his work at acclaimed restaurants including Le Cirque, Rouge Tomato and Avant Garde. Now based in Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire, D'Ambrosi is applying his wealth of culinary experience to D'Ambrosi Fine Foods <https://www.dambrosi.co.uk/>, whose menu – think herby southern fried chicken, delicate tuna tataki and stunningly flavoured and lamb shanks plus a wealth of innovative salads and sauces – is specifically designed to travel well and offer exceptional gourmet food that can be consumed at home.

Do you recall a specific moment when cuisine became your personal calling?

I worked in various forms of food service prior to my culinary training, so I already knew my path would be food focused. The minute I put on a chef jacket I knew that's what I was supposed to be.

How does your experience in restaurants such as Le Cirque, Rouge Tomato and Avant Garden inform your mission here in the UK?

The culmination of my experiences has granted me a broad swath of techniques and cuisines to prepare food, and my training ensures the consistency and quality of its execution.



What makes food travel well, for minor preparation in people's homes?

A lot of research and development is involved. Testing what will hold quality is our greatest challenge. At the shop, for example, we cook chickens till 'just done' and they're kept on the bone so they don't dry out when reheating. Ceviche, on the other hand, is not something that can hold like a smoked rack of ribs can. It's best eaten the day it is prepared, so we ask our clients to enjoy it the day of arrival.

Other techniques, like the glazing of a braised lamb shank in its own jus, much like a pastry chef would glaze a cake, is something we developed. When reheated, the jus becomes liquid again and can be poured into the lamb when plating. The technique provides a beautiful garnish, but also a functional one. I would patent that one if I could.

What are your priorities when it comes to expansion and new venues for the brand?

Consistency in product is the foundation of a successful food venture. Providing continuously good service and quality throughout multiple locations takes a lot of effort. It's important to surround yourself with a team of individuals with similar goals and provide clear communication as to [how to] uphold those standards.



What makes a menu compelling and fit for purpose?

I like simplicity. Dishes should be described like ingredients labels, which are listed according to weight whereas in restaurants, the 'weight' is the flavour impact of the components that make a dish.

- *Composed Vegetables* (£4.25, £6.50, £8.50, £17)
- *Peruvian Style Roasted Chicken* (£5.5 for leg/thigh; £6.50 for breast; £12 for half; £24 for whole)
- *Big Meaty American Smoked BBQ Ribs* (£26 per rack)
- *Shrimp Brioche Rolls* (£18)
- *Ceviche Plaice with Orange, Lime, Jalapeno, Red Onion, Corn and Radish* (£7.50, £11, £15, £30)

 CULINARY MASTERS FOOD TYPE



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