



Andrew D'Ambrosi, Chef-Patron at D'Ambrosi Fine Foods

www.andrewdambrosi.com



From the city that never sleeps to a sleepily idyllic Cotswolds village; chef Andrew D'Ambrosi dishes up a slice of his life online.

Brooklyn-born **Andrew D'Ambrosi**, chef-patron at the **D'Ambrosi Fine Foods** in the Cotswolds, spent most of his childhood in South Florida. It was there that his gastronomic interest was first sparked, thanks in large part to the proliferation of world cuisines he grew up eating his way through. He later cut his teeth at China Grill on South Beach, before stints at Asia de Cuba, both in London and New York. International acclaim came knocking, however, when he appeared on Bravo's Top Chef as a top ten finalist – an accolade that precipitated a move back to New York, where he took up his chef's whites at the legendary likes of Le Cirque and Rouge Tomato.

Taking voraciously hearty bites out of the Big Apple, he continued to thrive, in 2012 becoming the Executive Chef of the Derossi Global restaurant group in New York. He later went on to open Avant Garden in New York's East Village, through which he challenged the stereotypes of vegan cuisine, thus blazing something of zeitgeist-sparking trail.



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But in 2015, Andrew and his wife, Jesse, traded life in the city that doesn't sleep for the western Loire Valley, having purchased the Cointreau estate. There they ran a fine dining restaurant and guest house. But last year, however, France's loss became Britain's gain, when he brought his US-trained, French-honed repertoire to the Cotswolds with a restaurant quality food-to-go concept; and thus D'Ambrosi Fine Foods was born.

From beguilingly lovely premises in idyllic Stow-on-the-Wold, D'Ambrosi Fine Foods – run by Andrew and Jesse, an interior designer and floral stylist – also sells a curated selection of wines, liquors and homemade candles as well as offering floristry services. Just one year on from opening, the store has garnered an ever-growing queue of epicurean tourists and locals alike, thanks to Andrew's distillation of the best international cuisine: think the best lobster rolls this side of the Atlantic, crispy Sichuan style pork belly, and Toulouse style sausage – all created using local, responsibly sourced, sustainable food.

Here he shares the one ingredient he could never do without: the dangerously good cider brand he discovered online, and why you should stay on his good side unless you fancy the 'face in hole' treatment.

Images: Ros Atkinson; Jonathan West

My favourite website...

Wikipedia I call it the 'rabbit hole' as it can lead to a three-hour dive into any subject. WW1 is particularly dangerous.



My favourite app...

My favourite app is called **Pixellab**. It's like Photoshop light. I often make stupid memes in a sad attempt at humour. A close second is called **Face in Hole** – seriously. It allows me to remove faces from pictures and replace it with mine or others. Don't make me angry.

My favourite blog...

I don't currently have a favourite. **Eater**, **New York (Food)** and **Bloody Elbow (MMA)** are my most

frequented.

My favourite podcast...

I like **The Quiet Village**. They play Tiki music which I like lounging around to.

My favourite YouTuber...

I'm old so I only use YouTube for 'how-to' videos.



My most recent buy online...

A lot of **Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt**. I use it for everything I cook at D'Ambrosi Fine Foods and at home. There's a balance to it that seasons completely without the stinging effect of salinity that other salts have. It's completely irreplaceable and I refuse to cook with any other salt.

Last book you downloaded or read...

I read a lot. I'm between two books. One is **The Farseer Trilogy**, which is about an assassin. The other is called **Zoey Punches the Future in the Dick**, which is self-explanatory.





Favourite tweeter...

Lol. I live in the Cotswolds, we don't use Twitter. We use Tweeder, which is like Twitter, but all about tweed.

Favourite tech gadget...

My laptop. It's mainly for gaming.

The most useful gadget/item on your desk...

I don't have a desk per se, but a worktable. My favourite gadget is my Japanese Mandolines; it's as useful as it is deadly for slicing vegetables. For example, I use it to slice aubergine that gets seasoned and shingled in a pan before being roasted and pressed for my aubergine parmesan – it's a firm favourite on our menu.



Most useful digital resource during lockdown...

The Guardian. I used it to predict when it was necessary to hoard toilet paper during lockdown.

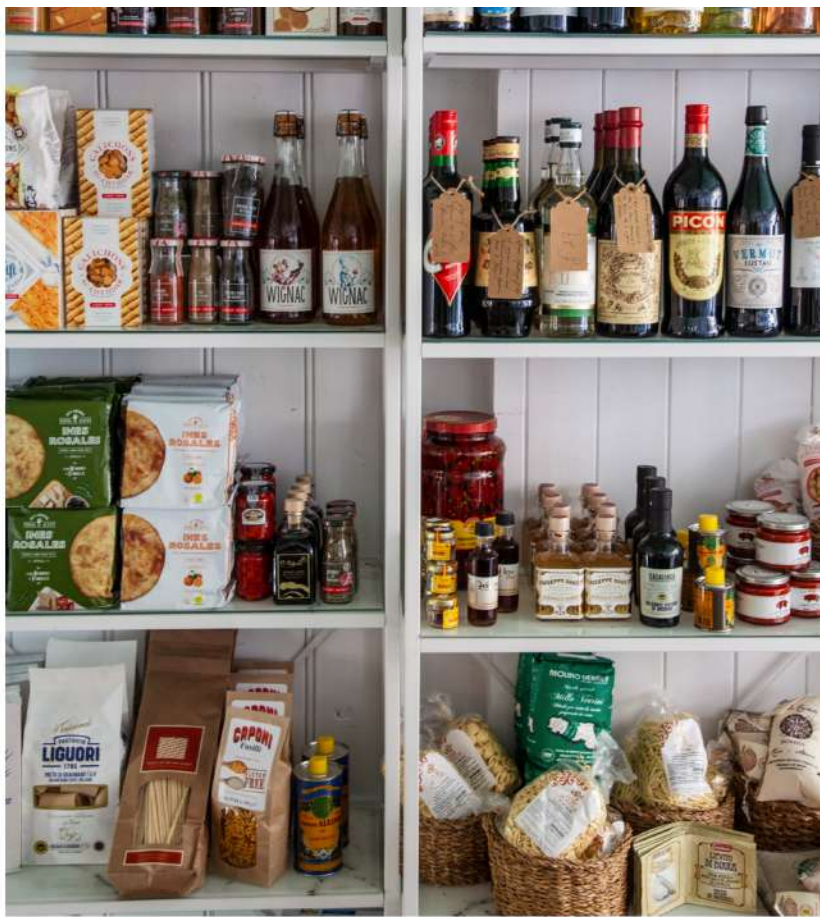
Last thing you binge-watched...

I binge watched **A Series of Unfortunate Events** on Netflix. It's currently my daughter's favourite so I have no choice. I think we've seen the entire series about three times now. The last series I binge watched by choice was **The Boys** on Prime.

Favourite brands have you discovered online...

Wignac. An organic cider from the Champagne Ardennes region of France. It's dangerously delicious if you catch my drift.





Social media allowed me to meet...

It's been more about re-meeting old friends.

The best digital advice I've been given...

'Buy a PC' after years of having a Mac.

My screensaver is...

A picture of my daughter and me.





My standout online memory...

I miss the sound of the phone dial up when connecting online.

My pet online hate is...

Pretty much everything.

The Internet. On balance, a force for good or ill?

Probably leaning towards ill. Mainly because of social media: a weapon of mass distraction.

By Nancy Alsop

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