



The rise and rise of the humble kebab



A hugely successful Berlin kebab stand was the inspiration for an innovative new concept brought to life in the form of 'kebabs made good' at Chifafa in Clerkenwell.

From Berlin the journey towards establishing the exceptionally promising new business led across the Middle East in an odyssey geared to creating the perfect kebab.

Directors Nick Green and Matthew Kershaw subsequently co-founded Chifafa with the aim of offering up fresh and healthy

Creating the perfect kebab!

versions of the fast food favourite which they said has for too long had a bad reputation.

Designers for the project to create the new

venue were Russell Sage Studios; main contractors were 3interior Contracts Ltd, who were commended for their work.

Nick Green told Premier Hospitality:

“I had the idea about three years ago after being in Berlin and seeing a very successful kebab stand which always had very long queues of all ethnic creeds. This showed me the huge market potential of good kebabs which were treated with love and respect. I then began thinking about how I could make it happen in the UK – in much the same way that popular foods such as burgers, sushi, fish and chips and particularly burritos had been upscaled.

“I wondered why no one had thought of doing the same with kebabs. This really piqued my interest and over the course of the next six months I did some research into it and came up with the answer that the reason why kebabs had not been upscaled effectively was because they had an incredibly poor reputation in the UK.

“Whilst there are many nice authentic Lebanese and Turkish neighbourhood restaurants in the UK where you can go in the evening and get a good kebab, there are also many high street kebab shops where they treat the food with less respect – which has led to it being a maligned product in this country.

“We spent three years making the concept as good as it can be. During odysseys around the Middle East researching creating the perfect kebab, we obtained influences from Greece, Syria and Turkey. We love the Middle East and this has been created from our love of Middle Eastern cooking traditions.

“We decided that if we create a really, fresh, healthy, ethically sourced product that we could produce quickly – and this is crucial for customers who are on a lunch break from work, or on their way for a night out, for example – then we think we should be able to succeed and make the kebab something that is synonymous with eating well.

“Now we are trying to change the perception of the kebab in the UK and make it something that people associate with fresh, healthy food and being a lunchtime option as well as just a late night choice.

“With this in mind we have opened a premium kebab restaurant in London to provide time-poor people with restaurant quality food at the same speed as fast food restaurants.

“The site of the new venue is quite small at 680 sq ft – space costs in London are huge. There is enough room for 20 - 25 covers, but we anticipate that business will be 70 - 80 per cent takeaway.

“A hugely successful Berlin kebab stand was the inspiration for an innovative new concept.”

“We didn’t want a traditionally Middle Eastern look for the venue – but rather a design inspired by the Middle East, whilst being modernist and very clean and contemporary - in fact the antithesis of a traditional kebab shop. We definitely tried hard to make sure that it looks unconventional.

“3interiors are wonderful contractors and incredibly professional – they did exactly what they said they would do,” added Nick.

“I’m an entrepreneur and have wanted to work in catering for a long time - which is why I spent three years of my life developing this concept,” he said.

“We’ve been incredibly meticulous in gaining an understanding of kebab heritage and how the British public will best enjoy them. And after our recent opening, feedback so far has been incredibly good.”

Which is hardly surprising when you consider the venue’s mouth-watering menu which includes: succulent chicken thigh marinated in lemon and garlic, feta, fresh mint and tahini yoghurt; slow-cooked shoulder of lamb with feta, Amba mango pickle, fresh dill and tahini yoghurt; British veal shoulder in lemon, oregano and garlic, with tomatoes, fresh mint and dill tzatziki; hand-made falafel, parsley, pickle, salsa, houmous, feta, fresh dill and tahini yoghurt and Za’atar-dusted Cypriot halloumi, pickled turnip, houmous, fresh mint and tahini yoghurt.

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Tel: 028 9260 5030 Email: info@3interiors.com www.3interiors.com
Unit C6, Knockmore Hill Business Park, 9 Ferguson Drive, Lisburn BT28 2EX