

MEET THE CHEF:

RICHARD KIRKWOOD

Chef Patron, Fish Union, Royal Parade, Chislehurst



What led you to become a chef?

A love for food from a young age drove me in the direction of hospitality, from then on the camaraderie of the kitchen drove me forward.

Where did you train?

I had spent a year in Dundee at hospitality college, but I preferred to be at the coal face, so I dropped out to move into kitchens full time, this is when I began training with Roy Brett at Malmaison in Edinburgh. Roy then helped me get a position in Le Caprice with Mark Hix and Tim Hughes and that's how my journey began...

Where have you worked before?

I spent over 12 years at Caprice Holdings, working at some of London's best-known restaurants including Le Caprice, The Ivy (the real one!) twice and two stints at J. Sheekey, where I held the position as head

chef for six years, it was here where I met Fish Union co-owner, Andy Roberts. I also worked for Conran restaurants in the city, and finally I was the executive chef for Wright Brothers.

Why Fish Union on Royal Parade?

The Covid pandemic hit us and sadly led to redundancy. Through the lockdown myself and fellow chef and J. Sheekey colleague, Andy Roberts, joined forces and ran two pop up fish stalls – one in Mile End, the other in Chislehurst. It was during this time that Andy and I decided to combine our passion and our experience and fulfil our dream and bring restaurant quality seafood direct to Chislehurst locals with the launch of Fish Union – our very own chef-led fishmonger and seafood restaurant.



What is Fish Union's concept?

Myself and Andy were concerned that as an island, and with Brexit looming, there were little or no fishmongers on British high streets. We wanted to bring fresh, day boat British fish back to the high street and we do this by uniquely offering a chef-led, upmarket wet fishmonger coupled with a seafood restaurant; making it the ultimate seafood destination and shopping experience.

As chefs we waste nothing, which makes the fishmonger more viable. Our seafood restaurant offers small plates and market fish with whatever we freshly source from the fish markets that day. We buy direct from Newlyn, Brixham, Rye and Hastings so our menu changes every service which makes for a fun, creative environment.

Tell us about the dishes and menu you have created?

We offer a seasonal menu that changes daily depending on what's coming in off the boats. All of our dishes are British, sustainably sourced and

everything is cooked and prepared on site by experienced chefs. We pride ourselves on offering fresh, delectable small plates that complement our buzzing restaurant and bar setting.

We have a great ceviche with bream, grapefruit, smoked jalapeno oil and nori salt. Tuna ham is part of our seacuterie range, alongside monkfish bacon. We do a mean croquette, be it lobster, crab or salt cod and the Galician octopus, onion soubise and Ortiz anchovy dressing is so simple yet offers beautiful flavours. And, you heard it here first, we are working on a tuna and cuttlefish shepherd's pie, but you will have to follow our Instagram to find out more!

What is your signature/favourite dish?

The shrimp burger is hard to beat when you want something quick, tasty and easy. Our chips have become a bit of a talking point locally. I have always believed that the guests decide the 'signature' dish of the restaurant due to popularity, which would mean our tuna tataki, pickled radish, wasabi mayonnaise and ponzu would be it.

What is your guilty pleasure?

For the last few years it has definitely been ramen. If I get an hour I will look for the best ramen bar and enjoy a bowl. Edinburgh, London, Berlin, Amsterdam. Wherever I am, I try to fit one in.



www.fishunion.co.uk

  [fishunionlondon](https://www.instagram.com/fishunionlondon)

Richard's Galician Octopus with Onion Soubise and Ortiz Anchovy Dressing

Serves: 4

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 45 minutes - 1 hour

Ingredients:

For the octopus:

- 4 octopus tentacles steamed
- 20ml rapeseed oil
- 20g butter

For the soubise:

- 100g butter
- 250g onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 20ml rice wine vinegar

For the dressing:

- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 1 red chilli, finely diced
- 1 clove garlic, finely diced
- 1 small tin Ortiz anchovy fillets
- 100ml extra virgin rapeseed oil*

Method:

Steam the octopus tentacles until tender (about 45 minutes-1 hour depending on the size) or buy them direct from Fish Union fully prepared with no steaming required!

For the onion soubise:

1. Dice the onions and garlic.
2. Melt the butter in a heavy bottomed saucepan, add the onions and garlic and cook slowly, cooking without colour.
3. When they are cooked, increase the heat and this will begin to caramelize the natural sugar in the onions.
4. When the onions are a deep brown colour (but not burnt...) add the rice wine vinegar and reduce.
5. Allow to cool for 5 minutes and then blend until smooth.

TOP TIP: You can save time and make this a day or two in advance.

For the dressing:

1. Add the shallots, chilli and garlic to a heavy bottomed saucepan and cover with the rapeseed oil, confit slowly over a low heat until cooked.

2. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

TOP TIP: As with the soubise, this dressing can be made well in advance to save you some time.

To serve:

1. On a medium heat, fry the octopus in a small amount of rapeseed oil, with a knob of butter for richness.
2. Warm the soubise in a saucepan.
3. Chop the anchovies and add to the dressing.
4. Spoon the soubise between four plates, top with the octopus and finish with the dressing.

Enjoy!

**Olive oil can be used but this can sometimes take over the flavours of the dish. We use rapeseed oil because it is flavour neutral, so allows the flavours on the plate to do the talking.*