



Mayo chef Patrick Powell is one of the most talented chefs working in London. His solo venture Allegra opens in the UK capital in June.

Mayo chef to take helm at London's hottest restaurant

by Keith Bourke

A Mayo chef is set to open one of the most breathtaking restaurants London has ever seen.

Killala native Patrick Powell, formerly head chef at the renowned Chiltern Firehouse, is taking the helm at Allegra. The high-rise restaurant, which opens in June, is a part of the 42-storey Manhattan Loft Gardens development in Stratford. The restaurant has been designed by the team behind the acclaimed Noma in Copenhagen.

Powell is one of the most exciting chefs cooking in the UK capital. Allegra will be his first solo venture.

"I was aware that I wanted to leave Chiltern Firehouse for a while. It just had to be the right thing and then when Manhattan Gardens and Allegra came along I knew it was the right thing as soon as I saw the site," said the chef.

As well as a stunning dining room, Allegra will boast an amazing garden that flows out from the

restaurant. Retractable glass walls open out to a spectacular terrace.

"In terms of spaces and rooms I think it's going to be the most beautiful in London," he said.

Powell has worked under an array of stellar chefs. He has had stints at L'Ecrivain in Dublin with Derry Clarke, spent time at Knockranny House Hotel with Seamus Commons, at London's Wild Honey with Anthony Demetre, and most recently with acclaimed executive chef Nuno Mendes at Chiltern Firehouse.

The Firehouse opened in 2013 and fast became one of the hottest spots in London.

"It's an open kitchen so you would see everything and everyone. What was great about the Firehouse was and it had the most electric dining room I have ever come across. The atmosphere in that room every night was magic," said the Mayo chef.

Powell began his working life washing pots as a teenager in Crocetts on the Quay in Ballina before years of hard work saw him climb the cooking ladder.

"My brother-in-law is a chef, he's a bit older so when he started coming around he'd show me his cookbooks and stuff and I remember seeing his copy of *White Heat* [the seminal cookbook from Marco Pierre White] and just finding it very exciting and mysterious. And then I got a job working in Crocetts on the Quay washing dishes and I kinda knew then that the kitchen is where I wanted to be. I loved the environment, the kinda nervous excitement every day, there was always so much going on," he said.

Powell has high hopes for his restaurant, which will focus on modern, seasonal European cuisine.

"I'd like a Michelin star for Allegra. It's good for staff, it's that pat on the shoulder that you are doing things right and you are cooking to a certain level. But I certainly wouldn't judge the success of the restaurant on a Michelin Star. It will be judged when I can stand in the room and see it's full of people happy and enjoying their meal, their drinks, and the atmosphere."



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