

PICTORIAL:

THE CHEF'S CHOICE

Executive Chef Mark Oldroyd discusses selections from the menu of QM2's Todd English restaurant.

by

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"I just love cooking in general" confesses QM2 Executive Chef Mark Oldroyd and that passion comes through when he discusses the topic. Accordingly, when I asked Chef Oldroyd what some of his favorite selections were from the menu in the Todd English restaurant on QM2, he responded by preparing some of the dishes that are his personal favorites and some which are the favorites among the guests who dine in the restaurant in order to illustrate his remarks. (Comments by the chef about each dish are set forth next to its photo below).

Chef Oldroyd is in a particularly good position to discuss these dishes. As one of the dining venues aboard the great ocean liner, the Todd English Restaurant is within his area of responsibility. Moreover, Chef Oldroyd is not just a supervisor but an experienced professional chef.

He first learned his profession working in England and in Michelin star restaurants in France. One day he saw an advertisement in a British catering magazine and decided to apply for a position with Cunard. "I had a former boss who used to work on the old Franconia and Queen Mary. He was always boasting how good it was. I saw 'Cunard' and I thought I'd go for that because it is the only shipping company that I have been passionate about, being a truly British company"

One of a set of twins, his brother Nicholas joined Cunard at the same time. "We started at the bottom and worked our way up." This included time on the Queen Elizabeth 2, the QM2 and on the Queen Victoria. Now, nearly eleven years later, Mark is the executive chef on QM2 and Nicholas is the executive chef on the new Queen Elizabeth.

Maine Crab Cake (lunch menu) -
"I recommend the crab cakes.
Todd's crab cakes are very good.
The sauce is a fiery tomato which
is made with ginger with a slight
Asian taste to it. And then we
have a little cucumber-tomato
salad. You have a crab cake and
a guacamole cream and we have
his signature garnish which he
calls 'sexy'. It is one of his signa-
ture dishes."



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Heirloom Tomato Nicose (lunch menu) - - "What we have on the bottom is a basil aiolli, heirloom tomatoes with French beans, quail eggs olives and garlic chips."

Za'Tar Roasted Beets (dinner menu)
- - "The roasted yellow beets comes with the za' tar spice and cashew nuts which have been tossed in spices. [It has] Greek yogurt, a nice vibrant arugula salad and sesame seeds as well. It is interesting. You get sweets and sours then you get the spiciness from the arugula Its nice. It is one of our favorites."





Shaved Asparagus Caesar (lunch menu) - - "This is Todd's twist on a Caesar salad. What we have here is at the base of the salad, there is a nice tomato ragout and then you have the classic Caesar with Todd's Caesar recipe. Then you have the anchovies. The sliced asparagus is coated in bread crumbs and Parmesan. That is deep-fried and then we slice it. It's a nice twist and a delicious Caesar salad."

Love Letters (dinner menu) - - A vegetarian dish described on the menu as "pumpkin puree and amaretto biscuit with a Madeira glaze."

"Everyone loves the Love Letters. Todd always emphasizes his Love Letters. They are very, very good. It is a signature dish. The one which we used to have on the menu is the truffled potato but this one is pumpkin with amaretto biscuits inside. A nice sauce and a Madeira glaze Todd says it is like a little package of love."



Pan Seared Salmon (lunch menu) - - "This dish includes octopus confit, cauliflower puree, green harrisa and saffron bean salad."

"The octopus has been slowly cooked in oil, really slowly so that it becomes tender. The salmon, of course, is cooked ala minute. We sear the skin first and then slowly cook it so it should be slightly pink in the center



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Surf and Turf (dinner menu) - - "For me, I like the surf and turf combination - - the contemporary surf and turf. That is a real popular one as well."

"The lobster is in a ragout with a little bit of sauce. We have a celeriac and potato gratin, baby vegetables with Swiss Chard, which is bread-crumbed. The fillet steak has lobster ragout with Bearnaise sauce on it."

"All of Todd's sauces are reduced. There is no starch or anything in them. They start off with the stocks and then we do an enriched stock and reduce it right down."

Mediterranean Paella (lunch menu) - - "Todd's take on paella."



Todd's Carrot Cake (dinner menu) - - "The carrot cake is like a discovery when people order it. When your order a carrot cake you expect a cake with a frosting on top. But when it comes, you say 'oh wow.'"

"It is a very contemporary design. We have the carrot ice cream and we have the carrot caviar. We have pear and raisins. This is like a cream cheese frosting and then the actual carrot cake."



Warm Chocolate Pudding (dinner menu) - - "One of the most popular dishes we have had since the opening of the Queen Mary 2 was the chocolate fallen cake. On the first menu, we had chocolate fallen cake with a raspberry sauce and that was the biggest hit ever. Everyone loved that."

"Right now, on the new menu, we have the trio of chocolate - - chocolate fallen cake, chocolate sorbet and underneath is another rich chocolate mousse. It is another winner."

White Chocolate Fallen Cake (lunch menu) - - "It is another favorite. This is a white chocolate fallen cake, chocolate mousse and raspberry ice cream and this under here is just crushed wafers, which gives it a little texture. The chocolate mousse is like a real thick chocolate gnash."