



# Skye's not the limit for Calum

**AT the age of 29, Calum Montgomery is living the dream.**

Originally from Portree, Calum says it is "pretty amazing" to achieve his long-term ambition of having his own restaurant, just 15 minutes from his home town.

And just months after opening, Edinbane Lodge is already building an impressive reputation among food fans on an island where high-quality dining is joining the natural beauties of the Cuillins as a reason to cross over the sea to Skye.

However, making a 16th century building fit for purpose as a high-quality 21st century dining experience certainly proved a challenge.

"It's a hunting lodge that dates back to 1543 so it's one of the oldest operational buildings on Skye and when we bought it in November 2017, we knew it was in quite a bit of disrepair. It needed a full nine month refurbishment," Calum said.

"Myself and my dad were on site for the whole time. I threw away my chef's whites and we really got our hands dirty – I didn't realise how sheltered I had been working in a kitchen! But it was definitely worth it."

Edinbane Lodge has been many things in its long history, including a coaching inn, a family home and even a courthouse, while its hospitality heritage includes being the first building on the island allowed to legally dispense alcohol.

That history is reflected within the décor of the restaurant, but with the completion of stage two of the development this month with the opening of four letting bedrooms, Calum is looking to the future.

"Now we have accommodation, it is going to be fantastic and we are really looking forward to everything coming together," he said.

This will be the first season Edinbane Lodge has been fully open for business, but ever since the restaurant opened in August, it has been establishing a name for itself, with word of mouth and reviews in print and online praising the new arrival on Skye's already impressive culinary scene.

"Our menu is completely reliant on what our

local suppliers have available," Calum said.

"Because I'm from Skye myself, that's really important to me. I'm of the firm belief that people want to come to Skye not only to see the incredible sights, they want to taste what is on offer as well. We want to add to that and be among the destination dining places that people already come to the island for."

Certainly Calum does not need to look far for ingredients.

The blueberries he uses in his cooking – as well as in Edinbane's own gin brand, created in association with Isle of Skye Distillers – come from a farm just across the road. Scallops and venison are sourced from an estate just a mile away and its woodcock from Edinbane Estate itself.

For Skye's famous seafood, Calum can call on a family connection with his wife Eilidh's uncle providing langoustines and crab, giving the local restaurant first pick.

"Having fresh ingredients right on our doorstep makes it easier for the staff," Calum said.

"Everyone's so proud of our produce. You see such amazing bursts of energy from our chefs – I work with two other chefs. When they see this amazing produce coming in. They want to work with it straight away."

Calum has worked in kitchens since he was 14, but it was not until he moved to Glasgow to study business management he realised how much he missed cooking and moved back to Skye to make it his career.

That led to a return to Glasgow, this time to catering college, where he studied under 2016 Masterchef: The Professionals winner Gary Maclean while also working at One Devonshire Gardens.

"That just blew me away and made me realise that was what



cooking was about," he said. Calum (above in his kitchen) returned to Skye five years ago, first to the then Michelin-starred Kinloch Lodge, followed by Uillinish Lodge where, as head chef, he secured three AA rosettes by the age of 26.

He was then asked to return to Kinloch as head chef, but soon after had the opportunity to purchase Edinbane and create the casual fine-dining experience he would want for himself.

To help achieve that, he enlisted childhood friend and now business partner John Grant, former manager at The Wolseley Restaurant in Mayfair, to ensure every guest is well looked after.

"We want people to enjoy comfortable seats and a relaxed atmosphere," Calum said. "One of my pet hates is if you go to a restaurant for a special occasion and they say they need the table back in an hour and a half. Here you can come in for a meal at 6.30pm and you can still be sitting at that table at 11pm if you want to."

"The whole concept behind the restaurant is how I would like to go out and eat myself and that's really important. I think any chef should feel like that."

Which is the thinking behind Edinbane Lodge's 10-course taster menu. Calum explained: "When I go out to a restaurant, I can never decide, I want to taste everything! That's why, even though it's a set menu, it doesn't feel restricted."

"You get a wee bit of everything and hopefully we take you on a wee journey around Skye as well."



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