

Bringing food back to the people

By NICK SILVESTER

MICHAEL Daly's father told him not to go into the family business and become a chef.

"It's stressful, it's long hours and you will never get to see your family," he told him.

"That's all true," Michael says, but he couldn't keep away.

Michael, an executive chef at the Kingsgate Hotel, has launched a new website and wants to use it to get the masses back into the kitchen and have fun with the cooking.

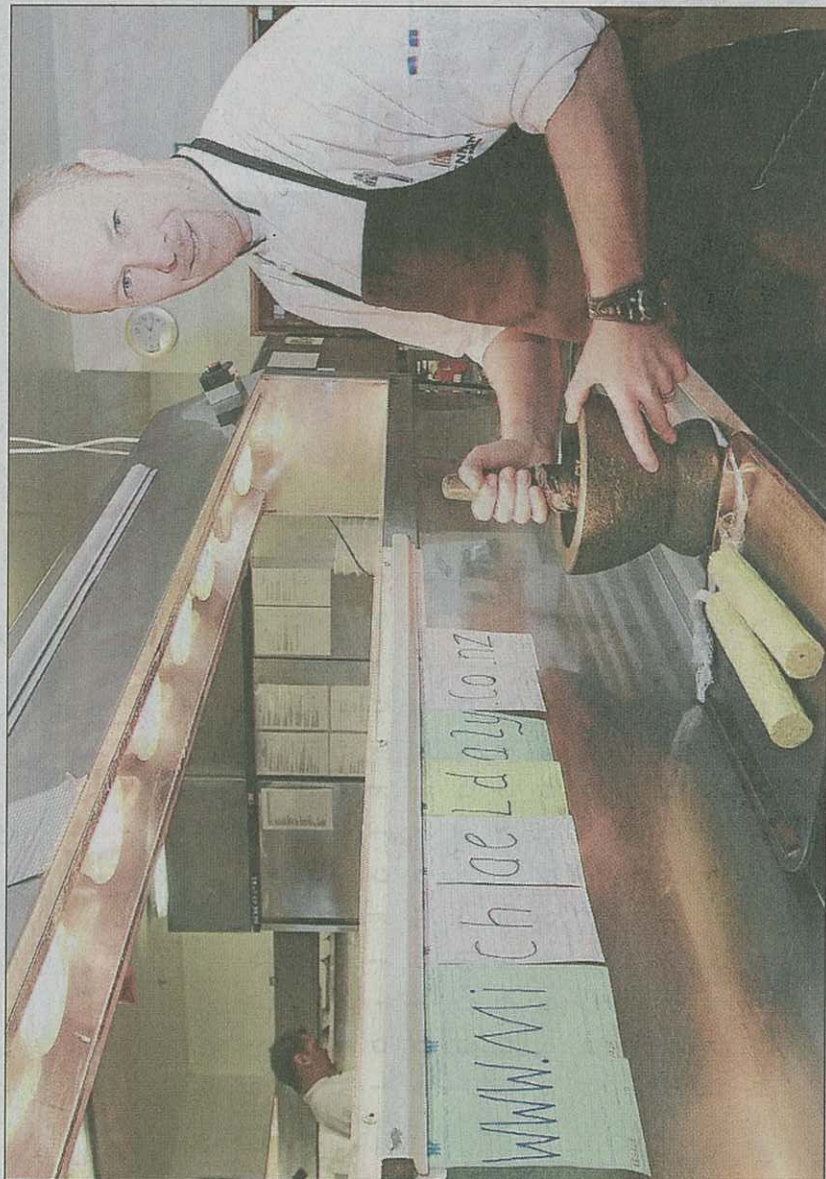
"I want it to be an educational site. It was originally built for housewives to use," he says. "I want people to get back into the kitchen and get excited about cooking again. There's a lot of people who are scared of cooking, but so what if you make a few mistakes? Shouldn't the thinking be 'well, I'll know for next time?'"

Michael says when deciding what to put up on the site, he uses his wife as a benchmark.

"It's built for the people, not for other chefs . . . I think of my wife and I ask myself if she had the recipe could she follow it and turn something out the way I would."

He says he is one of the only chefs he knows with a website, which is unique among other food sites because it's updated with new content every month. The site is free to view and contains recipes, food facts, kitchen secrets and food news.

The page also contains a wine section written by Auckland-based Nicky Grandorge, awarded the prestigious Vintners Cup for top graduate in the world for The



IRISH PASSION: Top Hamilton chef Michael Daly has launched his own website and hopes to use it to inspire others into the kitchen. Photo: KATRINA BIELESKI

Wine and Spirit Education Trust (WSET) diploma in 2007-08. This

is the qualification taken immediately before studying for the Master of Wine exams, and Nicky was the first to be awarded this honour outside the UK.

The WSET diploma involves specialist knowledge of the principal wines and spirits of the world; how they are made, the history and culture – and most import-

antly how to analyse them. Michael was born and raised in Ireland. He came to New Zealand in 2000 after already establishing his career and his credentials at restaurants around the world. His first job in New Zealand was as executive chef at the Hyatt Regency in Auckland where he was the second highest paid chef in the country.

He has been a chef for about 20 years, but says that if you count the time he spent as a child working in his father's kitchen, it's more like 30 years around food.

His father, a chef and captain of the Irish culinary team, thought that having Michael work in kitchens as a boy would put him off being a chef. However, it had the opposite effect.

‘I want people to get back into the kitchen and get excited about cooking again’

– Michael Daly

long hours, stressful work and a job that comes first before anything else.

"I absolutely love it, but that's because I've got a passion for it. If you don't have that passion don't even think about becoming a chef because it is long hours and very stressful. But it's a great skill to have . . . if you're a qualified chef you can work anywhere in the world."

Michael has made a name for himself with his transtasman cuisine, an infusion of Aboriginal and Maori indigenous herbs and extracts. He uses indigenous ingredients with regional and seasonal produce to create modern dishes.

"I take ingredients like Maori horopito pepper and balance it out with Aboriginal alpine pepper, which is usually found all over Australia.

"This cross-over flavour will then be used to create indigenous flavoured salt, vinegar, oil, chutney, rubs, ice cream and so on.

"I like to be doing something different from the guy down the street. I don't follow anybody's trends except my own. I know what I like, I know my boundaries and I know what I can do."

To check out the website go to www.michaeldaly.co.nz