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Chef

of the Month . . .



JONNY ROBERTS

Executive Chef/Owner

Bolero Brasserie Restaurant

Q & A with Scott Hill

Chef Jonny Roberts and his wife Fiona opened Bolero Brasserie in April of last year. Since then, Bolero has earned the “Bermuda Gold awards” title of Best New Restaurant 2008.

Bolero was also nominated in the top three for the Mayer Award, for excellent health and safety standards. Bolero is now one of Hamilton’s busiest and most popular restaurants.

Has your life changed since opening your own restaurant?

Yes dramatically! When Bolero opened last year, I was working as many as 18 hours a day. I was running on pure adrenalin for the first few weeks, with very little sleep and a diet of espressos and cigarettes! Life is a little easier now, but it still can be still very stressful and hectic. The overall responsibility is huge, not only am I now personally responsible for 15 staff, the bills have to be paid and the bank wants its money back!

I have sacrificed free time and my personal life for my dream, but my wife Fiona is 100% behind me. She breathes wind in my sails everyday.

Presently, it seems that the only time that I can spend with my wife is after service on Monday nights were we get to check in on each other while we eat dinner, of course at Bolero! The bottom line is, I love it!

Are you a “hands on” business owner?

Yes, I am. I believe that’s how it should be, certainly in the first years of a new business. It’s down to me to work very hard now with an aim to reap the rewards in the future. The rewards being, to take time off and spend time with my family, rather than becoming a millionaire!! I really enjoy it, but more importantly I also earn respect from my staff. If they see you slogging away too, they become more willing to go that extra mile for you and ultimately the customer,

when it's asked of them. I am the boss, but I am also a worker. The staff is with me at Bolero more than they are with their family and friends. Working with them closely builds a strong loyal team very quickly. I like to say that my staff doesn't work 'for' me, but 'with' me.

You see me in a blue and white striped apron like the rest of the chefs in my kitchen and I sweat and get my hands dirty like them too. If someone requests to see me in the middle of service at their table then they will see me how I am at that moment, after all, I'm a chef and I'm working.

To be successful in this business you need to be everywhere and adapt quickly. Its all work and not as glamorous as some people think. The restaurant industry is a very competitive world. It keeps you on the edge and that's healthy. One day your there the next you could be gone, simple as that.



What's on the menu?

In keeping with the original concept of a brasserie, the food is honest, simple, inexpensive and unpretentious. I have included some classic brasserie favorites such as Coq au Vin, duck confit, cassoulet, snails, Camembert baked in its box, frogs legs, sweet breads, and Moules Frites to name a few. The menu has fifty dishes on it, so there is something for everyone. Bolero's wine list has over one hundred wines from around the world, which will complement the food and most discerning wine connoisseurs. The best thing is that all the wines are competitively priced.