Shepheard Neame Acquires The Minnis Bar & Restaurant

Wednesday 17 June, 2015

Jason Freedman the chef patron has sold the freehold of his sea-front***Minnis Bar & Restaurant*** in Birchington-on-Sea, to Shepheard Neame. The Kent brewer will take control of the site on 29th June.

Freedman acquired the property, a former 1930s beachside café in 2003, but was forced to undertake a complete refurbishment when the two-storey building suffered major fire damage in 2007.

It is believed Shepheard Neame will invest around £2m renovating and extending the building, with the addition of much-needed overnight accommodation for holiday makers.

The Minnis Bar & Restaurant, which under Jason was open all day and operated 365 days a year, currently has inside seating for over 140 diners. There are 20 covers in the bar, 72 in the downstairs restaurant and a further 50 upstairs in the Taste of the Med tapas restaurant. There is also alfresco seating for a further 80 on the sun terrace.

"It's been a labour of love for nearly 13 years, it's a big operation and open every day of the year," said Jason, adding, "I want devote more time to my event catering business, developing artisan food crafts and be involved in a more intimate dining concept."

Last year Freedman opened ***Curiously Kentish*** a café-delicatessen joint venture with The Minnis's head chef Kevin Faux, as an outlet for the pair's home made and home cured produce. There are also plans to host more of its sell-out monthly supper clubs, where diners turn up, not knowing what impromptu dishes of will be served or even who they will seated with.

Curiously Kentish has already received a TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence award for 2015.

In November Freedman and Faux will travel to Tuscany in Italy to advanced 6-day Sapori (theory) & Salumi (practice) course to learn how to making a wide variety of traditional artisan Tuscan salumi (cured pork products), to enhance their existing range of home cured meat offerings. www.sapori-e-saperi.com

On return, Jason and Kevin are also keen to learn how to make their own cheeses.

Jason and his team will again cater for ***Produced in Kent***'swww.producedinkent.co.uk prestigious ***Taste of Kent*** awardswww.tasteofkentawards.co.uk dinner on 3rd March, an assignment he last undertook in 2014. Mama Feelgoods catered for the awards in 2015.

Jason's latest addition to his outside catering operation is a mobile Kahuna Hut, serving Cuban sandwiches and street food. The hut will appear at the Canterbury (25th to 27th September and Broadstairs (2nd to 4th October) food festivals.www.canterbury.co.uk/canterburyfoodfestival.aspxwww.broadstairsfoodfestival.org.uk

'Sir Galahad', Jason's fully equipped 1963 California Sundial split screen VW microbus, available for private hire complete with onboard catering team will make an appearance at the Kent VW Festival at Headcorn Aerodrome (24th to 27th July) www.kentvwfestival.org.uk

In addition to selling its own meats, fish and seafood plus salads, deli accompaniments and sauces, Curiously Kentish will also sell the best artisan foods produced in Kent, including cheese, pasta, rice, sauces, speciality oils, vinegars, syrups, herbs and a host of delicatessen fine foods.

They are also introducing a "Traiteur" service where customers can buy Restaurant quality ready meals or they can arrange delivery, and the dishes can be simply re-heated.

Asked whether he could be tempted back into the restaurant business Freedman said, "I've been offered a couple of potentially interesting sites in Canterbury, but I won't be rushing back into any large-scale 365-day a year operation in the foreseeable future."

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Editors' Notes:

Chef patron is Jason Freedman, a member of the Master Chefs of Great Britain and the Academie

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Culinaire de France, whose main area of interest lies in salted, smoked, brined and pickled seafood and meat-based dishes, which is evident in the ever-evolving and varied menus. Jason sources fresh, seasonal ingredients from local suppliers to ensure quality and to support the community.

Press Contact: To review the restaurant please contact George Shaw at Avocado Media on 01892 750851 or geo@avocadomedia.co.uk

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