



Re-Imagine + Elevate

THE CHEF DECLAN HORGAN STORY

STORY BY JEANETTE WAGES | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JONATHAN THORPE

Declan Horgan is a man on a mission to educate the world on the finer points of Irish culture through Irish cuisine.

For many, "Irish cuisine" means simple ingredients like potatoes, corned beef, and simple country food. Certainly not elegant or elevated. That's all about to change thanks to a hot new chef on the scene. Declan Horgan (also called Big D) is here to change that conception. "People get trapped in the concept of what Irish food is. They go to the pub and it's the same things served. Modern Irish food is so much more than that."

For those who have not kept up on the latest in food television, Declan is currently on Season 19 of Hell's Kitchen with Gordon Ramsay. He has also appeared twice on Guy Fieri's Food Network show, Guy's Grocery Games. We won't give you any spoilers on how he did, so you'll just have to watch. His is no overnight flash in the pan rise to stardom. This chef has truly paid his dues with over 25 years in professional kitchens.

Showing his chops from the beginning, Declan was quickly placed in classes typically reserved for second-year students at DIT School of Culinary Arts and Food Technology in Dublin. Being placed in these classes during his first year showed that his teachers already saw the fire and prowess behind the young aspiring chef.

After graduation, Declan worked at La Grande Cascade in Paris. It was there that he honed his craft in traditional French cuisine with his Irish charm before eventually bringing his new skillset home. There, he was mentored by some of the best chefs Dublin has to offer, such as Michelin-star winner Peacock Alley's Conrad Gallagher, Les Freres's Jacques, Chapter One's Ross Lewis, and Mint and Fade Street Social's Dylan McGrath.

At 6'3, Declan is a big man with an even bigger personality and a passion for food and his native Irish culture. When asked on his rapidly expanding Instagram account if he was proud to be Irish, he eagerly responded, "Guinness is in my blood and I bleed green, so proud to be Irish."

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Mix the passion for his home country with unquestionable skills in the kitchen and we have a recipe for changing the way people think of Irish food and food in general.

This powerhouse has been with us in Alexandria for six years and most of us didn't even know it. He worked as executive chef in a local Alexandria Irish restaurant and assisted in the opening of a restaurant at the Wharf in Washington, DC before his appearance on Hell's Kitchen.

In an approach that doesn't come as a surprise when meeting Declan, he did not take a traditional avenue to find his way on the popular competition show. "I got bored when filling out the application, so I made all the answers 'You have to ring me' and eventually, they did." When he received the call from the selection team, they were at first confused by his responses. Eventually, they

put him on the phone with the right people and the rest is television history. We still won't give you any spoilers, but Declan has become a clear fan favorite on the show with his motto "You can either Lead, Follow or F**K OFF!"

Coming off the show, Declan is working hard here in the DC-metro area, which he now considers home.

"I want to change the scene of Irish food and I have some big supporters behind me."

One of Declan's most avid supporters is ChefWorks. Together they are brewing up something big so stay tuned to social media for those exciting announcements. If patience is not your thing, you can always check out Big D's brand new line of BBQ sauce, which has an Asian flair and much healthier ingredients than you would expect from a bottled sauce. He also plans to release his line of Made in America Irish sausages and other not commonly found foods. Declan will continue on his journey as the Executive Chef at the brand new Jack's Ranch located at Tyson's Corner and opening Summer 2021.

Throughout Declan's career and appearance on Hell's Kitchen, he has remained ever so humble in the face of his achievements, admitting "I am still trying to absorb everything that has happened over the past two months. I am so grateful to my family, friends, colleagues, fans located around the world and especially my local supporters." When asked what advice he has for aspiring chefs Declan responded without missing a beat. "You're never too old to follow your dreams. I'm living proof."

Be sure to join Declan's 28k followers (and counting) on Instagram to stay up-to-date on big things that are coming your way! www.instagram.com/declan76



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To try your luck in the kitchen with Irish cuisine, check out a few of Chef Declan's recipes on the VIP Alexandria Magazine blog. www.vipalexandriamag.com