



Case Study...



# ...Drakes Restaurant

## SLEEK NEW KITCHEN DELIVERS MICHELIN STAR CUISINE AT DRAKES

Surrey's finest Michelin Starred restaurant at The Clock House in the picturesque village of Ripley, has reopened its doors following an impressive revamp to its Grade II Listed building. Head chef and proprietor, Steve Drake, will be creating dishes for its renowned French-inspired, modern British menu from a kitchen specially designed for his culinary team. Imperial Catering Equipment was called in to provide the stove centrepiece around which the kitchen has been designed.



Steve Drake's lifelong ambition of owning his own restaurant was finally realised six years ago when he and his wife, Serina, took over what was a French restaurant in the historical Clock House in Ripley, Surrey. Steve's unique style of cooking uses the best seasonal ingredients, creating dishes with inspiring flavours, technique and texture, as he explains: "nothing is more important than the food and the customer experience."

The team at 'Drakes' quickly built an enviable reputation for creating a unique style of stunning artisan dishes and have been awarded a Michelin Star every year since opening.

Having taken on the restaurant, Steve started plans for his dream kitchen. He explains:

"When we bought The Clock House, we didn't have a lot of money left over for refurbishment and upgrading the kitchen with new equipment - which is what I really wanted. So we made do with mid-range, medium duty individual kitchen units to get by. But these would constantly move around and had to be pulled out to clean, which had a major impact on time.

"I'd always wanted an island cooking unit - this is such an efficient way to work in a kitchen. It makes communication between the team so much easier and quicker. Everyone can move around better, which improves traffic flow in a busy kitchen.

"All our dishes - which include roast scallop with pig's cheek, pears and saffron, and slow poached and roasted lamb, radish, aubergine and a pumpkin pie - are prepared from scratch, using a number of stylish, artisan techniques on which our reputation has been built. Time is taken over every dish to make it a real work of art, so diners are wowed by the presentation as well as the great tasting food, and these dishes will definitely benefit from our new suite. Consistency and creativity, as well as a good balance of flavour, keep our guests coming back, I want people to leave us with a beautiful memory and excited taste buds.

"Having plenty of good, clear vision during service is really important to make sure everything is running smoothly and leaves the pass perfectly. I knew exactly what equipment I wanted to give us this visibility and make the kitchen operate as efficiently as possible."



"Your Food, Our Focus"

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As a Listed Building in a Conservation Area, The Clock House was the subject of strict planning guidelines and restrictions, but work finally started in 2008 and plans for Steve's new dream kitchen were drawn up.

"Installing an island stove was my first priority", says Steve. "I wasn't aware of Imperial's Montague brand before I saw the competition to win an island suite in the trade press, but was very impressed as soon as I saw it - it's a stunning piece of kit. It not only looks good with a satin finish, stainless steel front, but it is also solid, robust and clearly hard-working, producing great results. This is essential in a kitchen like ours. We probably open the oven door more than 500 times a day, which has clearly been too much for the medium range ovens we've made do with so far. These doors have had to be replaced after just one year - so we should save money in the long run.

"The Montague Island Suite also replaces a 15 year-old oven, which has served us well, but parts are no longer available for the repairs increasingly needed on it."

Steve designed the kitchen around the Montague Excalibur Island Suite. These suites are custom designed to meet the different requirements of each kitchen and its team. Innovative features include a unique concealed flue system, which provides a flat machined steel top surface to the flue passageway to keep platters or sauces warm. The top surface is level with the range's cooking surface, allowing chefs to pass items across the island without obstruction and with no vent panels, the risk of spillage accumulating is minimal.

In addition, flue products are diverted through the double passageway to the vertical flue risers, which also support shelving to increase storage space in a busy kitchen. Steve also designed

the floor to be flush with the suite. This has built-in drainage and is made from hygienic material that rolls up the sides of the unit for maximum hygiene.

"This in itself could save us as much as half an hour each day in cleaning," he explains. "Up to now, we've had separate units pushed together to form an island, but it's a major job to pull them apart and clean in between. The self contained Montague Suite cuts all this out."

Narrower walkways between the counter fridges and stove also reduce walking time between equipment.

The suite now sits pride of place in a sleek, gleaming new restaurant kitchen that Steve is extremely proud of.

"I see this as an important investment for the restaurant, which will mean our customers are ultimately the ones to benefit," explains Steve. "The Montague's design will also make us more energy efficient. Unlike other stoves, we can now turn off half the oven during any quiet times in the kitchen, which cuts down heat wastage and saves on fuel bills. The plancher grill will save us even more time in pan work - and dish washing! We prepare a lot of dishes with fresh ingredients such as scallops, usually cooked in individual portions in small frying pans. Now, we can cook them straight onto the hotplate, which is fantastic."

Imperial Catering Equipment's sales director, Andy Piggan, added: "Imperial's award-winning Montague range has been developed with 150 years of specialised manufacturing experience behind, so it is the highest quality commercial cooking equipment.

"More and more of the UK's top chefs are now spending time in the US, where Montague is



seen as the best, and the range is fast becoming the equipment to use in top class kitchens back home. Montague will also custom build, design and install to the exact specifications required, giving chefs their dream kitchen."

"It was great to be able to choose a design and size to fit our own kitchen," adds Steve, "Andy knew exactly what we wanted. Imperial has also given us a lifetime guarantee, which shows great confidence in this range."

Imperial's Montague range includes heavy duty ranges and counter equipment, custom island suites and high volume convection ovens. The Montague portfolio offers unrivalled quality with designs that are both classic and simple, with flexibility and rigidity to withstand even the toughest kitchen environments.

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**For further information,  
please contact:**

**SJ Barlow  
Proactive Communications  
Tel: 0845 466 3700**

**Email:  
sj@proactivecommunications.co.uk**

*For further information  
on equipment available from  
**Imperial Catering** log on to  
**www.imperialrange.co.uk**  
or call **01509 260150**.*