



Andrew Walker

Tell me about your career to date?

Out of school I studied a B-Tech Diploma at Doncaster Tech College before working at Wentbridge House Hotel, one of the three best fine dining restaurants in Yorkshire, where I learnt all the fancy techniques around classic French cuisine. On top of this I was able to train as a sommelier and maître d', meaning I was a chef who also understood front of house, which are not ten a penny.

I moved down to London in true Dick Whittington style and joined Compass a whole 28 years ago on the trainee manager graduate scheme. By getting stuck in and using my well-rounded skills I moved up the company to the role of corporate catering manager for the whole of the UK business and then about 15 years ago I moved to become Executive Chef at Chartwells. I genuinely love my job and what I do.

Does it make you proud to see the young generations coming through the ranks?

I love watching them build their confidence in the kitchen and learn their trade. I sort of envy them a little as they have their whole career ahead of them in a profession where the standards are becoming higher and higher.

"I love teaching other chefs and seeing them progress. The chef world is like a big family and we want to see everyone succeed. I become particularly proud when I can see a chef who is open enough to ask questions, open him or herself up to try new things, and come out the other side a better cook."

"It would have to be something close to my heart – the absolute perfect chip. Amazing potatoes, cut thick, cooked in beef dripping – it is proper Yorkshire food. I would then serve it with a side of scraps, crispy batter bits from the fish, and some non-brewed condiments."

"The ability to be unforgettable and create a memory. I mean, how many jobs can you take an object in the morning, mould it and use it to create something amazing, and then receive applause for it afterwards? I always tell my young chefs that we are the lucky ones as we get to do what we do every day."