



Silvena Rowe

The Patron Chef of Quince at the May Fair Hotel and renowned author is having a good time with cuisine

She looks stunning with eyes to die for and to crown it all she has a way with spices like no other chef we know. Does being a Bulgarian born on the Turkish border influence one's palette and cookery skills so much? Or is it when you grow up in a world of spices, influenced by a father's romantic bohemian approach to life and love of cooking that makes it all real?

We were very curious to discover more about the patron chef who is making the headlines lately. She tells us that as a young adult she left home to travel with her English husband continuing to cook, taste and explore different cuisines and cultures before finally settling in London. Since then, cooking has been fun, shared and enjoyed.

Author of "Purple Citrus and Sweet Perfume" and "Orient Express" Silvena Rowe has also appeared on television shows like Saturday Kitchen, This Morning and judging and mentoring in Young Chef of The Year. Her unique and inspirational cooking style earned her the role of food consultant on David Cronenberg's 2007 film Eastern Promises, starring Viggo Mortensen.

Executive Traveller chats to Silvena Rowe:

1. First restaurant, TV programme, and exciting times in your career – would you say that you have reached your ultimate goal?

No, there is still quite a lot I want to achieve. Although I am in a very good place in my career I am just beginning and there are many more things I would still like to accomplish.

2. What challenges do you face when you invite diners to the Chef's table?

When you invite diners to the Chef's table they expect high end, out of the ordinary food as well as me to be there to both serve the food and talk about anything and everything they want. The hardest challenge of them all however, is encapsulating all the flavours of the menu into one dining experience.

3. Being a chef is competitive and if the latest trends are anything to follow, it appears to be a man's world. How do you keep yourself competitive enough to keep up with the game?

Being a woman in a man's world I have to work without emotion, which is hard being a woman; however this helps me to maintain my place in the game. I work with an amazing team of chefs, the majority of whom are men, so it is essential for me to be both tough and ruthless in the kitchen ensuring a level of healthy fear and respect for one another creating the ideal work environment.

4. What has been the toughest thing that you have cooked?

One of the greatest challenges and honours of my career was cooking for the Japanese ambassador in the Japanese embassy. Although this was exciting for me it was daunting at the same time as I was working in an unfamiliar, restrained Japanese kitchen – which is not something I am used to.

5. And your signature or favourite dish?

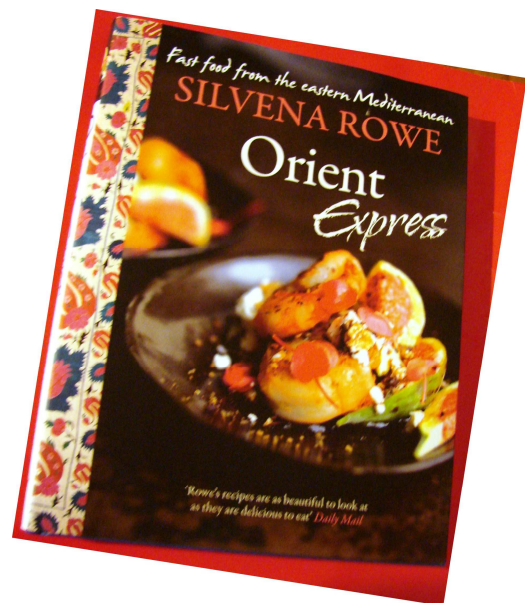
It would either have to be my Ottoman Spiced Lamb Cutlets or my King Prawns in a pomegranate butter sauce.

6. What other career would you have pursued if you were not a chef?

I would have pursued a career in sports, perhaps even become an Olympian. Growing up, and still to this day, I have always been very athletic and enjoyed participating in various different sporting activities.

7. What would you say to any other female aspiring to become a chef?

All chefs, not just females, need perseverance. You don't become successful just from talent and passion you need hard work and determination too, the most successful chefs are those who are the most persistent and put in the most hours. Anyone aspiring to become a chef needs 'balls' to survive in the industry, however I would say to females in particular they need to be very tough, there are no concessions for being a woman in this industry.



Silvena Rowe is the patron Chef at Quince at the May Fair
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