William Sitwell's Biting Talk, Britain's liveliest food and drink podcast

Weekly episodes of conversations and revelations from the great and good of the food and drink world

By Telegraph Food
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Join William Sitwell as he chats to the biggest names in the business, as well as introducing new up-and-coming talent.

Find all episodes below, include a Best of Biting Talk 2020, in which chef Marcus Wareing muses on an alternative career as a farmer, Sabrina Ghayour teaches us how to ‘Persian-up’ our kitchens, and Stephen Bayley remembers his frenemy Sir Terence Conran.

'Get the magic three things right and your restaurant's on the up. Don't, and it won't survive'

26/02/21

They are the questions that have taxed even the greatest restaurateurs across history: how can you make a restaurant successful, and why do restaurants go bust?

Now, Michelin-starred chef Tom Aikens, who has experienced his own share of financial woe, reckons he knows the answer.

Speaking on the latest episode, Aikens says there are three things that make a great restaurant. "Great food, great service, great ambience. If you get those three things right, people will hear about you and will come. And once you have those magic three things you’re on the up and up. It’s only the restaurants that aren’t offering one of those things that always suffer."

This week's episode includes hospitality consultant Alexandre Santamaria discussing futuristic restaurant tech, Wales-based hotelier Debbie Cappadonna explaining how she was awarded a first Green Michelin star, and a cocktail from mixologist Farhad Heydari of The House of Heydari.
Celebrity chef Ed Baines admits he 'can’t sell enough whole crab' to customers who love it, but fears there aren’t enough Brits who appreciate seafood. He has called on industry colleagues to work to educate British diners on the glories of seafood as shellfish producers and distributors admit they are in crisis.

Baines says that British antipathy to eating seafood, ‘has become more prevalent over the last 30 years. As a whole the UK consumer is not part of the [seafood eating] culture. We like to remove ourselves from the identity of where food comes from, which is completely opposite to the French, Italians and Spanish who directly relate eating meat to an animal; they’re not squeamish, they celebrate it.’

Listen to the full interview with Ed Baines by clicking on the audio player below, and also hear from planting expert Julia Parker, design guru Stephen Bayley and mixologist Farhad Heydari.
The family behind London's iconic India Club fears "we can’t carry on the fight" against hotel plans

07/02/21

A crowdfunding campaign has been launched to save the famous institution dealt a "double blow" by the pandemic and redevelopment plans. The India Club's manager, Phiroza Marker, whose family have run the club for 23 years, speaks to William Sitwell about the struggle of surviving the pandemic while also fighting the battle against their landlord.

Also in this episode, co-founder of Big Mamma restaurant group Victor Lugger compares UK and French furlough schemes, meet MasterChef finalist Philli Armitage Mattin, and mixologist Farhad Heydari celebrates Bacardi’s 162nd birthday.
Meet the chef taking on a supermarket giant for selling New Zealand venison over British

30/01/21

With wild deer stocks higher than ever, imported venison is a depressing sight says chef Mike Robinson. He urges M&S to try a new approach: "My advice to them would be to embrace [UK venison], create a brand around wild venison. It's sustainable, it helps the environment and it's super-healthy."

This week's show also includes newly-Michelin-starred waiter Joe Warwick, celebrated chef Marianne Lumb and the Biting Talk mixologist Farhad Heydari.
Having opened her restaurant in 2020, chef Harriet Mansell has experienced first-hand the difficulties of small businesses in a pandemic. After an accounting error meant that her full-timer employees missed out on being able to apply for furlough, Harriet Mansell, chef patron of Robin Wylde in Lyme Regis, has now enlisted the help of her local MP, Conservative Chris Loder, in her attempts to appeal to HMRC.

Guests on this edition of Biting Talk include Dublin-born chef Robin Gill, who reflects on how to deal with a bad review, Scottish restaurateur Ranald Macdonald, who explains the origins of Burns Night, and Biting Talk mixologist Farhad Heydari, sharing a simple cocktail to stave off the winter chill.
The best of Biting Talk podcast 2020, from food heroes to the finest cocktails

23/12/20

Listen to the highlights of a year of lively conversations with the great and good of the food and drink world.

On this Best of Biting Talk, you'll hear Marcus Wareing musing on an alternative career as a farmer, Sabrina Ghayour teaching us how to ‘Persian-up’ our kitchens, and Andy Varma describing how a sprinkling of love makes his recipes sing, while Claude Bosi reflects on the day he first arrived in London and stood alone on a train platform with no friends and even less English, Grace Dent talks about how to become a restaurant critic, and Stephen Bayley remembers his frenemy Sir Terence Conran – and much, much more.
The Northamptonshire cheesemaker forced to crowdfund to stay in business

11/12/20

Having turned to cheesemaking after he was made redundant seven years ago, Gary Bradshaw now faces closure thanks to the pandemic.

Now with a Crowdfunder page, fans of this small producer can pledge money and receive a box of Bradshaw’s award-winning cheeses. "We’re not just asking for money," he says, "If you pledge now you'll get a box of cheese next March. The money will enable us to pay bills, continue to buy milk from the farmer and make cheese."

This episode also features the founder of Kerb, Petra Barran, meat snack entrepreneur Jack Mayhew, chef and restaurateur Mark Hix and the Biting Talk mixologist Farhad Heydari.
Meet the award-winning whisky maker who became a distiller by chance

04/12/20

Having escaped the city for the Cotswolds, Daniel Szor found success with his range of spirits. But it wasn't an easy ride...

Speaking on the latest episode of the Biting Talk podcast, the founder of Cotswolds Distillery explains that their converted barn in Warwickshire "was only ever supposed to be a weekend place."

This episode also features Peter Greig, director and co-founder of Devon's visionary meat box firm Pipers Farm, food historian Mark Riddaway reflecting on the history of ingredients on sale at Borough Market, and Biting Talk's resident mixologist Farhad Heydari.
The neighbourhood Indian restaurant in Reading that found nationwide fame for its takeaways

27/11/20

When Nandana and Sharat Syamala decided to deliver their regional Indian curries across the country, sales soared from word of mouth alone.

Clay’s Hyderabadi Kitchen is well-known to locals around London Street in the Berkshire town but, using an overnight courier service, is now delivering food across the country, from Devon to Scotland.

You can hear the full interview on Biting Talk which also features London restaurant Blacklock’s Gordon Kerr on his passion for chops, Cardiff-based former bad-boy chef Tommy Heaney, co-founder of Pizza Pilgrims Thom Eliot, and mixologist Farhad Heydari of the House of Heydari mixology emporium.
"Good people came into my life, and from that came good food"

20/11/20

The cookbook author Justine Murphy reflects on how cooking has helped her recover from a traumatic childhood. As a child she was subjected to violence from both her parents. "I was locked in a room for a lot of my childhood," she says. "I was isolated and in the hands of the wrong people for a very long time."

Today, however, she says she thrives by "chasing happiness. I changed my life, chose who I wanted in my life, and protected myself."

Also featured on this episode are legendary Italian chef Gennaro Contaldo sharing his love of parmesan, wine box entrepreneur Laura Riches, British cheese expert Francis Gimblett, and Biting Talk's mixologist Farhad Heydari.
"It’s been heart-warming to see the support we’ve had"

13/11/20

Far from being deserted by their customers, chefs on our latest podcast share their relief that the desire to dine out has not waned.

Steve Drake, chef-patron of Sorrel, a Michelin-starred restaurant in Surrey, reports that since reopening in July it has been "like Christmas every day; it’s been mad, a crazy, crazy few months."

This week’s episode also includes a conversation with food writer Grace Dent who discusses her emotive new memoir, Hungry. Remy Martin’s Jack Charlton explains his mission to dispel cognac’s reputation as an after-dinner sip for old buffers, and Biting Talk’s mixologist Farhad Heydari makes a sultry Fallen Leaves cocktail.
"I don't really care what people think is going to happen"

06/11/20

In his latest podcast, host William Sitwell speaks to Adam Handling on staying calm amid crisis, and how to plan ahead. The celebrated chef has revealed his secrets to staying sane in a crisis: not listening to the news and drinking alcohol.

The Scottish-born restaurateur, who runs a small empire of bars and restaurants in London, a successful nationwide high-end food delivery service and has won a string of awards, says: "There's no point worrying."

Listen to the full interview with Adam Handling on Biting Talk. Other guests on this week’s episode are chef Harriet Mansell, whose new restaurant in Lyme Regis, Robin Wylde, opened just one week before having to close for lockdown, and Michelin-starred chef Aktar Islam, patron of Birmingham's acclaimed Indian restaurant Opheem. Plus Biting Talk mixologist Farhad Heydari reveals a drink to put you on a war footing...
The naked chef was part of a BBC drive to delight viewers, but his discovery didn't come about by chance. Speaking on the latest episode of the Biting Talk podcast, author Gilly Smith reveals that Oliver "was created by the producer Pat Llewellyn. She was sent by two people who were pivotal in creating television culture at the BBC, Jane Root and Mark Thompson."

Hear the full interview on this week's episode, which also features Ed Templeton of London restaurant venue Carousel, and Clodagh McKenna, author of new book Clodagh’s Weeknight Kitchen described by William Sitwell as ‘the most cookable recipe book of 2020’. 
Bath Oliver biscuit maker, John Siddall: "William Oliver would have preferred ours"

23/10/20

The news recently that United Biscuits had ceased production of one of the UK’s most loved crackers, the Bath Oliver, was greeted with shock and consternation.

The biscuit was created in the 18th century by physician William Oliver and has brought pleasure to people for almost 250 years. But now Bath-based biscuit producer and cheese seller The Fine Cheese Co, has come to rescue with an alternative: the Bath Square, which company founder John Siddall claims is a "better quality artisan version".

The latest episode also features Cornish butcher Ian Warren talking about his new Wagyu/Jersey cross beef cattle, and Omar Allibhoy celebrating 10 years of his Spanish restaurant group Tapas Revolution. Plus Farhad Heydari mixes a curing ginger, whisky and lemon cocktail: the Penicillin.
"If you’re a picky eater, you’re not going to last"

16/10/20

It may be considered a cheap and unsophisticated chocolate bar by some, but intrepid war reporter Clarissa Ward says there is one item she can’t go into a conflict zone without: a Snickers bar.

The multi-award winning chief international correspondent for CNN also has advice for budding war reporters: "If you’re a picky eater, go home, because you’re not going to last."

This week’s guests include pie afficionado Calum Franklin, Welsh lamb farmer Freddie Archdale, Hampshire winemaker Zam Baring, and Biting Talk's mixologist Farhad Heydari.
Sarah Jane Evans MW: "The French plant vines here because they know it's the place to be"

09/10/20

English wine success is down to good soil, good winemakers – and climate change, says Evans in the latest Biting Talk podcast.

The Decanter World Wine Awards is the world’s largest wine competition and, according to its co-chair, Master of Wine Sarah Jane Evans, the 2020 triumph of English wines is the result of climate change.

Listen to the full interview below – also featuring chef Adam Byatt of Trinity restaurant, food retailer Emma Schwarz, Koya co-founder John Devitt and House of Heydari mixologist Farhad Heydari.
The Michelin-starred chef and restaurateur Marcus Wareing considered quitting the kitchen for a role in farming, such were his concerns during lockdown for the future of his business.

‘Over the last six months I’ve thought about a different career,’ he admits in the latest episode of the podcast Biting Talk, in which he talks candidly of his fears for the restaurant industry.

This week’s guests include the UK Hospitality spokesperson and government lobbyist Kate Nicholls who reveals ‘the iron fist’ in her velvet glove, East London baker Francesca Strange of The Proof, up-and-coming chef Olivia Burt, and Biting Talk's mixologist Farhad Heydari.
"Terence Conran was my mentor, my friend, my antagonist"

18/09/20

Host William Sitwell reflects on the life of the late designer with Conran's Design Museum co-founder, Stephen Bayley. "We had a fractious relationship which ended in long silences," says Bayley. "Terence saw in me a mirror image of himself.

Also in this episode, nightclub boss Carlo Carello laments the neglect of late-night hospitality, restaurateur Camelia Panjabi celebrates the 30th birthday of Chutney Mary, and entrepreneur Charlie Bigham reveals the secret to the success of his brand of supermarket meals. Plus, mixologist Farhad Heydari concocts a gin spider highball.
The Swedish chef serving reindeer in the face of a vegetarian boom

11/09/20

William Sitwell hosts Niklas Ekstedt, one of Sweden’s most acclaimed chefs and the owner of one of Stockholm’s most celebrated restaurants, Ekstedt, whose recipes and methods extol the virtues of traditional Nordic cooking methods – the open fire, with its flame, smoke and embers and cast-iron, from pans and tongs to ovens and paddles.

Also in this episode, conversations with chef Sabrina Ghayour and Cornish fishmonger Paul Trudgian.
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By Madeleine Howell
3 Mar 2021, 1:28pm

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Meghan’s earrings: when diamonds aren't always a girl's best friend

The Duchess of Cambridge shows how her new £119 buy could be the next unsung hero of your wardrobe

'Get the magic three things right and your restaurant's on the up. Don't, and it won't survive'