

MCMULLENS PUB CHAIN JUMPS ABOARD THE GRAVY TRAIN WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM ESSENTIAL CUISINE

WHEN it comes to food, pub chains often find it difficult to maintain the consistent delivery of quality across their entire estate.

This was a problem recently addressed by the McMullen pub chain when it came to the gravy and sauce offering across its retail estate.

Earlier this year catering development manager Paul Robbins recognised there was an issue with consistency and quality in this area and decided to bring in some expert help.

He contacted former Dorchester-trained chef Nigel Crane at stock and jus maker Essential Cuisine in the hope he could offer a practical solution to the problem.

Paul explains: "Having initially sampled Essential Cuisine's range I was really impressed by their authenticity, flavour, ease of use and quality.

"Nigel came in and took the time to understand our business, and he came to the conclusion that there was a definite need for a high quality gravy base that could be used across the board.

"I liked the fact that Nigel was a "proper chef" and not a quick talking salesman who knows nothing really about a range of products but just wants to shift boxes and make a quick sale. My instinct was proved right as Nigel went away and created a bespoke traditional style gravy for us which actually tastes like it should – rich, meaty and homemade."

Essential Cuisine's No1 Beef Gravy, which is made from beef stock and beef dripping is now being rolled out across the McMullen chain – based in the Northern Home Counties.

The company is also using Essential Cuisine's Premier Veal Jus as a sauce base at selected pubs and at its Baroosh style bars – the first of which opened in Hertford in 2000.

Nigel said: "When we were approached by McMullen to improve their offering we jumped at the challenge as we enjoy working side by side with chefs and caterers, listening to their needs, and creating a tailor made solution for them.

"We soon realised they were in need of a gravy product that was above and beyond anything on the market. The No1 Beef Gravy we have created was

tailored to a specific taste – gravy that tastes as it should each and every time. It is perfect for roasts, grills, pies, puddings and sausages.

“We are now rolling out the product across the foodservice sector. We are confident there is a place in the competitive gravy market for a premium product like this that tastes above and beyond anything else available.”

Essential Cuisine’s products have been introduced at McMullen’s recently re-opened and refurbished pub The Old Beams in Milton Keynes.

The rustic pub, famous for its wholesome pub food and roast dinners, was destroyed by fire two years ago.

It was reopened in July 2007 and hopes to return immediately to its former reputation for serving fantastic food.

John Farley, manager at the Old Beams, said: “The pub has opened to a new era, but the basic qualities of the Old Beams which the regulars know and love are still firmly in place.

“The Essential Cuisine No1 Beef Gravy and Premier Veal Jus being used in our kitchen are proving a great success so far. The head chef is very happy with the consistent quality and performance of the end products – especially on Sundays for the roast dinner service – which is our busiest time of the week.”

Paul adds: “One of the toughest hurdles when you introduce a standard change across a large pub estate is gaining acceptance of the new products by the managers and chefs at the pubs. We are very pleased with the way the rollout is going and has been embraced in the retail estate.

“ Because Essential Cuisine’s products are so versatile and now we have a good working relationship, the use of their stock products will grow and become for McMullen just what it says on the tin – “Essential.”

Notes to editors:

Nigel set up Essential Cuisine because, after working as a top chef himself in London, he wanted to create products which genuinely contributed to his fellow chefs’ kitchens.

His company prides itself on listening to the needs of chefs around the UK and it constantly strives to produce the best products. Essential Cuisine is passionate about helping busy chefs to create the best possible food for their customers.

As a result, chefs from some of the country’s leading hotels, restaurants and gastro-pubs turn to Essential Cuisine’s chefs for help with their own stocks.

Over the past decade, Nigel has used his years of experience working under world famous chef Anton Mossiman at the Michelin starred Dorchester Hotel in London to create a wide range of stocks, jus and glaces, all made to use as chefs would a traditional kitchen-made stock.

They have an authentic taste, an appropriate level of seasoning and a low level of fat.

Right across the range, the taste and flavour is as chefs would expect from a stock pot and it's 100 per cent consistent.

The whole range is free from artificial colours and preservatives, and from added MSG.

For more information or samples, contact Essential Cuisine on 0870 050 1133 and www.essentialcuisine.com.

_For more information on McMullens visit www.mcmullens.co.uk or call 01992 584911.