



John Williams

Executive Chef, the Ritz

When John Williams joined the Ritz, London, in June 2004 as executive chef he brought three decades of hospitality experience to the legendary Piccadilly hotel's kitchen. Williams incorporated classic French cuisine and traditional British dishes to the daily menu, immediately establishing his objective of "running the best hotel restaurant and the finest banqueting in Great Britain". In this role he oversees a kitchen brigade of 54 chefs and is responsible for menus in the Ritz Restaurant, the Palm Court, the Rivoli Bar and room service and for the five banqueting and private dining rooms in William Kent House.

The son of a Tyneside fisherman, Williams developed his passion for food at an early age. His culinary career began in 1974 with his first position as a commis chef at the Percy Arms Hotel in Otterburn. He later worked at the Royal Garden Hotel in Kensington and Le Crocodile in Kensington before joining the Savoy Group of Hotels and Restaurants in 1986. During his impressive 18-year tenure with the Savoy Group, Williams served as premier sous chef at Claridge's and maître chef des cuisines at the Berkeley before his move to head up Claridge's kitchens as maître chef

des cuisines in 1995. After nine years in that role, he made the move to the Ritz.

Williams has also been a member of the Academy of Culinary Arts for the past 18 years, and was invested by the Academy with a formal chair in 2001 and appointed executive chairman in 2004. He continues to work tirelessly to promote the education and training of young chefs and is the Committee Chairman for the Academy's Annual Awards of Excellence Culinary Skills discipline as well as a member of the Adopt a School committee.

The ultimate accolade came earlier this year, when Williams received an MBE for his services to hospitality in the New Year Honours List.

The judges said of Williams: "In addition to John's heavyweight posts over the years, where he has produced countless protégés including master pastry chef Claire Clark and National Chef of the Year winner Eyck Zimmer, and executed some of the finest hotel food in the world, he has put in innumerable hours upholding the education, training and nurturing of young chefs."