

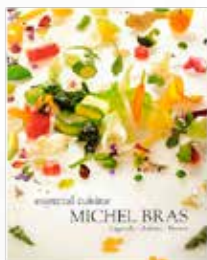
## CHEF'S NOTEBOOK

# Simon Rogan

*He runs L'Enclume in Cumbria and Fera at Claridge's, has two Michelin stars, and is rated Britain's number one chef*

*Interview Clare Hargreaves*

**Simon's inspirations: his favourite cookbook, kohlrabi and a basic Bolognese**



### Early inspiration

My father worked at Southampton's fruit and veg markets. When I was 11, I'd go after school, sit on the pallets and watch the forklift. I loved the smells and atmosphere. My dad brought home lots of stuff, which gave me an interest

in ingredients and led me to cooking family meals - basic stuff like Bolognese, curry and roasts. This prompted me to choose cooking as an option at school.

### Favourite cookbook

*Essential Cuisine* by Michel Bras is my number one book of all time. I love the colours, the vibrancy and the design. It was way ahead of its time. Bras is very rooted in



his native village of Aubrac in southern France. It connects with what I'm trying to do with L'Enclume in Cartmel.

### Most memorable meal

It was 13 years ago, at Marc Veyrat's La Ferme de Mon Père (*fermedemonpere.com*) in Megève, France, just after I opened L'Enclume. After service one night, a group of us flew to Geneva. When we got to Megève, it was snowing. The restaurant was incredible - like a film set. There were live animals everywhere, recreating Marc's father's farm. His use of Alpine flowers and herbs was inspirational. The snacks sat on a piece of freshly dug turf, which still had worms in! One was a shot glass of moss mousse that had the most amazing vegetal flavour I've ever tasted. The experience was so special - the journey, the location, the food, the service. That's what I set out for L'Enclume to be like.

### On a night off

I don't really have nights off! When I opened Fera, I hoped I'd be dining in London and Paris - it didn't happen. But last summer I took my 13-year-old to Riddle & Finns (*riddleandfinns.co.uk*) fish restaurant in Brighton. We sat in the sunshine eating oysters, scallops and lobster. Again, it wasn't just the food, it was the whole experience.

### The magic of Cumbria

I hit the jackpot with the Lake District. L'Enclume gets its sea herbs from the coast - just a mile away. Lake District Farmers (*lakedistrictfarmers.co.uk*) supplies lamb, hogget and beef; venison and game comes from Cartmel Valley Game (*cartmelvalleygame.com*). We buy Goosnargh duck, chicken and guinea fowl (*jandsgoosnargh.co.uk*), and Randolph Lop suckling pigs from the Holker estate (*holker.co.uk*) next to us.

### Always on my menu

Kohlrabi - it's good raw or cooked, and I love its versatility. Sweet cicely is another one - it has a really strong anise flavour. We grow it on top of Bigland Hill, near Cartmel. We always have one or two wild or cultivated mushrooms on the tasting menu.

### Modern cooking

More and more restaurants now grow their own, like us. It's all about the quality of the ingredients, and this is a way to be in control of that. I've gone through all the fads and trends. We still use technology, but the way we use it is more subtle. Now I'm content with where I am and the direction I'm going.

**For more about Simon and his restaurants, visit [simonrogan.co.uk](http://simonrogan.co.uk)**



Portrait: JOHN ARANDHARA-BLACKWELL | Kohlrabi photo: GETTY