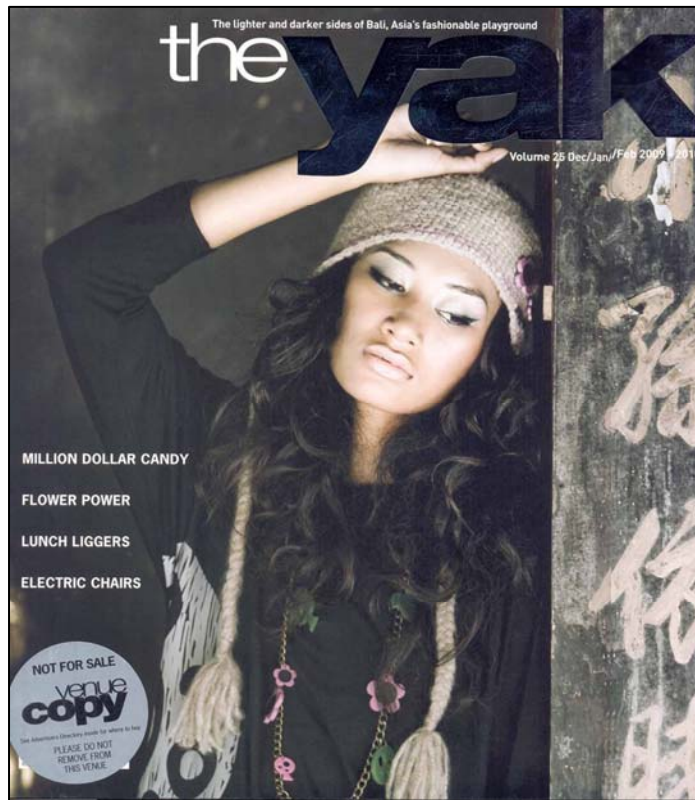


THE YAK

The lighter and darker sides of Bali, Asia's fashionable playground

VOLUME 25 DEC/JAN/FEB 2009-2010



THIS MUCH I KNOW

I AM I E

Jamie Theves, why are you always laughing?
Because every morning at about 7 o'clock I walk to my bathroom, look in the mirror and am faced by ridicule.

Tell us how you grew up...
I grew up in the North Perthshire Highlands. It's a very beautiful, wild part of Scotland. My father is an art dealer and collector and my mother is a cook. My childhood was spent in a very beautiful, very beautiful, beautiful area. I'm told that I was a pretty fine chef, but I don't believe it. Our house was constantly full of people enjoying my mother's food and my father's collection was quite a large part of the property. We grew much of our own food in an old walled garden. As children we were all encouraged to get what we could from the surrounding hills. Spring was St. George's mushrooms, nettles and garlic eggs. Summer was salmon, wild garlic, wood sorrel. Autumn was game and mushrooms and Winter was... well Winter was bloody cold! We had a manna - you kill it, you grill it - which cured my teenage bloodlust and brought me to the kitchen. In other words, I had an awesome childhood.

How did you end up in Bali?
Bali arrived at the end of what seemed like a very long journey. We sold our family's restaurant in 2004 and I then found myself working on various projects primarily in Scotland but also Portugal and the Bahamas. One of my clients was John Dadd who'd recently bought The Istana, he asked me to come out and train his chefs for a few weeks. This became an annual thing until he asked me to come out full time a couple of years ago.

What's important to you in life?
Contentedness without the smugness.

And food, we would imagine...
I was very lucky to have been born into a family who love food. My mother and two aunts are all professional cooks. In the late 80s my father decided to convert our (straggling) footbuildings) into a concert hall. It was quite a bold call, for although he had a great love of music, his taste wasn't in the industry. At the time he'd been commissioned to refurbish the Japan Embassy building in London after their expulsion. Everything attached had to be sold, so on his return to Scotland he brought with him a 'magnificent' commercial kitchen. My parents set up a charitable trust that aimed to give master classes to young musicians from around Scotland. I think, even to my parent's surprise, it was a huge success. We started to host regular concerts and a music festival. They wisely brought in the Canadian classical guitarist Simon Wynberg as musical director and soon we were hosting some of the greatest artists in the world. In the early '90s the late '90s the Menuhin became president and so began an extraordinary relationship between the Menuhin school in Surrey and home. My mother and aunt catered for these events, often cooking for up to 140 guests. We, as kids, would help. It was a great way to learn the dark secrets behind the entertainment industry. My mother, being a thrifty Scot, would take huge pleasure in announcing to the assembled crowds that my brother or I had shot the venison she'd packed the charcuterie or grown the veg and that the whole expense of the meal was the wine! After I left home I went through the rigmaroles of apprenticeship in Ireland at Ballymalone, which was a huge learning curve. I then packed up my knife case

and followed my stomach around the world until I came home and opened our restaurant.

Can you also wash up?
Sure! I was a doorman for a catering firm in London for the first six months of my professional career. I was promoted to 'genius' chef. I had to walk up and down a long line of cooks elegantly dipping greenery on their creations. It wasn't a happy time in my life.

Have you ever cooked for anyone famous?
Prince Charles - genius chef.

OK, give us your best culinary anecdote...
Once upon a time, an unnamed hotel asked me to discreetly investigate whether their chef was on the take. I spent a few days in the kitchen and soon found that although he was rough as old boots he was straight. In the middle of service, one of his commis admitted that he'd run out of mint for the minty peas. In a flash of 'genius' the chef went to his locker and emerged with a tube of gel toothpaste, which he generously squeezed into the simmering water. I was somewhat astonished when the kitchen started getting compliments for 'the best peas ever'.

The Istana...it's quite posh isn't it. And you're the de facto general manager, we hear.
I'm lucky in that we've got an excellent GM from Bali Homes Management. I'm not nearly computer literate enough to take on the management side of things. We work very closely on all aspects of running the house but really my domain is in the kitchen or cellar. And posh? Well, the glorious thing about The Istana is that

although it's breathtaking, it's not over the top, shiny suited and doped in bling. The only gold is the bed on the 18th century bed cover. Cabio the architect really got it right with the innovation project and the Docks have collected some superb works of art.

What's the best part about running somewhere like The Istana?
Not having to capsize the team into engaging themselves. The Istana staff are a very tight knit crew and excellent at what they do. The smiles are genuine.

And now for something completely different. What's your opinion of...rain-stoppers?
I'm so keen to go to start shipping them to Scotland. The Istana's rain-stopper is so powerful he managed to shield the house from rain while bringing an already downpour on the film next door.

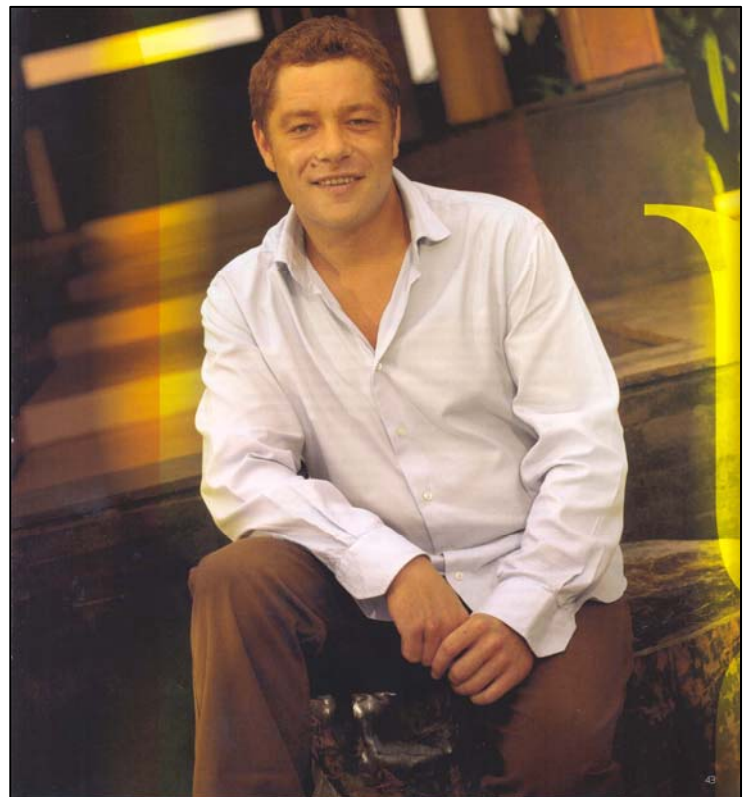
Do you have a talent of which you are particularly proud?
I'm a pretty dab hand at fly-fishing but I don't like to brag.

What's the worst job you've ever had?
After a bit of an unimpressive 10 year two days working for a television firm that had been exposed on a TV watchdog programme as a sham (I've never been subject to such vehement abuse) I'll dash know what a 'bumme' level it is. Apparently I have one where the sun don't shine.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with us?
Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie did NOT stay at The Istana. - honest.

And what's the last thought to go through your head at night?
Who the hell is calling at this time?

Jamie Theves, thanks for your time. <3 www.theyak.com





This Much I Know

JAMIE

He runs one of the poshest pads on the island and has no idea what a chutney ferret is. Good boy, Jamie Thewes.

Photo : Yaeko Masuda

Jamie Thewes, why are you always laughing?

Because every morning at about 7 o'clock I walk to my bathroom, look in the mirror and am faced by ridicule.

Tell us how u grew up...

I grew up in the North Perthshire Highland. It's a beautiful, wild part of Scotland. My father is an art dealer and collector, my mother a cook. My childhood was spent mainly outside and invariably involved mud. I'm told that I was a pretty feral child, but I don't believe it. Our house was constantly full of people enjoying my mother's food and my father's cellar. It was quite a remote neck of woods, so we grew much of what ate in an old walled garden. As children we were also encouraged to get what we could from surrounding hills. Spring was St. George's mushrooms, nettles and gull's egg; Summer was salmon, wild garlic, wood sorrel; Autumn was game and mushrooms and Winter was..well Winter was bloody cold! We had mantra – you kill it, you grill it – which curbed my

teenage bloodlust and brought me to the kitchen. In other words, I had an awesome childhood.

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although he had a great love of music, he'd never worked in the industry. At the time he'd been commissioned to refurbish the Libyan Embassy building in London after their expulsion. Everything abandoned had to be sold, so on his return to Scotland he brought with him an enormous commercial kitchen. My parents set up a charitable trust that aimed to give master classes to young musicians from around Scotland. I think, even to my parent's surprise, it was a huge success. We started to host regular concerts and a music festival. They wisely brought in the Canadian classical guitarist Simon Wynberg as musical director and soon we were hosting some of the greatest artists in the world. In the early 90's the late Yehudi Menuhin became president and so began an extraordinary relationship between the Menuhin school in Surrey and home. My mother and aunty catered for these events, often cooking for up to 140 guests. We, as kids, would help. It was a great way to learn the dark's secrets behind the entertainment industry. My mother, being a thrifty Scot, would take huge pleasure in announcing to the assembled crowds that my brother or I had shot the venison, she'd picked the chanterelles or grown the veg and that the whole expense of the meal was the wine! After I left home I went through the rigmaroles of apprenticeship in Ireland at Ballymaloe, which has a huge learning curve. I then packed up my knife case and followed my stomach around the world until I came home and opened our restaurant.

Can you also wash up?

Sure. I was dishpig for a catering firm in London for the first six months of my professional career. I was promoted to "garnish" chef. I had to walk up and down a long line of cooks elegantly draping greenery on their creations. It wasn't a happy time in my life!

Have you ever cooked for anyone famous?

Prince Charles – garnish chef!

OK, give us your best culinary anecdote...

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What's the worst job you've ever had?

After a stint at university I spent two days working for a telesales firm that had been exposed on a TV watchdog programme as a sham. I've never been subject to such vehement abuse. I still don't know what a "chutney ferret" is but apparently I have one where the sun don't shine!

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Jamie Thewes, thanks for your time

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