



Cooking Up a Storm

JLife's Holly Thackeray caught up with professional photographer Rick Pushinsky, to find out all about Just Not Kosher, the family recipe project causing a stir.

If you've flicked through a newspaper recently, you're almost certain to have caught a glimpse of father and son duo, Steven Morris and Rick Pushinsky. The brains behind Just Not Kosher, a family recipe card collection that's taken on a life of its own, they have recently been catapulted into the limelight.

Just Not Kosher is a limited edition, carefully curated collection of 21 recipes on laminated cards that feature traditional Jewish meals, although not all are strictly kosher. Split over a seven-day menu, the archive is a celebration of Jewish home cooking and suggests three courses: a starter, main and pudding for each day. Steven, who grew up in Manchester, originally collated the recipes, which include favourites that have been handed down and perfected through generations, such as chicken soup and baked apples, for friends. Adding to the charm of the recipes are Steven's own personal musings on each dish and its origins, along with family photos and still life photography by Rick.

Being on the other side of the camera is a new experience for professional photographer Rick, who says of his family's sudden fame: "I think my dad is slightly perplexed at seeing himself in the news. He's not a chef by trade. I take photos for magazines and newspapers all the time, but it's never pictures of me, thank goodness. So it's quite odd to see yourself for something you've done."

A selection of the recipes are also available in an online library for perusal, and the response to the foodie family's recipes, which have also had input from Rick's mum and brother, Helen and Harry Morris, has been warm.

"It's been really nice, we've had quite a few people emailing to say they've tried the recipes and how much they've enjoyed them. We have been really surprised and pleased by how well it has been received everywhere," continues Rick. "We never went into it to make any money; our only intention was for it to be a genuine sharing of

recipes and to put something out into the world that was enjoyable and interesting. It's not a big media machine – it's just me, my dad and my mum working hard and putting it together."

Speaking about how the idea transformed from a personal project into somewhat of a sensation, Rick explains: "My mum and dad have always cooked. They cook, more elaborately than most people. Whenever people come around they make a fuss and a lot of friends have asked for the recipes, so my dad had amassed this big collection of emails. I'd been doing some food photography for work so I thought I would photograph some of the dishes, and then we decided to put them together into a book for ourselves so that we had all the family recipes. Eventually, over a year or two, I thought we should put something out and that it would be fun – and it has been."

Having acted as a taster, as well as a photographer and pictures editor for the collection, does Rick have his own favourite recipe 'day'? "I think the traditional ones," he says, "So day one and day seven for me. I like the salt beef, chopped liver and egg and onion, and the baked apples. They're the most nostalgic for me, ones that I remember from being a kid or from family get-togethers."

Specialising in portraits, Rick has worked for a series of prestigious print titles, including Vogue, and has snapped a host of famous faces such as actor Stanley Tucci and Samantha Cameron. When quizzed on whether he'd like to permanently switch to food photography, however, he states: "I've been taking portraits for about 10 years so it feels like second nature to me. I always find it interesting to meet new people and go into new situations.

"With food, you spend a lot of time on your own working on the picture. I like going into unknown situations with unknown people and the pressure of trying to make a picture out of it – it's quite exciting."

Rick suggests he can also trace his love of photography back to his father, who previously worked in a camera shop: "There were always cameras knocking about when I was a kid. Then I went to study art and also worked in newspapers for 10 years as a picture researcher and editor. I saw a lot of photographs and started to think it would be a more interesting way to earn a living."

Now based in London for work, Rick still regularly visits his family in Manchester and picks out Whitworth Art Gallery as one of his favourite spots, adding: "It was on the route between my parents' house and town and I'd go there at lunch break when I was still at school."

With Startup London, a 250-page photography project, due to be published in 2018, it's been a busy year for Rick, and the buzz around Just Not Kosher looks set to continue. But, will there be another kitchen-based collaboration with his father? "We called [the collection] week one to leave it open for week two. We were thinking about doing it this year but I think it's too soon. We're doing a talk in 2018 for Jewish Book Week, so we'll still be talking about the existing one. Plus, it was really hard work!"

With 2019 mooted as the year for a potential follow-up, fans of the family recipes will have to wait a little while longer for a second serving.

For more information on the recipe cards, visit Justnotkosher.com.

