

Iced pleasures without the guilt

Husband and wife team launch frozen fruit desserts which are healthy and dairy-free

It's a familiar feeling, you sit down on the sofa with a tub of your favourite ice cream and before you know it half has mysteriously vanished. Slowly a feeling of guilt overcomes you as it sinks in: "the calories! What have I done?!"

However, these dark times could soon be over thanks to a Chalk Farm husband and wife team who have devised a guilt-free, dairy-free, gluten-free iced dessert to stop pudding lovers from spilling out of their jeans.

The Frozen Fruit Company, founded by Michael and Victoria

Philipou, makes frozen treats only from fruit.

They are promoting their fruity fusions as a healthy alternative to ice cream and frozen yoghurt, hoping to entice customers with their inventive flavours Strawgo (mango and strawberry), Orangeberry (raspberry and orange) and Blackberryblue (blueberries and blackberries).

Mr Philipou said: "We're completely new because we're 100 per cent fresh fruit. Something like sorbet is made with a water base, which is then sweetened with sugar but we make everything



■ Michael and Victoria Philipou, founders of The Frozen Fruit Company

from fruit. So unlike frozen yoghurt or sorbet, you get a really intense fruity flavour."

The former lawyers decided to swap the city for the food industry after meeting (and falling in love) on an MBA course.

Inspired to make their own

product after seeing the lack of alternatives for fellow-sweet tooths in their local supermarket, the couple left their jobs in September last year and haven't looked back.

Mr Philipou said: "The amazing thing for us was that no one else has done this before. We couldn't

believe that no one had thought of making a desert out of 100 per cent fruit, so it was a sort of eureka moment really."

After months of deliberation over flavours, the Philipous decided on recipes and started production from small premises in Chalk Farm.

Available

Despite being completely inexperienced in the industry, the couple are glad they stuck to their guns with their business approach.

Mr Philipou explained: "We did originally think about getting outside help with our production but whoever we visited always tried to push us away from the idea of frozen fruit and go towards a frozen yoghurt dessert. But that's not what we wanted – we wanted to break the rules."

The Frozen Fruit Company has only been open for business for two weeks but their desserts can be bought in Pomona, Belsize Park; Raoul's Deli, Maida Vale; Panzer's, St John's Wood and Fork's, Parliament Hill.

■ For information visit www.thefrozenfruitcompany.com

Food blogger of the year doubles as inspiration for supper clubs

Since starting her food blog back in 2009, Kerstin Rodgers has always placed an emphasis on authenticity.

Now with her website, Ms Marmite Lover, newly-crowned as the Guild of Food Writers' blog of the year, she is quite comfortable taking on anyone in the industry.

"I try to be amusing and quite honest in my writing," says 43-year-old Rodgers, "but also quite direct. Do you know how many celebrity TV chefs don't actually write their own books, for instance?"

"It can be difficult to really expose these things but that's

what I like to do."

Having worked as a chef as well as a writer, Rodgers puts her recent awards success down to her ability to combine the two worlds. However, take one look at Ms Marmite Lover and it is clear that the blog is just the tip of the iceberg.

Rodgers is the inspiration behind the underground restaurant movement supper clubs, which have drawn praise from celebrities like Kate Nash.

Supper clubs are informal restaurant of sorts, taking place at small venues like houses where chefs can provide meals for guests



■ Kerstin Rodgers

whenever they like, be it once a week or once a month. Guests pay £30 to £40 a head and attend the nights, which play out similar to dinner parties – the only difference being that they often do not know

each other. "I got the idea from Cuba – there's hundreds over there. Very few people want to run a full-time restaurant, but if you're a retired chef of a chef with children, it's not difficult at all to run a supper club."

"It's a great thing for singles and can be cheaper than a dinner party," she added

Ms Marmite Lover has grown in the last four years to become one of the most popular food blogs in the UK. With her career as a photographer and a family to balance, how did Rodgers manage to find time to not only maintain her blog, but see it blossom?

"When I started, I was writing about bringing up my daughter in London, but I realised food was becoming a big part of my writing. I was amazed when people actually started to read it.

"Success is simply down to the art of continuing. Most people give up after three months, but I had 20 years of experience pent up that I had to write about."

Born and raised in Highgate, Rodgers has always felt a connection with the local area. She takes her daughter to the same ballet lessons she attended in Pond Square and can often be found at the Prince of Wales pub on quiz nights.

"Did you know this area has the most pubs per square mile?" she asks. "My aim is to try them all."

Love it or hate it, Ms Marmite Lover is happy in Highgate and will, as usual, be at a supper club near you.

Alex Bellotti

■ Find out more at marmitelover.blogspot.co.uk.

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