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arcus Wareing is a brilliant chef who is doing a great job and we get on famously,' Gordon Ramsay assured me a few months ago when we met at one of his many openings. What's more, he said it with such conviction that it was

tempting to believe him. But, after recent developments, it is clear that Ramsay's assertion was wide of the mark. The rift between Gordon Ramsay and Marcus Wareing has been widening for a year, and last month became absolute.

Wareing, of Pétrus fame, was once described as Ramsay's number one protégé and his most loyal lieutenant. He has worked for Ramsay for 15 years, taking over Pétrus in 1999, when they would talk to each other umpteen times a day. But all that is over because, from 19 September, Marcus Wareing will be running the restaurant at The Berkeley hotel, the location of Pétrus, by himself.

Extricating himself from the yoke of Ramsay has been a messy and unpleasant business. Rumours suggest Wareing discovered that Ramsay had plans to part company with him, but outmanoeuvred his old boss, persuading the Maybourne Hotel Group, which owns The Berkeley, to stick with him.

This latest stand-off should not come as any surprise. Falling out with people - or pretending to do so - now seems to be a crucial component of Ramsay's success. Or, at least, crucial to keeping his face and name firmly in the headlines. Richard Branson is brilliant at marketing his companies through rampant self-promotion, but Ramsay is just as good. And getting angry and engaging in spats seems to come so naturally to him. The problem is that just as some people fear he's spreading himself too thin, others think his relentless cultivation of enemies is itself wearing just a little thin.

'For years it's been one of the world's worst-kept secrets that Gordon and Marcus can't stand each other,' says a senior figure in the restaurant industry. 'What really bothered Marcus was the way Gordon took the plaudits for Pétrus and how people would refer to it as Gordon Ramsay's Pétrus when it was the one kitchen where Ramsay never cooked and where he hardly ever bothered to drop by. In fact, Gordon and Marcus haven't seen each other for eight months.'

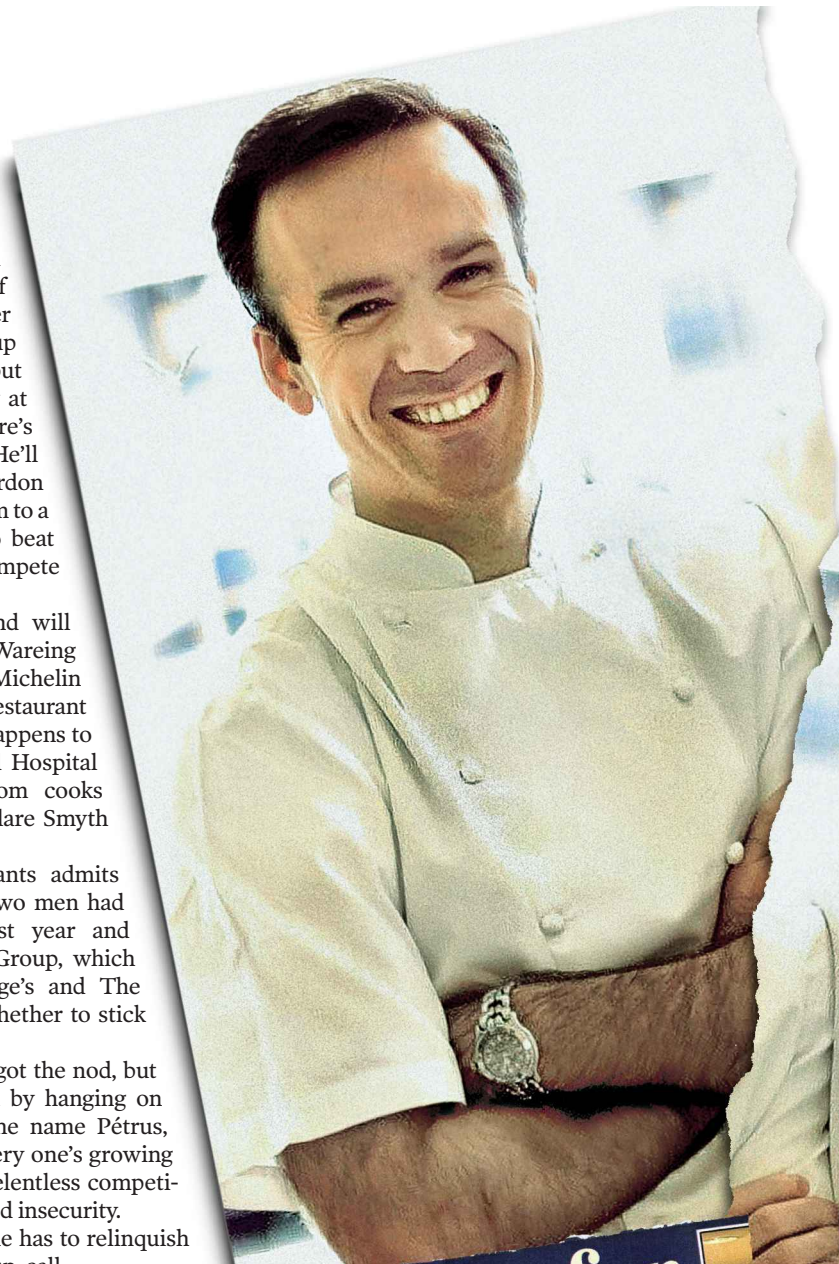
Which is rather different from when Wareing, now 38, first worked for Ramsay, 41. In the old days Ramsay even said he would be delighted if Wareing proved to be a better cook than him or ended up with more Michelin stars, but significantly, in an interview at that time, Wareing said: 'There's no competing with Gordon. He'll always have the faster car. Gordon hates to fail. You challenge him to a race and he'll find a way to beat you. That's why I don't compete with him.'

Well, he will be now. And will Ramsay go stir crazy if Wareing manages to garner a third Michelin star, because the only other restaurant in London with three stars happens to be Gordon Ramsay at Royal Hospital Road, where Ramsay seldom cooks himself, having appointed Clare Smyth head chef last year?

One of Ramsay's lieutenants admits that relations between the two men had reached breaking point last year and that the Maybourne Hotel Group, which owns The Berkeley, Claridge's and The Connaught, had to decide whether to stick with Ramsay.

At The Berkeley, Wareing got the nod, but Ramsay is playing hard ball by hanging on (lawyers are involved) to the name Pétrus, which says a lot about the fiery one's growing obsession with brands, his relentless competitive streak and his deep-rooted insecurity.

'It won't worry Marcus if he has to relinquish the name Pétrus and ends up calling his restaurant Marcus Wareing at The Berkeley - in fact that's what he's wanted for years - but he does feel attached to the name and feels Pétrus's international fame is down to him,' says a source close to Wareing. 'What will bother Gordon immensely is



## Cold shoulder for Ramsay as he splits with most loyal lieutenant

By Miles Goslett

GORDON RAMSAY has split from the chef who played a key role in the creation of his restaurant empire. Wareing has worked with Ramsay since 1999 and is currently

head chef at his acclaimed Pétrus restaurant at the Berkeley Hotel in Knightsbridge, West London.

But when the foul-mouthed TV chef's contract on the venue expires later this year, Wareing will take it over himself. Wareing was widely regarded as Ramsay's protégé and most loyal lieutenant. He is considered one of the world's top chefs and has worked with Ramsay at several other restaurants.

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