



if Marcus then gets a third Michelin star in January. And if by any chance Gordon's Royal Hospital Road drops a star at the same time, he'll go ballistic.'

Ah, Michelin stars. They can be such a curse. Perhaps they are the little devils that get under Ramsay's prickly skin. Perhaps those 'win some,

**'IT'S A BADLY KEPT SECRET THAT GORDON AND MARCUS CAN'T STAND EACH OTHER'**

lose some' stars explain why he's so keen to diversify and expand his empire into pubs, books, hotels, produce endorsement and lots of television.

As it stands, Gordon Ramsay Holdings presides over 16 restaurants worldwide, with Gordon Ramsay at The London West Hollywood opening in the Los Angeles

hotel last week. That means, in the last 12 months alone, the company has opened restaurants in Prague, Versailles, Heathrow Terminal 5 and Los Angeles. In that time, he's also bought Tante Marie, Britain's largest independent Cordon Bleu cookery school, in Woking, which he hopes to turn into an academy for young chefs.

Turnover for Gordon Ramsay Holdings in 2008 is forecast to be more than £70 million, a near 50 per cent increase on last year. Television income for his shows in America was approximately \$6 million in 2007 and £6 million in the UK. The forecast turnover for GRH in 2009 is £112 million.

Impressive stuff. But what else is going on? Could it be that Ramsay is so frightened of failure that he will do anything to keep his name in vogue? Which can be emotionally fraught, triggering temper tantrums. And yet the Ramsay brand seems sometimes to depend on falling out with people, just as it relies on him appearing on chat shows and turning up at West End movie premieres with his

tousle-haired wife Tana and posing for pictures as if they are the Posh and Becks of the restaurant firmament. Even so, no one can deny that the man has phenomenal energy.

Angela Hartnett, who is about to open another GRH-backed restaurant, Murano, in GRH's first boutique hotel in Regent's Park, has worked for Ramsay for more than 14 years. 'It's horses for courses, but I get on fine with Gordon and, by and large, I am allowed to make my own decisions. Frankly, I like the security of knowing that if business is slow my staff will still get paid. And I respect his energy and work ethic.'

It's just not always clear what fuels that energy. One theory is that it has to do with his tough childhood. His Glaswegian father was a heavy drinker and the family moved from council house to council house before settling in Stratford-upon-Avon, where his mother worked in a tea room. Then there was his failure to make it as a footballer with Glasgow Rangers owing to injuries and watching his brother Ronnie - with whom he no longer has any contact - slide into heroin addiction.

As Ramsay once said: 'The more successful I become the more nervous I become as you can never take it for granted. I'm a bit one-dimensional. I am a family man and I work hard and I'm scared to stop.' On another occasion, he said: 'Getting into food was a way of hiding the hurt and the insecurity of not making it as a footballer.'

With his father-in-law Chris Hutcheson in charge of the day-to-day running of Gordon Ramsay Holdings, Ramsay is free to be the front-man par excellence.

**R**amsay hates it if anyone suggests he is spreading himself too thin. But it's obvious he is no longer just a chef and is now an international businessman selling everything from cheap chocolates to expensive foie gras. He has dumbed down to move up in the world.

A few years ago, Ramsay was Mr Big in the world of Michelin-starred hotel restaurants. His Savoy Grill (where Wareing was chef) had one star; Pétrus (also starring Wareing) then acquired two stars; The Connaught (with Angela Hartnett at the helm) had one star, and Gordon Ramsay at Claridge's also had one star. Today, the Savoy Grill is closed due to the refurbishment of the hotel (although contracts have been signed with Ramsay for when it reopens); The Berkeley hotel will soon be outside his control, and he's lost the contract at The Connaught to Parisienne Hélène Darroze. →

# GORDON?

Last month saw the dramatic announcement that Gordon Ramsay's most faithful lieutenant, Marcus Wareing, had staged a coup at The Berkeley. It's just the latest kitchen nightmare for a chef who's always at boiling point. Mark Palmer digs in