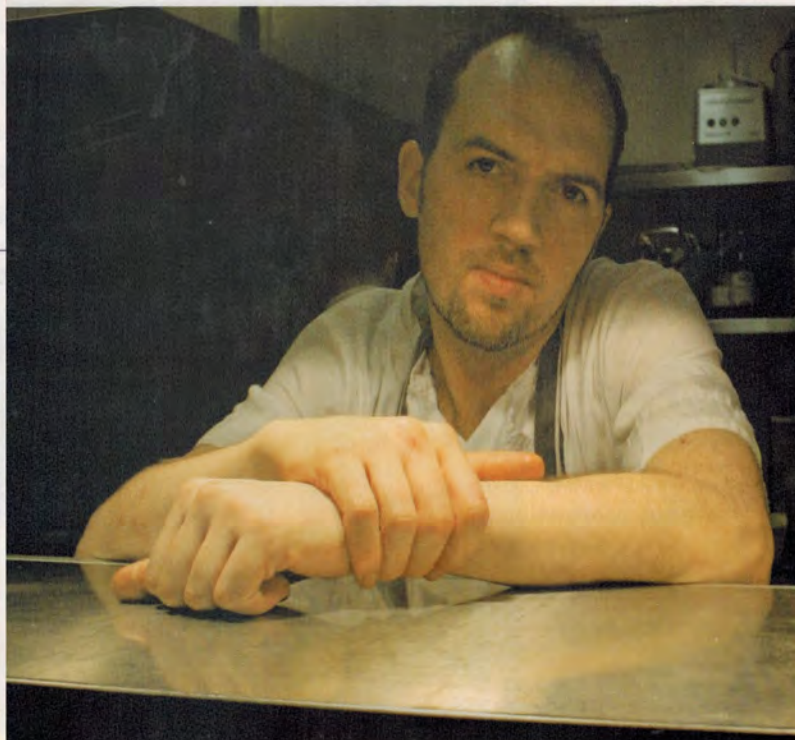


CAPITAL LIFE

THE INTELLIGENT GUIDE TO LIFE IN THE CITY THIS MONTH

EDITOR'S CHOICE

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He's young, irreverent and obsessed with winning a Michelin star...

Is Dylan McGrath the most exciting chef in Ireland?

Read Trevor White's review of Mint on page 100

Mint
47 Ranelagh Village
Dublin 6
497 8855

I was the first person to champion Dylan McGrath in this country. This is no reflection on my scouting abilities. Last summer he rang up to boast about his cooking. I am, he said, the most exciting thing happening in an Irish kitchen right now. McGrath had just taken the reins at Mint, a small, rather poky restaurant in Ranelagh that was previously home to Oliver Dunne.

McGrath, who is fascinated – as all Irish chefs are – by Conrad Gallagher, has an intense, slightly awkward manner. He is not a people person in the tradition of, say, Derry Clarke or Ross Lewis. However, he is every bit

as talented, and Mint has since become the most fashionable address in culinary Dublin. None of this meant anything to the grey suits in Michelin. They decided not to reward Mint in the new edition of their increasingly irrelevant guidebook (“Rubbish,” counters McGrath. “It’s far too early for Mint to win a star.”)

I took clients to Mint for dinner last night. We spent more than their annual advertising budget on a truly sublime dinner for three people. The tasting menu is the only way to go here – everything is so expensive that you might as well leave feeling like a pot-bellied pig. On the seven-course menu (€105) the

highlights are the foie gras and quince ballotine with Sauternes jelly and pain d’épices, and the cutlet (note: not plural) with caramelised garlic purée, red onion pomme purée, minced lamb and buckler sorrel salad. Have a glass of wine to match each dish for another fifty quid, and to hell with the expense. The portions are small, the prices are huge, the service is all very frou-frou, an ‘optional’ 12.5% service charge will be added to your bill, and a cup of coffee will set you back another €6.50. It’s the 50 cents that really got me. Still, most of the customers looked old, rich and determined to spend it all.