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Sangita Patel

HOW TORONTO'S OWN **RISE** STAR ENGINEERED HER LIFELONG DREAMS TO FRUITION **p. 32**

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FOLLOW YOUR FERVOUR

At the LG Kitchen event, chef Chuck Hughes and interior designer Jane Lockhart chopped it up about their lives, influences and how their childhood hobbies became their passions

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Interviewed By Bianca Ricci

Chuck Hughes and Jane Lockhart are both titans of their respective industries. Hughes is a chef, television personality and restaurateur, as well as the executive chef and co-owner of two Montreal restaurants, Garde Manger and Le Bremner. Hughes spends lots of time travelling, both personally and for his numerous television shows, including *Chuck's Week Off*, *Chuck & Danny's Road Trip*, *Chuck Eats The Street*, and *Chuck's World*. Similarly, Lockhart is the principal designer of the firm she founded, Jane Lockhart Interior Design. An award-winning designer and TV personality, from hosting and writing her hit show, *Colour Confidential*, to appearing regularly on *The Marilyn Denis Show* on CTV, Jane Lockhart is Canada's colour and design expert. As masters of their craft, Hughes and Lockhart require the best tools at their disposal, and for both of them, these are appliances from LG. *City Life* had the pleasure of speaking to Hughes and Lockhart at the LG-sponsored event LG Kitchen.

Having started as a busboy at 17, Hughes has always had a passion for cooking. This fervour developed from spending exorbitant amounts of time in the kitchen as a young child. Seeing his potential and his love of food, Hughes's mother encouraged him to become a chef. "I just loved cooking and it's something that I've been doing since I was really young, but I never thought it could be a job," says Hughes. "You know, I loved it so much, it was so much fun, I'm like, 'Really? You can get paid to do this?'"

What pushed Hughes further into exploring this occupation was an encounter he witnessed involving an executive chef at the restaurant where he worked. "The general manager was coming to talk to the chef and he came up, and this guy is the big boss of the hotel pretty much and he goes, 'Excuse me chef, permission to speak?' And I'm like wow, wow, wow.... Wait a minute, this guy's asking the chef if *he* can talk? The big boss is asking *this* guy?" The respect and admiration the hotel boss showed to the chef convinced Hughes. Not only would he be working at something he adored, he would also receive great respect for it.

Now a successful and well-known chef, Hughes finds himself exploring a new side to food: cooking for his two children. Just as he did with his mother while



PHOTO BY ROBIN GARTNER



Chef Chuck Hughes's favourite place is wherever the food is. Whether it be cooking or spending time with his kids, having and making food is the basis to many of his greatest memories

growing up, Hughes's children hang out in the kitchen with him, learning how to cook. "I haven't peeled a carrot in a year because my three-year-old is like, 'Oh my God, can I peel the carrots?' and I'm like 'Yes! Finally!'"

Since he spends so much time in the kitchen with his children, Hughes's favourite two appliances are his LG Fridge and ProBake oven. The fridge is opened "every five seconds," as his three-year-old and one-year-old are constantly on the prowl for snacks and milk. Having a durable, quality product means not having to worry about wear and tear. Hughes and his son love baking cookies, scones and biscuits and watching them rise. He also uses the convection oven with the back heating element to work on dishes for his restaurants. And he uses the LG Styler frequently to keep his aprons and hockey equipment nice and fresh. "It's like a little closet that steams," Hughes says.

Hughes wants his kids to learn the important life skill of cooking and he encourages all home cooks to do the same. "I'm just focusing on trying to make food fun and learn about it and be

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involved... I've noticed every time [my son] cooks with me, anything, you know, even if it's something that he doesn't really like, he's going to try it. Even if it's something he wouldn't really gravitate to naturally — because he made it with me, he's going to at least try it and have some interest," Hughes says.

Hughes's favourite fast food is French fries — which he has a tattoo of — and before his children were born, he ate a lot of takeout for dinner, specifically pizza, as he was always busy working at the two restaurants. Once Hughes had children, though, he had to find a balance between shooting his shows, working in the restaurants, and spending time with his family. "Ever since I had the kids it's become really important for me to cook at home and have great equipment and be well set up, you know, to have fun," Hughes says. "That's the thing that home cooks really realize, you know? Get yourself set up properly and don't make it a task, don't make it a chore."

Hughes encourages everyone to find the joy in cooking, especially people with children. "Cooking should be fun

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— everybody loves it — but if you have kids it's part of your reality. Instead of making it a chore, I always try to make it fun or have some sort of activity that revolves around it, whether it's choosing the stuff at the market, you know, always having a little angle helps."

Even if you don't have kids, to Hughes cooking is an important life skill: "I think in the end you give people skills to cook minimal, really simple stuff, and you impact their lives greatly, in the sense that they can cook for themselves and make better choices."

For Hughes, food is not just about the food itself, but also the memories and experience attached to it. Some of Hughes's most memorable meals include oysters freshly caught at sea, fermented shark and eating street food made by a local woman in her eighties. "When it puts you in context that becomes something amazing; even [if] the bite wasn't so good, the story behind it makes it pretty unique," Hughes relates. These types of memories are what makes food all worth it for Hughes.

Lockhart, like Hughes, found her passion when she was a young child. While others were playing with their dollhouses, Lockhart was designing, building and furnishing hers.

Lockhart graduated as an award-winning student from Ryerson University and went on to launch Jane Lockhart Interior Design, a brand that continues to grow 20 years after its inception. Lockhart's keen eye for detail and refined taste made her one of the most prominent interior designers in North America.

Appearing on numerous shows and writing articles on design, Lockhart has made a name for herself as an industry giant. Her tenacity and fervour for design show prominently in all of her work. In the same way that chefs love their ingredients, Lockhart loves the esthetics and balance of decorated interiors.

Part of the reason Lockhart favours LG is the sleek, modern look of its products. The black stainless steel has a "designer's edge" that fits with Lockhart's preferred design motif; this is why she has an LG Fridge in her own home.

Lockhart's design process is extremely client-focused. "I'm a bit of

Interior designer Jane Lockhart has been decorating since she was a child. Now an award-winning designer, for her playing house means making homes look good



a design nerd... When someone says, 'I like this' or 'I like that,' I ask them, 'Tell me what your happy place is' [and] tell me how you want it to feel.' We don't tend to go to books or magazines for inspiration — maybe reading books, but not visual books. We try to generate it directly from the clients and what they see by capturing their experience and then making it three-dimensional," Lockhart explains.

Lockhart's emphasis on the client is part of the reason she has seen so much success. She's able to get to the foundation of what a person wants, even if they cannot verbalize what that is. "A lot of people... they can't articulate those ideas. So part of our job is to get them to find ways: maybe they have vacation pictures, or they have pictures of things that they love. We like to look at those, we like to look at their pictures that they've collected so we can understand them," Lockhart says.

Being incredibly research-oriented is what Lockhart believes makes her different from other interior designers. Lockhart takes the time to understand and develop every minute detail to give the customer what they want. Perhaps most importantly, she always approaches every client with an open mind. "We need to be open to ideas. I don't mind a picky client. People go, 'It's awful when they're picky.' It's not. It's amazing. Because you know ... it makes the process much easier in some ways, because they tell you if it works or

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 ”

— Jane Lockhart

if it doesn't work. But at the same time we need to try stuff. And we like them to push us, you know, [to] not do the same old thing. Our work is generally not consistent. It's very different from every other job because we try to find that essence that is the client," Lockhart says.

Her willingness to work with every client, regardless of circumstance, shows that Lockhart is always up to the challenge. Her expertise shows in the way she communicates with clients, especially ones who want more control. "Like all consulting jobs, you're only as good as the client will let you be. So our job is to share it with the client and let them say, 'I like it' or 'I don't.' And you know, in the end, sometimes the job is better because the client did have good ideas ... We go in, but take their ideas with us as well, so it's kind of a combination."

For both Hughes and Lockhart, the end result — the client's satisfaction — is of paramount importance. Whether it is esthetically pleasing, delicious food, or a visually harmonious living area, both Hughes and Lockhart specialize in giving the customer the best experience possible. Even in their widely subjective fields, Hughes and Lockhart have brought their childhood passions to life, teaching and encouraging others along the way.

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