The *GQ* Lifestyle Guru

**This month:** Culinary coaching at Le Cordon Bleu, London

**Steering you towards the sharp end:** *GQ*’s bon vivant sets down his knife and fork and crosses the great divide to don chef’s whites

In the dog-eat-chien world of dating, or just entertaining friends and family, it’s not what you hunt and gather, it’s what you do with it that counts. Thankfully I’m in the hands of a bona fide master chef: Eric Bédiat, who has worked under Michel Roux at the three-Michelin-starred Waterside Inn in Bray, Berkshire, and Guy Martin at the similarly glittering Le Grand Vefour in Paris, and now teaches at Le Cordon Bleu cookery school in London. “When we do gourmet courses we certainly see quite a few men coming to learn to cook,” says Bédiat. “From a female point of view, it’s always attractive…”

Founded in Paris in 1895, Le Cordon Bleu (“the blue ribbon”) has since become, literally, a byword for haute cuisine – it’s in the dictionary in lower case. Owned by André Cointreau of the Cointreau and Rémy Martin families, Le Cordon Bleu’s 40 schools in 20 countries worldwide bring no fewer than 20,000 students up to snuff each year. The shiny new state-of-the-culinary-arts London flagship on Bloomsbury Square also boasts a Café Le Cordon Bleu – the first-ever restaurant in Europe to bear its name – and reflects the city’s status as a gourmet capital.

“Because Le Cordon Bleu is an international school, we create a teaching environment which is very rich,” explains Bédiat.

**Break a few eggs**

As well as being a perfect supper à deux, a good omelette is the mark of a pro – which is why it was the first thing Roux asked Bédiat to cook when he started at the Waterside. “The simplest things are always the hardest to do and that’s how you recognise a professional chef,” he says. “An omelette doesn’t have many ingredients, but is technically very challenging.” The variation he shows me is an omelette Savoyarde (visit [GQ.com for recipe](https://www.gq.com)), which hails from his native region of Haute-Savoie: “Once you’ve made 1,000, then you might get it perfect; if you get it perfect then you have to teach someone else.”

**Cook up a storm**

For a deceptively simple show stopper, Bédiat recommends **tournedos de boeuf sauté et glacé**, asperge verte et sauce au Marsala (sautéed beef fillet, green asparagus and a Marsala wine sauce). “Beef is a man’s dish, and British asparagus is underrated. The glaze makes it a little bit fancy.” The secret to perfect steak is its provenance. “Start from the beginning: quality ingredients.” That and letting it rest for as long as you cook it. “What you’re looking for is a juicy piece of meat,” he says.

**Home schooling**

Grand Diplôme aside, there are a couple of other things an aspiring chef needs: “A good set of pans – here we use All-Clad. Another one would be knives – we use Wüsthof. There’s nothing worse than having one knife for everything. Each knife should be used for its purpose so it lasts.” Indeed, Le Cordon Bleu’s first course is how to use and maintain knives – or in the Lifestyle Guru’s case, how to put an apron on. But what does a fully qualified master chef cook **chez lui**? “My wife is a chef, too, a very high-level one. At home, she is in charge.”

Courses start from £99. cordonbleu.edu

---

**Raising the steaks**

**Tournedos de boeuf sauté et glacé, asperge verte et sauce au Marsala**

**Series 2**

**Ingredients**

- For the steaks:
  - 2 x 180g beef fillet steaks
  - 10ml vegetable oil
- For the sauce:
  - 100ml white wine vinegar
  - 50g Marsala wine
  - 50g brown sugar
  - 300ml beef stock
  - 20ml hazelnut oil

**Step one:** De-stalk the asparagus, Blanch the tips and boil the rest. Purée, finish with the cream and season to taste.

**Step two:** Combine the white wine vineger, Marsala wine and brown sugar in a saucenpan. Reduce to a thick syrup.

**Step three:** Pan fry the steaks in oil. Deglaze the pan with the stock, reduce to a quarter and add the syrup.

**Step four:** Leave the steaks to rest, then coat with some of the sauce (whisk the hazelnut oil into the rest).

**Step five:** Spoon the purée onto the plate with asparagus tips. Drizzle sauce over steak and sprinkle with flaked hazelnuts.