

Michel Roux Jnr – Article from the Sunday Times

My parents, Monique and Albert, arrived in England from Paris in 1959 – the year before I was born – because my father was employed as private chef to Peter and Zara Cazalet, who were racehorse trainers to the Queen Mother. They had an estate in Kent, Fairlawne, with huge stables and wonderful green lawns.

My first school was in the village, at the top of the hill. I didn't speak any English, so it was difficult for me, but the headmistress, Ettie, a lovely lady, took me under her wing. I enjoyed school, but I'd come home and my parents, being very French, would say, "What did you have for lunch?" Invariably it was meat, gravy and potatoes.

A story my parents recount with joy is when I escaped from my playpen under the kitchen table at Fairlawne one day and was crawling down the corridor. The Queen Mother grabbed me, brought me back to the kitchen and said, "Chef, I think you may have lost something."

Then in 1967 my father decided to open his own restaurant with my uncle, Michel. We moved to Tooting in south London, but the city was scary and I didn't see much of my father. I didn't understand why my parents had taken away my happiness. But not for long – I grew into it and consider myself a Londoner now.

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