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## **Award-winning Filini welcomes new executive chef**

Filini, the triple award-winning restaurant at the Radisson SAS Hotel, Birmingham has a new executive chef - Savoy-trained Jonathan Parnell.

Coventry-born Jonathan takes up the apron from Chris Duffy, who is leaving to become executive chef at the new Radisson Blu Resort in Split on Croatia's Adriatic Coast.

Chris has headed up the Filini kitchen in Birmingham since the hotel opened in January 2006 and his contemporary, Italian inspired cuisine has earned the restaurant a popular following and three awards. Two years ago, it was voted one of the UK's top ten places to eat pasta by *The Times* newspaper and later that year was presented with a Gold Standard Italian Restaurant Award 2007 by the Pizza, Pasta and Italian Food Association for its "outstanding" authentic cuisine and dining experience. It won the same accolade again last year.

During his tenure, the restaurant was made the international hospitality group's European "Centre of Excellence" – being singled out as the restaurant to emulate for Radisson SAS hotels opening across the Continent.

Glaswegian Chris, 35, is looking forward to his new job, which he starts in July – but says he will be sorry to leave Birmingham.

"I've had a wonderful time here and learned so much. It has been a great experience to open a new restaurant in a brand new hotel and see it flourish and win awards. I've been lucky to have had a fabulous team to work with – and it's partly thanks to them that the Filini brand is now a success throughout Europe."

To ensure the restaurant's high standards are maintained, Jonathan is working closely with Chris before taking over officially at the beginning of July. He has been involved in creating Filini's new menu, which is launched later this month.

"I'm really excited about joining Filini – it has a brilliant reputation for serving top quality food prepared imaginatively yet simply," says Jonathan. "Being a Midlands lad, I'm also delighted to be working in Birmingham, which is now the UK's regional foodie capital."

After leaving school, Jonathan studied catering at Henley College, Coventry. During his studies he spent three months at a five-star hotel in Germany on work experience.

He spent two years at The Savoy Hotel in London, being promoted from third commis chef to junior sous chef – and meeting the late Princess of Wales when she came in for dinner one evening – and then worked in increasingly senior roles at several hotels and restaurants across the country. In 2002, he was appointed head chef at the new and exclusive Eden Restaurant and Bar in Coventry city centre, where he designed the kitchen, created the menu and recruited the staff. The venue was short-listed for Best Restaurant in the 2004 Godiva Awards.

Aged 35, Jonathan is married to Dawn, an NVQ assessor in the hospitality trade, and has three children aged between one and 14. When not in the kitchen, he enjoys mountain biking and watching Coventry City FC. His food heroes are Gordon Ramsay, Rick Stein and Chris Duffy.

Kathrine Ohm Thomas, general manager of the Radisson SAS Hotel, Birmingham says: “We are very sorry to say goodbye to Chris, whose hard work and passion for food has made Filini the restaurant it is today, but we are also delighted to welcome Jonathan who I am sure will follow in Chris’s footsteps and maintain Filini’s first-class standards and excellent reputation.”

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