

Case in Point

The Jerk Pan Restaurant

Flavour of the Caribbean in Southsea

Chronic ill-health was no bar to an enterprising 'mid-lifer' who has spiced up the Hampshire restaurant scene, with a side dish of support from Business Link.

Brought up with five siblings in South London by his Jamaican-born mother, 47-year-old Desmond Clarke earned a living promoting music and DJ-ing at clubs and private parties – interspersed with periods of unemployment and taking odd jobs.

In 2005, as his health deteriorated and one of his kidneys failed, he visited a friend in Portsmouth and was persuaded to relocate and leave London, where he had lost close friends to gun and knife crime.

Although having to go to hospital three times a week for dialysis, Desmond quickly settled into his new home. The only drawback was the dearth of Caribbean food.

He said: 'South London is saturated with Caribbean restaurants, but there was nowhere in Portsmouth. Caribbean food is a sleeping giant, and I saw a huge gap in the market.'

The Business Link service is available locally and provides the information, advice and support you need to start, maintain and to grow a business.

For more information call 0845 600 9 006 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast



Desmond Clarke and Levi Roots

In 2007 he started a catering course at Portsmouth's Highbury College. Two years on, having gained an NVQ Level 2, he heard of a restaurant that was closing and decided to seize the opportunity.

He said: 'I had a dream and big ambitions. The catering course gave me great confidence but I needed help on the business side so a friend recommended Business Link.'

Adviser Simon Paine helped Desmond write his business plan and has provided valuable one-to-one intensive coaching.



Case in Point

The Jerk Pan Restaurant

'Simon helped me focus on what I can do and where it can go – Portsmouth, Southampton, perhaps the whole south east,' said Desmond.

Alongside the practical help from Business Link, Desmond had financial support from his mother, who gave him the deposit for the lease and money to buy a cooker and kitchen equipment.

In early October 2009 Desmond and his partner Corrine opened The Jerk Pan in Southsea, serving Caribbean-Jamaican food.

Dragons' Den success Levi Roots visited Portsmouth recently and dished up some good advice for Desmond, 'Make sure you give your customers a great experience so they keep coming back for more! You are the flagship and it is about the food, but the only thing that can stop you being successful is you.'



Simon Paine, Business Link Adviser

This was a great endorsement from the man, the brand and phenomenon, Levi Roots .

Desmond adds, 'The customers we have seen, love my food and the Caribbean flavour is spicing up the British culture in Portsmouth. Even better, Mum is so proud.'

Company Overview:

Established: October 2009

Sector: Restaurant

Employees: 4

www.thejerkpan.co.uk

Location: Southsea, Portsmouth

The Business Link service is available locally and provides the information, advice and support you need to start, maintain and to grow a business.

For more information call 0845 600 9 006 or visit www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast