RHCH nurse Julie Capper stars on BBC One show Masterchef

A ROYAL Hampshire County Hospital nurse was unable to realise her dream of winning Masterchef – but she created plenty of memories during her run to the BBC One show’s knockout week.

Julie Capper, who is 51 and lives in Chandler’s Ford, made it through two rounds to reach knockout week of the BBC1 show, which saw 14 amateur chefs fight it out for a place in the semi-finals.

She was among the first group to participate in the first challenge, which saw the cooks given 90 minutes to cook a dish inspired by their childhood or a family favourite.

Julie made pan-fried pheasant, with a pheasant and quail’s egg Scotch egg, stuffed savoy cabbage and celeriac cream with a cider and mustard sauce. The dish was inspired by her 94-year-old grandfather, who taught her how to prepare pheasant.

The judges were unable to fault the way Julie’s food tasted, saying that she had cooked the pheasant well, but felt that her presentation fell a little below the mark, meaning she was one of three chefs to exit the competition at the end of the challenge.

Julie said: “It was disappointing because I would have liked to have gone further, but I went into the competition to enjoy the experience rather than win the competition.

“It was an absolutely fantastic experience and I made a lot of new friends. It’s a memory that will stay with me forever and a day, and it made me challenge myself.

“Doing something with my cooking has always been on my bucket list, so I have ticked that off.

“It was really nice to hear the judges say that they enjoyed my food. I did try to refine my presentation, but I would prefer people to say they enjoy the taste than the way a plate looks.”

She may have wowed the judges with her cookery skills, but Julie has no plans to leave nursing behind and embark on a career in the restaurant business.

“Cooking is my hobby, but it is not something that I want to do full-time, because I really enjoy nursing,” she explained.

“It would be good to incorporate cooking into my nursing though and I am in touch with Tommy Whitelaw, the man behind Tommy on Tour, with a view to doing some cooking for patients with dementia.”

ENDS

Photo: I’m afraid we don’t have any photos from the show, but the BBC press office should be able to provide some.
Notes to Editors

1. Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust provides hospital services to a population of approximately 600,000 people in Hampshire and parts of West Berkshire.
2. HHFT has around 5,500 staff and a turnover of £345.6 million a year.
3. HHFT delivers one hospital service across multiple locations including its own hospitals, Andover War Memorial Hospital, Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital and Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester. It also provides outpatient and assessment services from Bordon and Alton community hospitals.
4. As a Foundation Trust, HHFT is accountable to the local community through a system of local ownership with members and elected governors. HHFT has around 18,000 staff and public members. Foundation Trusts are free from central government control and can reinvest any surplus to develop clinical services. They are authorised and regulated by Monitor, an independent regulator.
5. Tommy on Tour is a blog written by Tommy Whitelaw about his mother’s battle with dementia - http://tommy-on-tour-2011.blogspot.co.uk/

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