

C-CARE SKILLS FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME CASE STUDY  
**Lily Benbow – Noble Prawn**



The launch of a Suffolk based, Private Chef Business, “Noble Prawn”, has seen Lily Benbow’s lifelong dream become a reality. The business has been something of an “overnight” success, albeit her passion for food can be traced back to her childhood days in Southern Ireland.

Lily says she has “cooked all her life”, starting with family events in Ireland, before graduating from Dublin’s Catering College. Lily then embarked on her catering career, working in Hotels and Private Dining rooms, including invaluable front of house experience in Kensington and the House of Commons. She recently returned to her studies, graduating from the, much acclaimed, Ballymaloe Cookery School in Ireland, achieving “Highly Commended” status.

At every opportunity she has cooked including in Tuscany and Abruzzo both of which she described as “Heavenly”. She took the step of starting her own business last year, based in Framlingham and working from a local production kitchen, taking advantage of the local produce. Lily explained “I’m in pure heaven with the amazing abundance of fabulous ingredients on my doorstep”.

Whilst, in home, private dining, is a key part of her business, she has been surprised at the variety of catering work she has taken on. This has included catering on Yachts, in Holiday homes, Business lunches, Picnics on boats and “many things I didn’t anticipate”.

It is perhaps for her “Feasts” that she is gaining something of a reputation. Lily confirms every aspect of the evening with the host and works with the client and hire companies to dress tables to match the theme of the dining. She finishes the food preparation in your home and makes sure you have an unrivalled dining experience. As she says, “nothing is too much trouble”.

Lily attended workshops with Business Start-up agency, Menta on the C-Care skills for self-employment programme, describing their support as “perfectly pitched” for the start of her journey”. She was also thrilled that Menta’s networking events have introduced her to a local Photographer and Wine Buyer. Lily works with two reputable wine merchants (TheFramWineshop & How2enjoywine.com) pairing her menus with wines to ensure you have the perfect dining experience.

When asked about finally realising her dream of becoming a private chef, Lily said “it’s been a fantastic journey and I am very excited to see how things develop”. As to the secret of her wonderful food, her advice to up and coming chefs would be to simply,

“cook with your heart and the very best local sustainable ingredients. It’s teamwork from the start with producers and farmers”.

If you would like to experience one of Lily’s dining events, she can be contacted at **www.nobleprawn.com** or if you would like to work with her, drop her a private message.

For further details, please visit <https://store.menta.org.uk/collections/training/start-up>

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