

Chad Welch

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TO follow the recipe of the life of South Wales restaurateur turned author Colin Pressdee is to take a journey.

A food writer and broadcaster, but now a published author of fiction, a lot of the restaurant experience that shapes Colin's work has stemmed from his roots in Swansea.

Titles such as the Food Wales Eating Out Guide, and the London Oyster Guide have given Colin his name as a food writer — but his fiction works, about bloodsucking vampires and devils, are vastly different.

Gower-raised Colin used to run a the Drangway restaurant on Wind Street in Swansea during the 1970s and 1980s.

He also had Barrows, later called Peppers, in Newton Road, Mumbles, back at that time.

Now living in London, he says he has always kept his links with South Wales.

And that can certainly be seen in his fiction, which he writes under the name C D Pressdee.

Having grown up living on the Gower peninsula, Colin fished its rivers, its coastline, and gained a passionate appreciation of the natural surroundings.

But, working in the restaurant business has taken Colin further afield, from the mountains of Yemen to cosmopolitan cities across the globe.

His first published work of fiction, 2013's Reflections of a Vampire, reflects that.

"It is based in South Wales, then goes on a travelogue and ends up back in South Wales," he says.

REAL LIVES

"The unique thing about this is that in all vampire stories, with the exception of Dracula, the vampires suddenly appear, but here there's a genesis of the vampires.

"I'm fascinated in the natural blood suckers — some of those in the book are true stories from my time on the river."

The book tells the story of Uri Greenburg, brought up in a privileged family on a wealthy estate in the Welsh hills.

Joined by his closest friend Matt, the duo ups sticks from Wales to go on an expedition to the Equatorial rainforests.

Following an accident and a bizarre series of events they are transformed into vampires and begin their nocturnal existence.

Travelling for forty years, the undead friends eventually return to Britain at the start of the swinging sixties — a time of liberation — but are trapped in a situation from which they cannot break free.

Despite only becoming noticed for his fiction in the last two years, prose writing is nothing new for Colin.

In fact, he began writing his latest book, Devil's Recipe, 10 years ago.

"I had been writing fiction, but to actually get it done and finished and published is hard," he says.

"One now has the lifeline of Amazon and Kindle, which is very liberating for

writers. "I know a lot of people who have done it that way."

Devil's Recipe, published this year delves into Colin's many experiences in the restaurant business.

Filled with lively characters — some sincere and others dishonest — it will tickle the taste buds of a wide audience, particularly those involved in the food industry.

Published in print and e-book, Devil's Recipe first takes the reader to London in the early 1990s.

Foodie Paul Curzon and his friend Tony hear an old hotel in a small Welsh village is up for sale.

Tony brings in his contacts, including the financial backing of the charismatic Lady Fiona Snaples, but Paul is to lead the business and attempts to develop the hotel into a top food destination.

As things progress, Paul meets some seemingly friendly locals that alert him to some local legends, ones that turn the people in the area into twisted, envious evil beings.

But is the warning too late, or will the business descend into failure as struggles, ambitions, and anxieties take hold?

With the book set in Wales, Colin was also keen to embody a tale from Swansea folklore — that of the Swansea Devil.

This tells the story of the rebuilding of St Mary's Church, the tendering of which was contested between two local architects.

Aggrieved at losing the contract, one architect built opposite a statue of a devil.

When St Mary's was bombed in the war, the devil stayed standing and laughing.

● Devil's Recipe is available from Amazon.

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