



ABOVE: Jo and Chris Coubrough in the The Crown at East Rudham, one of the five businesses they own.

# Living with the kings of the kitchen

They might not even see their husbands on Valentine's Day, let alone get whisked out for a romantic meal. **Nancy Wedge** speaks to three wives of top Norfolk chefs.

**Y**ou might expect that being married to a top chef would mean gourmet meals on tap and never having to go near the kitchen again, but the reality is often rather different.

While many couples will be celebrating with a candlelit dinner a deux on February 14, wives of chefs know that their husband's fine cooking will be enjoyed by a restaurant full of diners and that he probably won't get home until the small hours.

Whether they work with them or spend much of their time without them, partners of chefs have to be understanding about their husband's other big passion: Cooking.

An internet search reveals that many wives and girlfriends are supporting each other via blogs, forums and websites, such as *desperatechefwives*, *marriedtoachef* and *chefwags!*

While their husbands may be "married to the job", there are many plusses to living with a king of the kitchen, say some of Norfolk's chefs' wives.

## *Jo Coubrough*

Jo, 35, has recently started brewing her own beer, JoC Ales Norfolk Kiwi. She is married to Chris Coubrough, 39, who owns Flying Kiwi Inns, five gastro pubs/hotels in Norfolk, where Jo's beer is the best-seller. Chris proposed to Jo on

the only Valentine's Day the couple have ever spent together.

"I met Chris at The Swan in Southwold 15 years ago when I was waitressing my way through teacher training college and he was working in the kitchen. After qualifying, I taught at a Cambridgeshire school for two years while Chris worked in London. We use to have this answer-phone relationship, as we were never free at the same time to speak!

"It was a very exciting time when we bought our first pub, The Crown Hotel in Wells. We worked all hours, but were doing it together. The following year, we had Lily (now aged six) and although it was amazing to be a mother, it was hard work and could be quite lonely.