

**Marion Kane:**

I love the job I do because it's a fix for me. It makes me high. I'm high right now.

**Lynn Crawford:**

(laughs)

**Marion Kane:**

I don't drink....

**Lynn Crawford:**

There we go.

**Marion Kane:**

...so I have to get high somehow.

*Theme Music*

### Introduction

**Marion Kane:**

Chef Lynn Crawford and I are longtime friends. She's kind, quick to laugh, and down to earth in spite of being one of the biggest names in Canadian cooking. I'm Marion Kane, Food Sleuth, and welcome to "Sittin' in the Kitchen". Lynn Crawford became a celebrity chef through years of determined effort. She worked her way up to Executive Chef at the Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto then in New York. Her TV career began with *Restaurant Makeover* followed by *Iron Chef America*, *Top Chef Masters*, *Chopped Canada*, and her own series *Pitchin' In*. She has also written several cookbooks. We spoke at her Toronto restaurant Ruby Watchco.

*Theme Music*

### Interview

**Marion Kane:**

I was hoping the baby would be here.

**Lynn Crawford:**

We're talking about Addie Pepper here. My little *sous-chef*. She's almost big enough that she could peel a carrot or an apple but not really.

**Marion Kane:**

Does she like olives?

**Lynn Crawford:**

She loves olives. We did a little caper pan sauce with olives and fresh dill and she ate it. She loved it.

**Marion Kane:**

That's the sign of a good palate.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Let's hope so.

**Marion Kane:**

I loved olives when I was little and...

**Lynn Crawford:**

Did you?

**Marion Kane:**

...I called them "olibes".

**Lynn Crawford:**

"Olibes" (laughs). I love it. I love it.

**Marion Kane:**

So Lynn, we're sitting at Ruby Watchco, your restaurant.

**Lynn Crawford:**

It's a treat having you here.

**Marion Kane:**

How long have we known each other?

**Lynn Crawford:**

25 years. Is that possible?

**Marion Kane:**

It's exactly right.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Is it?

**Marion Kane:**

According to my calculations. I asked my daughter Ruthie who you taught to play pool one evening. We went out with a bunch of chefs.

**Lynn Crawford:**

I remember that fun evening like it was yesterday. I really do.

**Marion Kane:**

When did you get your love of cooking and the idea of being a chef? Was it in your family history?

**Lynn Crawford:**

My father came home from work first and then my mom and it was dad who made it fun. He made cooking so much fun and he loved it himself. He did more cooking than my mother did. We would get home after school and it would be like all hands on deck, let's go. If it was fire up the barbecue which he

loved to do or if it was roasts, the Crawfords were all butchers right? He was a butcher when he immigrated to Canada.

**Marion Kane:**

From Scotland?

**Lynn Crawford:**

From Scotland. So roasts were always such a big thing. Very much, you know, meat eaters but meat and potatoes.

**Marion Kane:**

But meat and potatoes are very good, especially your recipe for Mince and Tatties.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Did you cook up the Mince and Tatties? Did you? Did you try it?

**Marion Kane:**

I did.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Ha ha!

**Marion Kane:**

And I was thinking good thoughts about you.

**Lynn Crawford:**

See? That's a good one. That's a Crawford staple. I'd eat that right now, I'm so hungry.

**Marion Kane:**

I lived in Scotland for a year and I know Mince and Tatties but you describe it Lynn.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Basically if you say Shepherd's Pie it's really just that. It's like the ground beef and those peas and onions and carrots in there and it's like a stew. It's like a ground beef stew but it's thickened and it's just rich gravy and you pour that over a volcano of mashed potatoes. That's what we would do. We would pile the potatoes up in a cone shape like a volcano and then you put your fork in and you just indent the top of the mound of the potatoes and then you pour that mince stew all over it. It was the best.

**Marion Kane:**

Your recipe comes from *At Home with Lynn Crawford*.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Simple, simple.

**Marion Kane:**

I love that book. I made a recipe or two from your new book *Farm to Chef* and the favourite of mine is Pear and Blue Cheese Salad with a Tamarind Vinaigrette. That recipe — Tamarind Vinaigrette — is a winner. Where did you get it?

**Lynn Crawford:**

Isn't that amazing? You know what? Every single recipe that was made in *Farm to Chef* I created at the spur of the moment. I did. I was inspired by the ingredients and for Fall it was pears and what I like to eat with pears ... I love pears in salad in the Fall ... and it was going through the ingredients that I had and tamarind is such an incredible pod isn't it? It's like this seed but this fruit. When I lived in Nevis in the Caribbean there was a huge tamarind tree. It must have had a wing span of like 50 feet and it was at the corner of an intersection in Nevis, on the island of Nevis.

**Marion Kane:**

Were you a chef in Nevis?

**Lynn Crawford:**

Yeah, at the Four Seasons. And the pods used to fall and they would all fall onto the road so all of the cars that went through the intersection would squish the tamarind pods and it would be like this sticky tacky but the smell of the tamarind was so divine. It's tart but it's sweet. In a vinaigrette it's divine with pears. That's a good salad.

**Marion Kane:**

Lynn you've described it perfectly. I was trying to find the words in my head for tamarind — tarts, sweet, dates come to mind. I've had it in Pad Thai. It's an ingredient in Pad Thai but I've never thought of using it in a vinaigrette. I'm going to use it from now on.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Thank you so much. See? Even though we've known each other for what, 25 years, we're still learning from one another and that's what I love about this wonderful world of food.

**Marion Kane:**

Sharing and bonding and connection and love. Now we get on to your TV career. That started with *Restaurant Makeover*?

**Lynn Crawford:**

I think that's like, honestly 15 or 15 years ago now. Believe it or not.

**Marion Kane:**

I loved your show *Pitchin' In* which followed and I have memories of these shows. You're treading grapes with some monks in a vineyard.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Just your average day in a vineyard crushing grapes with a couple of monks. So, two monks and a chef walk into a vineyard...

**Marion Kane:**

(laughs).

**Lynn Crawford:**

It was a good laugh. Such great experiences on that show.

**Marion Kane:**

You got attacked by goats on one occasion.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Yes. In fact I still haven't gotten over that (laughs). But you know, putting yourself in the shoes of a farmer or a fisherman, you know we take a lot for granted. I think what that show did was really showcase the hard work and passion and love that the farmers, growers, ranchers and fishermen... what they do every day and how hard and diligent they work to give us great products to cook with. I mean, changed my life.

**Marion Kane:**

It's a beautiful show. Now my favourite show on Food Network that I'm addicted to is Chopped.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Is it? Really? Love it.

**Marion Kane:**

Yes.

**Lynn Crawford:**

I love it too. I enjoy watching it very very much.

**Marion Kane:**

Both the American and the Canadian one on which you're a regular judge. I sometimes fantasize that I'm on Chopped.

**Lynn Crawford:**

(laughs). Judging or competing?

**Marion Kane:**

Competing. I go to my fridge and look at the ingredients therein and I make a meal out of them but they're fairly compatible ingredients. How does it feel to chop someone?

**Lynn Crawford:**

Listen, I often have comments about how tough I am on that show and I think there's a lot to be said with the power of editing that show (laughs) but I think honestly it's hard and ultimately it's a difficult thing to say to somebody, "I'm sorry. Your dish isn't good enough. You're going to have to go home now. That's the end of your run here." Nobody wants to say that to anybody.

**Marion Kane:**

I feel it's a gentle show. The people who get chopped don't get chopped nastily *à la* Gordon Ramsay.

**Lynn Crawford:**

"You suck!" Could you imagine saying that? "That's it, you're out. That was disgusting".

**Marion Kane:**

I find him brutal and abusive actually. I once did a story about working on the line in restaurants (laughs)

and one chef had me cleaning squid. He had a grudge against me I think and I don't look good in a chef's hat.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Fashion is everything right Marion, in the kitchen? That's awesome.

**Marion Kane:**

I wore the wrong shoes. I wore purple boots with high heels. So you and I have another venture in common — The Kitchen Sisters series of gala dinners that you and other female chefs cooked for four occasions and raised \$40,000.00 for a homeless shelter called Sistering and they now have a new kitchen because of it. How was that experience?

**Lynn Crawford:**

The moment you asked of course women chefs would be there. I think that's a wonderful thing to say about women chefs. We have heart right? And we want to give back. It's like a fun night out for an amazing cause. Absolutely we're there.

**Marion Kane:**

It was women chefs cooking for a women's shelter on International Women's Day. It had synergy. Everyone I asked — six prominent chefs — immediately agreed and I had to turn down people who wanted to cook because there wasn't room in the kitchen. I went back there a few weeks ago and the two permanent cooks that work at Sistering were so happy with their new kitchen and they turn out a lot of meals. They make sandwiches at night, breakfast in the morning, food all day. It's a big task.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Seriously, it's amazing what you can do when you have a fantastic idea about giving back and that was your so big applause to you for making that all happen.

**Marion Kane:**

Thank you Lynn.

**Lynn Crawford:**

Thank you.

Conclusion

*Theme Music*

**Marion Kane:**

That was my conversation with chef Lynn Crawford. Find out more at [cheflynn Crawford.com](http://cheflynn Crawford.com) and visit [Sistering.org](http://Sistering.org) for more on their work helping women in Toronto. I'm Marion Kane, Food Sleuth. You can find more stories like this one at [marionkane.com](http://marionkane.com) and in Apple podcasts. Thank you for listening.

*Theme Music*