

Jamie's pukka pasta palace



Informal chat: Jamie Oliver talks to our reporter Polly March over a cup of cappuccino made by his famous hand about his plans for the new restaurant, pictured below

Pictures: Clare Green

By Polly March
p.march@bepp.co.uk

Naked chef is full of excitement with his new baby on the way and his latest restaurant set to open very soon

It promises to be pukka, lovely jubbly and there will not be a turkey twizzler in sight.

Excitement is at fever pitch in Bath where 'naked chef' Jamie Oliver is about to open his long-awaited restaurant.

The venture will be part of his Jamie's Italian high street chain and promises affordable, authentic Italian cuisine morning, noon and night.

Yesterday, staff were being given masterclasses on popping champagne, brewing authentic coffee and baking Italian bread, while workmen put the finishing touches to the plush new, vintage-style 200-seater diner set to open within the Milsom Place development on October 6.

Amid the chaos and hanging Parma hams, piles of focaccia and boxes of fresh pasta, was an excited Jamie, who has just announced he is to be a father for the third time.

He told me that hours are being poured into training his 65-strong workforce - all teenagers who hail from the Bath area. And before the restaurant even opens, they will be given the chance to test



their new-found skills on an invited array of guests, including local nurses, businessmen and their own friends and family.

There will be no big launch event or opening night media scrum.

Jamie said: "They are enthusiastic and ready to work and I have every confidence in them. But for this restaurant to succeed at the quality and price we are promising cus-

tomers, we need to open at full-pelt so we won't be putting time into a launch.

"Oxford, where I opened my first Italian, has been busier than I ever imagined. Three days a week we're cooking for 700 people, so it needs to be fast and efficient."

Bath was supposed to be the flagship restaurant in the chain but delays in development saw the Oxford premises open first. The chef, a big fan

of historic Bath, said he would divide his time between the city and his other ventures "like a yo-yo".

He said: "I love Bath, it's beautiful and it was supposed to be first but Oxford has been a wonderful education and I think people here will benefit from that. I come here quite a lot as I love to go to places like Frome and Babington House just to switch off."

But with a new baby due in



March, plans to roll the chain out to Kingston, Brighton and Cambridge, and his latest series *Ministry of Food* airing on Channel 4 later this month, he has been busier than ever.

Jamie admits he is still the main cook at home and loves making a mess in the kitchen with Jools, his wife of eight years, and daughters Poppy Honey, six, and Daisy Boo, five.

He said: "I love food and it's

in my soul so it's a real giggle when we get together and cook.

"I won't be suffering too many sleepless nights when the new baby comes because Jools is brilliant about getting the kids into a routine. We are very excited, especially as it's not been easy for us to have them.

"And although it would be great to have a boy as I am in a totally oestrogen-filled house, I really don't mind as long as it's healthy."

But he scotched rumours he is about to do a Madonna and adopt a baby from overseas.

"I did say I think it's an incredible thing for people to do and I wouldn't rule it out but I am not in talks or anything."

Jamie admits there will be some ingredients he can't buy locally, like prosciutto, but he is hoping to work with West fishmongers and butchers.

"The whole ethos of this place is not to be staid and presumptuous and where we can buy local we will," he said.

■ For an in-depth interview with Jamie Oliver, see *West Country Life* magazine in tomorrow's *Western Daily Press*.