

# Solihull MasterChef star Pookie keen to show the world her 'Pookiestyle'

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Solihull girl Pookie grew up in Thailand and went on to MasterChef to try to 'put a smile on people's faces' - and she's already becoming a favourite with fans of the show

**SOLIHULL'S POOKIE ON MASTERCHEF - "YOU'RE CLEVER, YOU'RE GOOD," SAYS GREG WALLACE**



From growing up in Thailand to running a Midlands' beauty salon and buying a catamaran, Solihull's MasterChef contestant Pookie is ready to take on the world. "Pookie has landed in MasterChef kitchen," she beamed as one of the winners of the first episode of the 2022 series of MasterChef.

Now said to be 'retired' from the beauty business, 45-year-old [Pookie said on MasterChef](#) that she had spent 70 hours preparing a nine-course Valentine's meal for husband, Heath. They bought a catamaran together last October and, judging by her first TV appearance, Pookie is already keen to throw her energy into whatever comes next...

Arriving on the show's set, Pookie told viewers: "I am taking this competition seriously. I try not to get stressed but I do. I am quite inventive as a cook. I am definitely here to surprise John (Torode) and Gregg (Wallace) with something amazing." Overcome with emotion after the success of her first appearance in round one of the hottest tests on TV, Pookie said: "I'm just buzzing. I think I established that I'm different. If I cry, the lashes will come off and I will look like a steam bun."

## Who is Pookie?

Her first dish for MasterChef 2022 was called Shallow Sea-Bed Life - featuring prawns turned into starfish, edible coral effects and a foam that "would be like the sea coming in."

Pookie, who received a good luck message from Senses of Siam based at Middleton Hall, says: "I couldn't be more excited and so very proud to be part of the United Kingdom's biggest cooking competition, MasterChef."



**Pookie from Solihull on the first episode of MasterChef 2022** (Image: MasterChef)

"I was born and grew up in Bangkok and then moved to the UK after my degree. I am Thai with Chinese heritage and although this has a huge influence on my cooking, I don't limit myself to Thai-Chinese food.

"I like cooking international foods but love introducing my own style with all the foods I've cooked. Most of all I want my food to be flavoursome, delicious, fun and put a smile on people's faces."

Husband Heath gave Pookie the confidence to go on to MasterChef as she doubted whether she would be good enough. "Friends had often encouraged me, saying my style is very unique and finally my husband made me apply," Pookie added.

"I'd never really thought I was good enough to enter a competition such as that, but one day I just decided to go for it. I'm not super competitive but I love cooking, so I will give it a go, have fun and who knows how far it will take me!"

"I enjoy all varieties of cuisines and love to recreate the dishes that I have tried elsewhere... then cook them in my own touch of Pookiestyle."

Blessed with a cheeky sense of humour, Pookie endeared herself to viewers in her first appearance by saying: "I'm trying to get my starfish out." Others thought they **instantly recognised her** but could not say why.

In an online diary, husband Heath explained why the couple bought a St Francis 48 catamaran last year.

"When I was about 24 and I used to care for people in the old folks home," Heath wrote. "Back then there were two old ladies, a chatty pair who would often watch the news and comment on the day's events.

"One lady seemed to always have a story to tell about this place or that place. The other lady, had only ever been to Margate for a holiday and in fact was blown away when we took her on a day trip.



**Pookie from Solihull on the first episode of MasterChef 2022** (Image: MasterChef)

"I decided, when I reached that grand old age where I needed care, I would be the person with a thousand stories to tell and I would grab whatever life's experiences came my way. I wanted then to see the world and about five years later decided a boat was the best way to achieve it.

"So, I have never chased a top of the range phone, a new car or other such trinkets that might stop me affording it. Then when I met Pookie and she said she'd love to see the world with me, our plans were set."

With a bit of luck, Pookie will follow Moseley chef Dan Lee and win the whole series like he did with MasterChef: The Professionals in December 2021. If she does, the world will clearly be her lobster, but how might she cook it?

Judging by one of her posts, it would be "Butter Poached Lobster in the Lobster Bisque". A classic and classy dish with an amazing flavour.