

# -The Oysters - No Muscles and an Empty Shell

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Food Critic

**Just** when the humble whelk thought it was safe to go out dining on the bottom of the ocean again - it has happened. The great British desire for fish - not just fish but anything that once walked upon the ocean floor or sailed in the blue seas above - has come plunging back into fashion. And we're not talking fish suppers here. No, not the greasy cod wrapped in yesterday's Daily Holler we all once loved. (At least the wrapping would be worth getting up for). No this is the lust for the sea food restaurant, that juicy joint where you can almost hear the seagulls cry and smell the froth of the sea in the air. And no where is this seen better than in the latest offering of Jamie and Shelley Oyster, the celebrity chef duo that first cracked it with the *Egg Shop* - the high street ommellette chain.

"Well you would expect us to end up running a fish shop or a seafood restaurant with a name like this," laughed the boyish chef.

I can't help noticing Shelley's grudging nod. The two met at catering school and they've been cracking yokes together ever since.

"I thought we might get into pearls actually," laughs his wife, but with an edge to her voice that could slice an onion into shreds in a millisecond.

Jamie shrugs it off and guides me through the restaurant, a flashy tacky place, with just enough smell of the sea to remind me of the bins at the back of the fishmongers when I was a little girl.

"No mussels on the menu," I observe.

"No!" laughs Jamie. His laugh is beginning to irritate me a little. Actually it is quite an apt observation. I notice that the man has spent too much time indoors. He has hardly a bicep or tricep on his frame.

Shelley, or "Oyster Shell" as Jamie calls her, arrives with a coffee and I ask her about their life together. I hear about their time at chef school and endless prattle about the couple's eight year old son, Rock.

"I really think he'll become Prime Minister- or King maybe- one day," whines the empty headed partner in this business. Really I haven't heard such vacuous nonsense since I did a piece on the Hedgetrimmers and Weedpullers Society dinner last year. That was all nettle soup and dock leaves.

So what's it all about? What motivates this couple - No muscles and Empty Shell?

I ask them and begin to sense an iceberg on the horizon...

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Jamie oyster plans to serenade his customers -  
"Get them out of their shells - he laughs"

