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## Food TV

# 'He's got his dad's charisma': Buddy Oliver ready to follow in chef Jamie's TV footsteps

Already popular on YouTube, it is hoped 12-year-old could help inspire other children to learn to cook



Esther Addley

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📷 Buddy Oliver has 133,000 subscribers on YouTube, and now a TV commission. Photograph: Jamie Oliver Ltd

Buddy is a 12-year-old schoolboy from Essex with a large family and a shock of blond hair. He also happens to have a famous father: [Jamie Oliver](#).

Perhaps not coincidentally, this week Buddy acquired a commission for a TV series. In a programme for the BBC, it was reported, Buddy will teach other children recipes and helpful tips. Dad may be the country's most influential chef, but in this case, a source [told the Sun](#): "Buddy is the star of the show."

His surname, of course, will have been a factor - and Buddy is far from the first son or daughter of a TV chef to venture into the worlds of cookery and/or presenting. [Jack Stein](#), son of Rick, is a chef director overseeing menus at his father's eponymous restaurant group, and has presented cookery shows on SBS and UKTV Food.

[Emily Roux](#), daughter of the former MasterChef presenter Michel Roux (and granddaughter of Albert Roux), spent some of her own chef career working at the family's restaurant Le Gavroche. Luciano Pierre White and Sam Worrall-Thompson, sons of Marco and Antony respectively, are [both chefs](#).

Perhaps closest to Buddy's experience is that of Gordon Ramsay's daughter Tilly. In 2015 she was given her own CBBC TV show, [Matilda and the Ramsay Bunch](#), in which the then 13-year-old cooked meals for her large and noisy family at their Los Angeles home.

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[Bachelors](#), in which the then 15-year-old cooked meals for her large and noisy family at their Los Angeles home.

If some “nepo baby” accusations are inevitable, and a family leg-up no doubt offers a significant boost, sustained success in the competitive and volatile restaurant world is near impossible without talent and hard work too (Jack Stein, for instance, was voted best chef at the 2023 [Food](#) reader awards).

And Buddy is no newcomer to cookery or TV, having a great deal more presenting experience than his father did when he first burst on to British TV in 1999, aged 23. Like all his siblings, Buddy has been cooking with his parents (and appearing in videos) since he was a toddler, helping his mum, Jools, rustle up “[a really cool super-smoothie](#)” or [rolling out pasta](#) with his dad.

Since 2020, he has been fronting videos himself, at first hosted on Jamie Oliver’s social media channel. His own YouTube channel, [Cooking Buddies](#), now has 133,000 subscribers.

It is this, just as much as his famous name, that is likely to have enhanced Buddy’s appeal to TV commissioners, says Vanessa Hartley, the head of social at [Tribal Worldwide](#), a branding and social media agency. “To me, [those social media numbers] essentially represent a baseline viewership at launch. So the BBC are going into this knowing that there is already interest – it’s almost as if a pilot had been done for them already.”

On one key point – the family connection – is extremely important, says Hartley. “Personally, I think the interesting bit of this is actually Jamie’s following, [because] I’m pretty certain that [Jamie Oliver](#) posting about the show on his own channels will be tied into [the broadcaster’s] contract.” That kind of money-can’t-buy endorsement to the chef’s many millions of followers would be any broadcaster’s dream, she says.



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None of which should detract from Buddy's natural talent. Confident and charming, he's definitely a chip off the old block, says Cathy Harding, the founder of [Cook Stars](#), which provides cookery lessons in schools, for councils and privately across the UK. "He's got his dad's charisma, and I especially love that they actually let him be a child - they leave in the little mistakes that he makes. I find that really endearing, because that's exactly how it is in our classes - it's never perfect."

Having a young cook on TV to inspire other kids will be brilliant, says Helen Gubbins, a woman from Edinburgh who started a blog, [cookingwithmykids.co.uk](#), sharing recipes she uses with her children at home. "Having someone their own age can really inspire other children to give it a go," she says. "They can relate to it so much more than if a grownup's making it."

For home cooks or wildly famous ones, "sometimes it's important that you take a step back and let them just get on and do it," says Gubbins. "Something might not turn out perfect, but if it's homemade food, it's always going to taste pretty good. And they get a lot of satisfaction too."

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