

Man Fire Food's Roger Mooking chats about his fascination with fire and his brand new album

By [Chanice Jennike](#)
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Image by Lumenville Inc.

Popularly known for his hit show on the cooking channel, *Man Fire Food*, Roger Mooking has recently released an album titled, *Eat Your Words*.

In an interview with *SABN*, Roger, a man of many talents, opened up about his childhood, his love for food and how he handles being a chef, a musician, a husband and a father.

Born in Trinidad, [Roger](#) and his family moved to Edmonton Alberta, Canada, when he was just five-years-old.

“I lived in Edmonton till I was in my late teens and I’ve been in Toronto ever since. I graduated from George Brown College’s Culinary Management program and am now the Chair of the Professional Advisory Committee there,” he said.



Image: Instagram

Roger said that his love for food came from his family and that he found himself “noodling in the kitchen” at the age of three.

“I’m now the third generation of food and beverage freak in my family as far as I know. Talking about and preparing food was an all-encompassing part of my childhood. Quickly, I figured out that the best way to eat what I liked

was to cook it for myself so I've been noodling in the kitchen from about 3 or 4 years old in Trinidad and Tobago.”

Roger admitted that his dad has been his biggest inspiration when it comes to cooking.

“My dad had a restaurant for 20 years and he learned from his father. So I suppose that debt is owed to my family.”

Besides being a renowned chef, Roger is also a musician and an author. Talking about how he handles having so many talents, Roger said that “making things is his passion”.

“I'm a creative person and endlessly curious so when an idea strikes, I just dive in and sometimes that ends up as a book, a song or a recipe. I don't think about how I handle it ever, it's simply a need to get the ideas out to make room for new ideas and inspirations,” he said.

He went on to say, “eventually, a body of work forms itself and then it is released to the world for everyone to enjoy, by that time I'm already headlong into about 10 other things. That's all I know to do, so that's what gets done.”



Image: Instagram

Man Fire Food is all about finding clever ways to cook with fire. [Roger](#) admitted that growing up he always loved playing with fire, so the show was a perfect fit for him.

“I’ve always loved playing with fire as a kid, I wouldn’t advise it as a hobby to any kids out there for sure...it is to be respected. Once you get that respect, then you can learn to contain it to do what you want with it, but it has a life and mind of its own so never forget that. Truly, I’ve concluded that being near a fire is a primal human desire; it keeps you dry, warm, cooks food, and boils water – it’s a unifying force.”

Speaking about the show, Roger said that *Man Fire Food* is “the brainchild of Irene Wong, the Executive Producer and Creator”.

“I was matched with the show concept by a Cooking Channel Executive at the time and have been the host from its launch to the public. As one says, the rest is history.”

Roger said that his favourite episode of the show was when they filmed in Jamaica.

“Although I’m from Trinidad, it felt like a homecoming to be able to showcase the Caribbean for the world to see. Maybe one day we will make it to Trinidad.”

While being on the show is a lot of fun, [Roger](#) admitted that it does come with its own challenges too.

“There have been many and I’ve explained those circumstances in a song called [Live From The Barbecue](#) on my album [Eat Your Words](#), it’s all in the song.”



Roger released a brand new album, *Eat Your Words*, which was inspired by the need to speak his mind.

“I’m constantly writing songs, on airplanes, on set between takes of shooting shows, walking thru the woods, waking up in the middle of the night cause a song I’ve never heard was playing in a scene.”

He went on to say, “this album specifically was born out of the need to speak my mind in a medium that is more contextually encompassing than a social media post could ever accomplish. I’m not incredibly candid on social media because it’s such a poor medium for meaningful expression given how short of a snapshot it is, and how short the attention span of the audience is”.

Roger said that he used the album to “spell out the idea lyrically”.

“In a song, I can spell out the idea lyrically, frame the lyrics in a sonic frame that supports the thought, and perform all the parts to draw out all the

nuances of the idea. The only more encompassing medium would be film, but I'm not there yet...maybe one day," he said.



Image by Lumenville Inc.

Aside from being on our television screens and making music, Roger is a husband and a father of four daughters.

When asked how he handles work and family, Roger said that is it simple: "Just Do It".

"I like Nike's slogan, "Just Do It". If I thought about how I do it, then it would never get done because it is all too incredibly daunting," he said.

"Every day I put on my creative cap and face the world. I don't believe in "work-life balance", it's a farce that has been sold and not a cheque that I have chosen to cash. My life is my work and my work is my life, notice how life happens before the work in that sentence though. Everything is

attacked with whatever fullness of energy I have on that day, and every day has a lot...believe me.”