



COMPLIMENTS OF THE CHEF

By Holly Ebel

lifestyle@postbulletin.com

It's been a great year for Chris Rohe. His restaurant, Prescotts, is one of the premier fine-dining spots in Rochester, and he was recently named Best Chef by Rochester Magazine. He has worked long and hard for these accolades, having been involved in restaurants for years, always with the dream of owning his own place.

So now that he has achieved it how does he feel?

"Great, but I am tired, very tired," he says. "Owning your own place is hard work and a lot different than working for someone else. You are responsible for everything from flowers on the table to what goes into the soup. I look back over the last 16 months since we opened and I can't believe it. I still get an adrenaline rush when I open the door. For Jenna (his wife) and me it is a dream come true."

Rohe has been a fixture on the restaurant scene for many years, beginning as a chef with the Broadstreet, then moving onto the restaurant-deli at Rochester Athletic Club, all the while nursing the concept of Prescotts.

Tomato basil soup, which is now the soup de jour at many places in town, was originally developed by Rohe, though not his creation.

"There were several different versions: one for lunch, one for the Redwood Room, and another for dinner," he says. "I kept fine-tuning the different versions, making subtle changes so that they were all just a little different. It is still one of my favorites and even now I keep playing with it."

Important to Rohe is to change Prescott's menus seasonally and he does that.

The spring menu was brought out last week, but as he points out it may only be around through May before he changes it again to reflect summer flavors. The difference between the winter menu and now?

"The spring menu has a lighter feel to it. We are offering more grilled items rather than searing or roasting," he says. "We also developed some lighter sauces."

In addition to his very full days at Prescotts, Rohe is also President of the American Culinary Federation, Southeast Minnesota Chapter.

Prescotts is at Crossroads Shopping Center, 1201 S. Broadway.

Holly Ebel of Rochester is a free-lance writer.

Q&A with Chris Rohe, Prescott's chef:

Q: You've hinted at opening another restaurant. Where are you with that?

A: Still thinking about it. We might be able to do something within the next year — an upper-end Italian spot where we make all of our own pastas. What is holding us up is finding a good location.

Q: What has been your biggest challenge?

A: Getting comfortable with seafood. I have made it a priority to work with it more,

explore the possibilities, especially with the more unusual fish. For instance in the past weeks our specials included grilled baracuda and Pacific snapper. We've also had little-neck clams. I check several times a week with seafood.com and my order is here the next day.

Q: Your 30 Under 30 wine list has been a huge hit. How did you get to that?

A: That is Jenna's expertise. Our intent was and is to make the best food and wine pairings we can. Our staff is trained for that. Jenna searches out the best, focusing on unusual sexy wines from small boutique wineries that you can't get just anywhere. If someone else in town starts to carry it we won't re-order. We want to keep our wines unique.

Q: Desserts are always a favorite here. Anything new?

A: For spring we brought back the lemon tart, and we are working on a really sensational strawberry parfait for summer.

Q: Any chance you'll ever offer lunch?

A: No. This is strictly a dinner place.



Chris Rohe