

Well done

Golden Mushroom picks seasoned chef to head up kitchen

BY ELEANOR HEALD
SPECIAL WRITER

Owner Reid Ashton opened the now internationally-known restaurant, Golden Mushroom, in 1972. Legendary Chef Milos Cihalka, the first master chef certified in the United States, left Detroit's legendary London Chop House to become the Golden Mushroom's executive chef and Ashton's partner in 1976. Chef Milos retired in 1994.

Filling his shoes since have been Steve Allen, who left to open his own restaurant, Steve & Rocky's in Novi. Derin Moore, next on board, left recently to head the kitchen at a Charlotte, N.C. country club, leaving the door open for the talented and popular Randy Emert to be named Golden Mushroom executive chef.

At age 32, Chef Randy, a Clarkston resident, has an impressive professional résumé. Since earning an associate's degree in Culinary Arts from Schoolcraft College in Livonia, he has become an American Culinary Federation Certified Chef de Cuisine. He's also a part-time instructor in the culinary departments at Henry Ford Community College and Oakland Community College. In addition, he captained the 1998 Michigan Culinary Team that was awarded a gold, four silver, and two bronze medals in the Culinary Olympics in Berlin, Germany.

Chef Randy comes to the Golden Mushroom after having been the executive chef at Piko Street

Golden Mushroom

Where: 18100 West 10 Mile Road, Southfield, just west of Southfield Road; (248) 559-4230.

Hours: Lunch, Monday-Friday, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; Dinner, Monday-Thursday, 5:10 p.m.-Friday, until 11 p.m., and Saturday, 5:30-11 p.m.

Menu: Award-winning International selection of flavorful, creative dishes, prepared with attention to every detail.

Cost: Lunch average \$13; dinner average \$32.

Reservations: preferred.

Extras: Mushroom Cellar, casual lounge serving contemporary American food during the same hours as the more formal dining room.

Restaurant in Pontiac and most recently, the Director of Operations and Executive Chef at Paint Creek Cider Mill Restaurant in Rochester.

"It's a challenge and an honor to follow in the footsteps of the great chefs who've been at the Golden Mushroom," Chef Randy said.

"Each day that I work in the kitchen, I hope I can maintain the reputation that's been established. This is not my responsibility alone, but one that the prep and line cooks and sous chefs also take seriously."

While trained in classical cooking methods, Chef Randy uses simple words to describe his style.

"Good food, presented elegantly and cooked from the heart," he said. "Pride will show on all plates. I'm very diner preference-conscious when it comes to the menu listings."

"It has been said that the Golden Mushroom is a place to come for an all-afternoon lunch. Not anymore. You can be in and out in an hour and have a great lunch, even a working business lunch. People are busy, and I'm committed to making this happen," he said.

Some Golden Mushroom sacrosanct items such as Fresh Beluga Caviar, the signature sampling of Spring Mushrooms, House Salad, Sautéed White Holland Dover Sole, and Crispy Dover Sole Murat will never change.

But diners at the Golden Mushroom will experience some delightful changes under Chef Randy. Foie Gras, the dinner experience, will take on two



Ready Randy: The new executive chef at Golden Mushroom is Randy Emert of Clarkston.

new faces: Foie Gras Combination of Seared Foie Gras and Foie Gras Terrine with a raisin scone and Port wine glaze; or Tableside Carved Whole Roasted Foie Gras, serving six, with appropriate garnish.

New dinner main courses include Sea Scallops and Shrimp Sauté, garnished with pen shell and grape tomato salad and roast fingerling potatoes;

Garden Party 1-6 p.m. Sunday, June 4 in the gardens of the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center, 27400 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills.

The event will feature entertainment by Alexander Zonjic and Friends, samples of appetizers, entrees, and desserts prepared by 50 of metro Detroit's

finest restaurants, and samples of premium wines from Michigan distributors. A live auction of wines, trips and extravagant items will be hosted by Dick Purton of Oldies 104.3 WOMC and his morning crew. Tickets are \$150 per person, patron and benefactor tickets also available. Call (248) 626-7527, Ext. 3118. Participating restaurants include Carver's Steak and

On the side

■ Food for thought: during Spring, about 4,000 pounds of Washington and Oregon morel mushrooms are purchased by the Golden Mushroom than frozen for use throughout the year.

■ Golden Mushroom uncorked

Executive Chef Randy Smith is a wine lover. His choices for best matches with his dishes include: Whole Roasted Foie Gras and 1988 Chateau Rayne Vigneau Sauternes Sea Scallops & Shrimp Sauté and 1997 Far Niente Chardonnay and Grilled Moulard Duck Breast and 1998 Iron Horse Pinot Noir.

■ Southfield's Golden Mushroom is a perennial winner of both the Wine Spectator Best of Award of Excellence and Diners' Choice Restaurants of North America (DiRoNA). You need only one hand to count the area's restaurants with such distinction.

Grilled Moulard Duck Breast with chanterelle barley risotto and spiced duck jus lié; Veal Medallions in Pilsner Urquell Sauce with Port Salt-Pancetta Risotto; and Roast Leg of Venison with Port wine sauce and crispy potatoes.

Desserts have a retro look. Chef Randy calls them "Back to Miles Favorites." They include Fruit Flan, Mozart Tart, Apple Strudel, Flavored Mousse Cup, Cheesecake of the Day and one or two specials.

Eleanor Heald is a Troy resident who writes about dining, food and wine for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave her a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 1864.

WHAT'S COOKING

Send dinner specials, menu changes, restaurant renovations, and other items to Keely Wygnen, Observer Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

To fax, (734) 691-7279 or e-mail: kwygnen@homecomm.net.

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