

Big Rock Chophouse – Executive Chef Brian Henson



Blending together 16 years of experience at several renowned restaurants, Brian Henson is perfectly suited for the high energy atmosphere at Birmingham's BIG ROCK CHOPHOUSE.

After graduating from Schoolcraft College in Livonia with a culinary arts degree, Henson spent four years at the acclaimed Golden Mushroom in Southfield, where he progressed from Saucier to Sous Chef, overseeing the entire restaurant operation.

He then took his talents westward, joining Wolfgang Puck as Executive Sous Chef and National Trainer. With responsibility for Puck's Denver restaurant and sushi bar, Henson was called upon to open five company restaurants in California, Chicago and Denver. He also served as acting Executive Chef in San Diego, while traveling with the company's special event staff.

Henson's career path then took him to a premier Denver hotel, the 4-Star/4-Diamond Brown Palace, where he worked at Ellyngton's. He gained valuable experience catering to large groups and handling special events as Sous Chef and Banquet Chef.

In 2002, Henson returned to Michigan as Sous Chef at Steve and Rocky's in Novi, and he continued to build his skills at managing staff as well as budgets, in addition to developing an ever-changing menu.

Henson soon was offered the position of Executive Sous Chef at Motor City Casino's Iridescence restaurant, overseeing the preparation and execution of Detroit's only AAA 4 Diamond restaurant. His strong focus on guest satisfaction enabled him to be a valuable resource as he implemented comprehensive training initiatives for his staff.

At each stage of his career, Henson skillfully has crafted menus to please the most discerning diners, as evidenced by the extensive list of awards he and his restaurants have received. From "best of show" and culinary Olympic medals to "best restaurant" recognition, Henson's commendations are a testament to his creative and technically astute culinary skills as well as his passion for pleasing those he serves—talents that enable him to proficiently serve BIG ROCK CHOPHOUSE'S upscale guests.

Recipes

1. Roast Butternut Squash Soup, Foie Gras, Pomegranate, Hazelnuts: Paired with Robert Mondavi Winery Fume Blanc

Ingredients

2 Butternut Squash
3 qt. Vegetable Stock
½ diced onion
3 T. whole butter
1 tsp garlic
1 T ginger
1 diced parsnip
Orange juice to taste
Orange marmalade to taste
3 c. heavy cream

Garnish

Pomegranate Seeds
Micro greens
Foie Gras Fat

Preparation

Cut Squash in half and roast at 350 until soft, skin side up. In butter sweat onion, garlic, ginger and parsnip for 5 minutes on a low flame. When the squash is soft and cool scoop out the meat and this and thyme to the vegetables, continue to cook for another 5 minutes, add stock. Bring to a boil and then simmer for 15 minutes, add cream the last 5 minutes of cooking, blend. Season with salt, pepper and orange marmalade, to taste. If it is too thick add orange juice to thin.

2. Smoked Venison Loin, Quinoa and Chanterelle Salad, Fiq Chutney: Paired with Robert Mondavi Private Selection Meritage

Soft Brine Ingredients

1 c. molassas
1c. brown sugar
1 gall water
3 lemons
2c. salt
2tsp garlic
1 sliced onion
2 oz. juniper berry
2 oz. coriander
4 bay leaf
2 oz. dry basil
2 oz. clove

Preparation

Bring all to a boil until sugar is dissolved, chill. Marinate meat 5 hours per pound of meat. Remove from brine and let dry in the refrigerator, uncovered.

You can use any meat for this recipe. If you have a smoker in your home use the manufacturers guide. Bring internal temperature to 130.

Fig and Red Onion Chutney Ingredients

2 oz. olive oil

1 T. garlic

2 ½ # quartered black fig

4 qt. small diced red onion

6 small diced red peppers

½ qt. red wine vinegar

1 qt. golden raisins

2 jars major grey's

1 T cardamom

1 qt. orange marmalade

Preparation

Sweat onions in oil until translucent then add red onion, sweat for about 1 minute then add garlic continue to cook for 1 minute, then add all other ingredients, bring to a boil and strain. Reduce liquid until thick and pour back over the onion mixture, chill.

24grille – Chef Christian Borden

Born in the Southern United States, Chef Christian Borden traveled with his family for years before making a home for himself in Toronto. After studying English and Psychology at the University of Toronto, Chef Borden decided to pursue his culinary passions and left to enroll at the Stratford Chef School. His true culinary journey began once he ventured to Detroit, where Chef Borden helped to cultivate the local restaurant scene, working at some of Detroit's premier restaurants, including: The Rattlesnake Club, Vintage Bistro, BooCoo, and Atlas Global Bistro. Known locally for his innovative and diverse cuisine, Chef Borden was easily embraced by the local media and the focus of many features. Now, after a decade in the Detroit area, he has teamed up the trendy and sleek – spa1924grille. Focusing on Midwestern classics with a New-American twist, Chef Borden is true to the simplistic style that has garnered his devout following. With 100 seats, 24grille is small enough to manage quality and detail and large enough to support the staff to accomplish the task. There is a culinary tradition here, in Detroit that Christian is definitely continuing to explore.

www.spa1924grille.com

Recipes

1. Poached Pear & Heirloom Tomato Salad with Toasted Goat Cheese, Petite Herbs, Pomegranate, Crispy Walnut and Smooth Dijon-Valencia Honey Vinaigrette with Single Vineyard Olive Oil: Paired with Robert Mondavi Winery Fume Blanc

Poached Pear Ingredients

8 ripe Bosc pears
3 sticks each cinnamon
4 C water
2 lemon zest and juice
4 C Robert Mondavi Winery Fume Blanc wine
2 tablespoons whole clove
2 tablespoons vanilla bean paste
2.5 cup sugar
1 thyme bunch
4 bay leaves
¼ cup chopped fresh ginger
½ cup honey raw
¼ cup cracked black pepper

Preparation

Peel Bosc pears and cut in half long way. Use a melon baller and scoop out seed core. Rub pears with the lemon juice lightly to avoid oxidization. Place all other ingredients into a pot and bring to a boil.

When boiling add the pear halves and bring back to a boil. Remove from heat and put a lid on the pears and let cool, when cool slice into quarters.

Store pears in ½ of poaching liquid. Reduce remainder of poaching liquid until it is a light syrup.

Cherry Tomato Preparation

4 pints Heirloom tomato varieties cut in half. Place these in a bowl with a pinch of salt and toss.

Let sit an hour before serving. Hold in refrigerator

Goat Cheese Cake Ingredients

2 cup goat cheese

1/2 cup mixed herbs

Pinch salt and cracked pepper

Breading Station

1 cup flour

3 eggs cracked and beaten

1 cup fine bread crumb

Preparation

Let goat cheese come to room temperature. Fold all ingredients together. Using a tablespoon scoop mixture into 16 balls. Form the ball into a puck shaped mixture.

Dip the puck into flour, then egg wash, and then fine bread crumbs. Using a sauté pan over medium heat pan fry the pucks until crispy. Hold in warm oven until ready, this should be done as soon as possible to serving.

Micro Salad Mix Ingredients and Preparation

3 cups baby pea shoots or mixed baby herbs

Mix herbs and shoots if necessary. Hold under wet paper towel in refrigerator.

Pomegranate Preparation

Picked and seeded. The ruby red seeds under the skin are removed and held cold.

Honey Vinaigrette Ingredients and Preparation

1 c. red wine vinegar

3/4 c. honey

3/4 c. extra virgin olive oil

1/3 c white wine reduction (one cup reduced by 2/3)

3 tsp. dry mustard powder

2 shallot minced

1 garlic smashed

Sea Salt & white pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and let sit 10 minutes

2. Grilled Michigan Lamb Leg with Hard Spices, Smoked Coffee Rub, Picked Thyme, Roasted Shallot, Radicchio, Parmesan, Shitake and Chives: Paired with Robert Mondavi Private Selection Pinot Noir

Lamb Leg Ingredients and Preparation

10 pounds boned, sectioned, separated and portioned domestic lamb leg

Cut and clean lamb leg. Then cut into 1 inch cubes

Skewer onto bamboo or wooden skewers. Hold in deep pan and rub marinade into flesh

Rub/Marinade Ingredients and Preparation

6 cloves Garlic minced

1/4 cup Coffee ground

1 cup blended olive Oil

1/2 cup mixed Peppercorn whole

1/8 cup whole Cumin

1/8 cup whole Mustard Seed

1/2 cup whole Coriander

1/4 cup Sea Salt

Combine all whole spices and blend coarsely in food mill. Add to olive oil and mix. Stir in salt and coffee last.

Shallot Ingredients and Preparation

16 whole shallots peeled and rinsed

Snip front and back tip of shallot pull skins off. Toss in oil and roasted with herbs until soft @ 325F.

Approximately 1.5 hours

Radicchio Ingredients and Preparation

2 heads purple radicchio

2 cups olive oil

Pinch salt

Cut into eighths and roll in tin foil pouches with olive oil poached in olive oil. Place the pouch in a baking dish and put in the oven with shallots

Manchego Cheese Ingredients and Preparation

1/4 pound Spanish Manchego cheese

Leave the rind on and shave cheese into sheets. Hold rapped in refrigerator and keep covered. Allow to come to room temperature before serving

Shitake Mushrooms Ingredients and Preparation

16 extra-large shitake mushrooms, stem off

Olive oil blend

Salt and Pepper

Quarter and sear mushrooms in a hot pan. Use oil sparingly. Season with salt and pepper

Chive Preparation

1 cup cut garden chives

Cut into 2 inch sticks and hold cool.

Sauce Ingredients and Preparation

1 drop Vanilla syrup

¼ cup Red Wine Acid

(1/2 cup red wine and 1/2 cup red wine vinegar)

(reduce by half)

2 cup Veal Demi-Glace

2 tb Butter

Place red wine acid into small pot and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and let stir in the butter. Hold warm until needed.

Five – Chef Jason Stoops



Jason M. Stoops is back where he grew up in the Plymouth area and has been named the Executive Chef of The Inn at St. John's. Bringing over 20 years of experience in restaurants most notably in luxury hotels. Jason is a graduate of the well – known Schoolcraft College in Livonia, MI. “working with the multitude of CMC's there enabled me to take the Culinary Arts as a serious and revered profession”

Soon after completing the program at Schoolcraft, Jason joined the brigade at The Ritz-Carlton in Dearborn, MI and worked his way through kitchens for over 5 years, The Grille Room, Banquet Kitchen, Garde Manger and back to The Grille Room, “it was important for me to have a wide base of knowledge, and it helped me greatly in my next step.

In late 2000, Jason took a sight – unseen move and transfer to The Ritz-Carlton, New Orleans to help lead the Culinary Team, “it was my first sous chef position and first time away from Michigan, I truly believe that it was a springboard for my future successes”

After nearly 3 years at the 5 Diamond Award winning Ritz-Carlton, New Orleans and after having lead the Garde Manger kitchen for more than a year, Jason was recruited by Mandarin Oriental Hotel Company to be a part of a very prestigious hotel opening in New York City. Jason was asked to lead the Banquet Kitchen in an unprecedented venue on the 36th floor overlooking Central Park. “while The Ritz-Carlton, New Orleans was in fact much larger, Mandarin Oriental, New York had extremely high expectations, the views were amazing and it was difficult to keep people out of the hotel, there was never a shortage of business”. The Culinary Team lead by Christian Schmidt and Jason Weaver was consistently setting the bar higher and higher and the Hotel was inevitably awarded a Mobil 5-star rating. “it seemed as though the weddings and events there tried to outdo each other, and we were challenged to exceed expectations”.

Another move was in store for Jason as he was transferred as the Executive Sous Chef to Mandarin Oriental, Washington DC, a perennial Mobil 4-star property, and soon after was put in charge of the kitchens and promoted to Executive Chef. “by this time I had a wide base of knowledge and experiences that prepared me for just about every challenge, I could not have been successful without the talented colleagues around me.”

The desire to return home to Michigan coincided with the news of MGM Grand building a billion dollar hotel and casino in Downtown Detroit. Jason was recruited to fill the position of Assistant Executive Chef of this monumental project “it was remarkable to be a part of the opening of the MGM Grand, it was exciting to watch it grow from a construction site to a Casino that could rival most in Las Vegas.”

Finding a home in a place like The Inn at St. John’s in Plymouth, MI has taken Jason full circle back to the where he went to grade school. Some highlights of the Inn at St. John’s include over 48,000 square feet of meeting space, 27-hole golf course, a pub style restaurant and of course Five Restaurant.

The Inn at St. John’s is now home to the annual Concours d’Elegance featuring the best of the best of Classic, Vintage, Rare and Antique cars from around the world. Drawing over 12,000 people every July to St. John’s to witness these truly unbelievable feats of automotive engineering.

Recipes

1. Chardonnay Poached Shrimp with Avocado, Cucumber, Marcona Almond Gazpacho and Chardonnay Stone Fruit Sangria: Paired with Robert Mondavi Winery Chardonnay

Shrimp Ingredients

court bouillon

1 1/2 cups water

1/2 cup Chardonnay

1 lemon juiced

1 onion chopped
1/2 celery stalk chopped
1 garlic clove, rough chopped
1 tsp black peppercorns
5 sprigs fresh thyme
1 bay leaf

Preparation

Bring court bouillon to a boil in a large stock pot and then turn heat down to just below a simmer, poach shrimp at 180 degrees for 2-3 minutes until just cooked, remove shrimp from court bouillon and spread evenly on a tray to cool completely.

Gazpacho Ingredients

2 avocados, pitted
1 cucumber peeled and pitted
1/4 cup Marcona almonds toasted
1 lime juiced
sea salt
fine ground black pepper
toasted ground cumin
ice

Garnish

1/4 of fine diced cucumber
1/8 cup Marcona almonds toasted for garnish
1/4 cup fine diced mango
1/4 cup fine diced red pepper

Preparation

In a high speed blender add avocados, cucumber, almonds, lime juice puree until smooth and season with sea salt, black pepper and cumin add ice to thin mixture and to maintain temperature keep covered in refrigerator until ready for use, ensure that plastic wrap is touching the surface to keep soup from discoloring

Sangria Ingredients

3 T sugar
3 shots of peach schnapps or calvados
1 lime sliced
1 lemon sliced
2 ripe peaches wedged
3 ripe granny smith apples wedged
1 bottle of Robert Mondavi Winery Chardonnay

Preparation

Combine all ingredients in large container and let stand several hours, preferably overnight.

2. Shaved Prime Beef Tenderloin Carpaccio, Five Mushroom Truffle Ragout, and Thyme - Peppercorn Oil: Paired with Robert Mondavi Private Selection Pinot Noir

To prepare the beef, liberally coat with sea salt and fresh ground black pepper. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and leave in freezer for several hours or overnight. If you have access to a quality meat slicer, shave beef in paper thin slices and serve. An alternative is to slice thin and place between two pieces of plastic wrap and gently pound out until beef is flat.

Five Mushroom Ragout Ingredients

1 cup fine chopped shallots
2 cloves minced garlic
1/4 pound quality butter, Chevre butter if possible
5 cups of your favorite mushrooms
keep mushrooms in recognizable pieces
fresh thyme
fresh chopped Italian parsley
sea salt
fresh ground black pepper
1/4 cup parmesan cheese

Preparation

In a large surfaced heavy bottom skillet, sweat shallots and garlic in the butter. Season with salt and pepper. Add mushrooms according to cooking time, longest to shortest, season again. Once mushrooms have all softened, re-check seasoning and finish with fresh thyme, parsley and parmesan cheese.

Thyme - Peppercorn Oil Ingredients

2 cups good quality olive oil (not evo) fresh thyme sprigs, washed and patted dry
2 T black peppercorns - lightly toasted

Preparation

Cover thyme and peppercorns with the oil and bring to approximately 150 degrees. Remove from heat and let stand overnight if possible remove or strain thyme sprigs and keep oil cool and away from light to store.