

EDUCATION CAN
BE FIXED — WE
CAN HELP **PG 64**

IS A MEDICAL
MONOPOLY
IMMINENT IN
NEVADA? **PG 30**

STAR CHEFS' SONS
TALK ABOUT DEAR
OLD DADS **PG 34**

LAS VEGAS LIFE

L V M

A SPA SECRET
REVEALED —
IT'S SAFE FOR
MEN, TOO! **PG 42**

THE LATEST IN PET
PAMPERING (IT'S
SHOCKING) **PG 70**

A HOUSE THAT
COMBINES WINE
AND ROCK **PG 38**

*Our list of new
on- and off-Strip
restaurants, with
tales of wretched
excess and who's
who in the food biz.*

Great Local Dining



March 2008 \$3.99

03



0 71896 44176 5

How Do They Do That?

LAS VEGAS' FOOD SCENE DOESN'T THRIVE ALL BY ITSELF. HERE'S A WHO'S WHO OF THOSE BEHIND THE CURTAIN. **By Max Jacobson**

HUMANITARIAN CHEF

With all due respect to Wolfgang Puck and Charlie Palmer, both of whom do yeoman's work for others, we have to give the nod to **Michael Mina**, the Bay Area wunderkind chef who runs 11 restaurants in San Francisco, Vegas, Miami and Scottsdale.

Mina's breakout year was 2004, when his eponymous San Francisco restaurant received three and a half stars from persnickety *San Francisco Chronicle* critic Michael Bauer and, a year later, two stars from the *Michelin Guide San Francisco*. In Vegas, his restaurants include Seablue, Stripsteak, Nob Hill and his signature, the original Michael Mina.

Mina is involved with several charities, including the Susan B. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, for which he and his wife, Diane, host an annual event at their home in Novato, California, and Wolfgang Puck's Meals On Wheels, held every September at Universal Studios. But it is his tireless efforts for local legend Andre Agassi's Charter School and its Foundation, which aids underprivileged kids, that we admire most. Last year, the chef, who never runs out of ideas, did a lobster shabu-shabu for 800 at Agassi's "Grand Slam" event at the MGM Grand.
—By Max Jacobson

Wine Importer

Wine produced outside this country is sold here through importers who bring it in and sell it directly, or wholesale it through large distributors, such as our own Southern Wine of Nevada. But there is also a core of individuals responsible for bringing less prominent wines to market.

One such person is 44-year-old Sean Paterson, National Sales Director of Bernard Magrez USA. The Vegas-based Paterson returned to the States in 2006 after twenty years in France, where he taught, worked as a therapist (in French), and married.

Paterson imports an impressive portfolio of 35 wines, including the prestigious Château Pape-Clément from Bordeaux, the well-regarded Château Fombrage, and wines from seven countries where his boss maintains vineyards: Argentina, Portugal, Uruguay, Morocco, Japan and the USA. Getting your hands on the allocated Bernard Magrez Napa Valley is almost impossible without going through him.

Meat Man

Tim Jensen of Village Meat and Wine, located at 5025 S. Eastern Avenue, was born in Milwaukee, but reared here since the age of eight. He's the man who cuts and sells some of the best meat in this country, as well as producing 28 different sausages such as lemon basil, turkey onion and Swedish potato, at his attractive, well-stocked shop.

Jensen literally grew up in the meat business. He started as a clean-up boy at Vegas Village

before graduating to a meat cutter at the Imperial Palace, where he did a ten-year stint. He took over his shop in 1999, and has been cutting, grinding and chopping meats to order ever since, with his wife and partner, Chemaine.

Jensen imports Australian Kobe from golfer Greg Norman, and sells a line of gourmet foods and boutique wines as well. He boasts that no one in town can match his prices for Prime meats, and we aren't arguing.

USDA Prime flatiron steaks start at \$12.98 per pound; \$18.99 gets you tenderloin. The Kobe cuts run about 30 percent higher. Make sure and try his Kurobuta pork and ham, too, from Idaho's Snake River Farms.

Cheese Guy

Bob Howald (pictured at right) as worked as a chef, waiter, commercial fisherman in Alaska, and heaven knows what else. He seems to have landed on his feet, however, at his stylish gourmet food store, Henderson's Valley Cheese and Wine, where he sells approximately 200 different cheeses from a variety of countries.

Howald actually developed his passion for cheese while working in a Caribbean restaurant called Café Babalu in St. Louis, his hometown, where he learned how to make his own fresh goat cheese for use in cooking there. Enter his store, and you are struck by the consummate array of products; wines, pastas, chocolates and cured meats. But in the end, it is the cheese counter that most impresses.

Behind it, on a large blackboard, are the names of some of the importers and producers Howald relies on. Each cheese is flagged with a small sign, which

lists the name, price and provenance of the cheese. Howald has some 70 cheeses unavailable elsewhere here. Including Couronne Lochoise, a mold ripened, ash covered French goat cheese, and Blu de Moncenisio, an Italian raw cow's milk blue that looks like Roquefort on steroids. Call 341-8191 for information, or visit the store at 1770 Horizon Ridge Pkwy, Henderson.

Sommelier Extraordinaire

Our favorite M.S., or Master Sommelier, may be Kevin Vogt, a tall, affable, 45-year-old Texan usually found on the dining room floor at Delmonico in The Venetian. Vogt, who many identify by spotting his familiar frosted glass lens, is the Wine Director for all of the Emeril restaurants here, including Emeril's Fish House at the MGM, and the new Table 10 at The Palazzo.

What makes Vogt special? It's his bedside manner, of course, which is laid back and a boon to wine sales. "I never intimidate or embarrass a guest," he says. "I strive to make wine accessible to everyone from young married couples on a budget to trophy hunters looking for that obscure, high priced bottle."

Vogt's wine list at Delmonico won the prestigious Grand Award from *Wine Spectator* magazine in 2004, and contains some 1,800 different selections, from \$25 to \$16,000. It is also worth noting that he makes his own label, Cuvee Delmonico, at Napa's Gemstone Vineyards, and is releasing a high-end wine this month called Mastery, a sixty-fourty blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. **LV**

