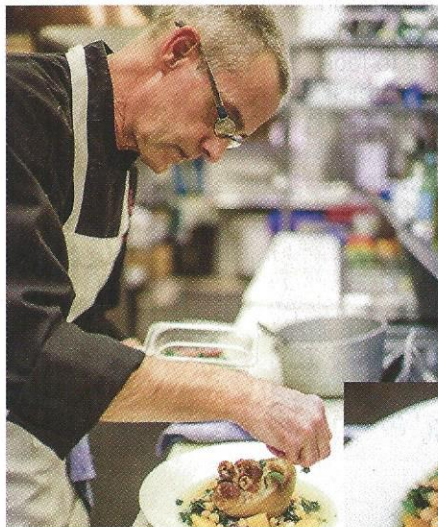


FIVE QUESTIONS:

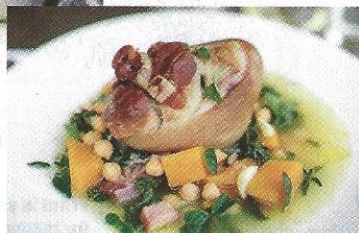
For Three Top Taos Chefs

By Teresa Dovalpage



fred muller

executive chef at El Meze, was a James Beard semifinalist in 2012 for Best Chef Southwest. He is also the author of "La Comida: The Foods, Cooking and Traditions of the Upper Río Grande."



1. Why did you become a chef?

It was the only thing I was ever good at. I like making people happy with my cooking and "feeding the tribe."

2. What new food trends do you foresee?

Cooking is becoming more simple. The trend is toward getting back to the basics. That's what I see and what I hope to see. There is a lot of foraging, too – getting the ingredients from the wild. I like for food to become more regional. Here in Taos, it would mean having more local foods, like homo chicos and, of course, chile.

3. Do you have a personal favorite or secret ingredient?

I have four: good olive oil, sea salt, fresh cracked black pepper and fresh lemon. A few drops of fresh squeezed lemon can brighten any dish and finish it in a very good way.

4. What is your No. 1 rule for restaurant dining?

Patrons should accept what the chef makes. Trust the chef! Great service also makes the dining experience memorable and unique.

5. Where do you eat when you are not in the kitchen?

I eat at home with my wife, Annette Kratka. She is a wonderful cook and runs the dining room at El Meze, too. On Sundays, we like to relax together and eat simple, good food, like homemade tacos.

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