

Husband, wife dream a little dream together

Wes and Kelsey Krimmer made their wishes come true

By **NICHOLAS DETTMANN**

ndettmann@conley.net 262-306-5043

Wes Krimmer has an extensive journal of people he's served in his culinary career.

It reads like a weekly lineup for a late-night talk show: Oprah Winfrey, Johnny Depp and Britney Spears for a small sampling of the much longer list.

With Krimmer's Restaurant — 114 N. Main St., West Bend — Washington County residents and guests have taken advantage of the same entrees the A-list celebs once enjoyed as it was recently voted as a recommended restaurant in Washington County in a recent and informal poll of readers by the Daily News.

"Have been (to Krimmer's) six or seven times and the quality of steaks is on par with the best Chicago steakhouses," said West Bend's Ryan Woody. "Wine is reasonably priced and the desserts are always worth it."

For four years, Krimmer was the head chef of the Mason Street Grill inside the Pfister Hotel.

"It's Milwaukee's preferred hotel," Krimmer said. "If you're an athlete or a musician, anything of that sort, you go there and stay there."

Krimmer believed that experience was something Washington County deserved to enjoy.

"That's the feel we're bringing back home is the big, not just Milwaukee taste buds, but everything a big city has to offer is what we're offering here in West Bend," Krimmer said.

There was interest from investors to have Krimmer's in Milwaukee. But being West Bend natives, Krimmer and his wife, Kelsey, wanted to bring the big-city dining experience home. "When we have something special going on, we love to spoil ourselves with great food and awesome service (at Krimmer's)," said Anita Ulrich of Kewaskum.

The Krimmers moved to Milwaukee about 15 years ago so Wes could attend culinary school at Waukesha County Technical College after getting a business degree from Moraine Park Technical College in West Bend.

Wes has known since he was 8 years old he wanted to be in the restaurant industry.

"My first job was wiping down tables at McDonald's here on (Highway) 33," Wes said. "Now the owner of that McDonald's and 17 others is one of the regulars here. It's a full circle here."

Wes worked at Motions, a seafood restaurant in Milwaukee, while attending culinary school. He was there for nearly three years before he took the job at Mason Street Grill.

After four years at Mason Street Grill, Krimmer worked as the head chef at the Pfister's sister property, the Hilton Hotel, also in downtown Milwaukee, for an additional four years.

But, for his final two years at the Hilton, Krimmer, along with several family members, was putting together what has become Krimmer's.

"I've been in restaurants for 20 years," Wes said. "Every job I've had since I was 14 has been in the restaurant industry."

Being in the culinary arts is not just in Wes' repertoire. It's also in Kelsey's.

For 11 years, they lived in Milwaukee. And while Wes worked at some of the prestigious restaurants, Kelsey ran a Brazilian steakhouse on Water Street for about six years.

They had in the back of their mind for many years they wanted to open a restaurant in their hometown and saved money for several years to do so.

When they got the amount they needed to fulfill their dream, they began to look at properties.

"It was the right time, we had our 20 percent saved and we were looking at commercial buildings here and in Milwaukee, on the east side of Milwaukee," Wes said. "Anywhere that had a bar or a restaurant for sale, we were looking for anything."

When they came across the spot in downtown West Bend across from the West Bend Theater, they were reluctant.

"We didn't think too much of it," Wes said. "We thought it was too small, there were no windows, it was real dark.

"We didn't see real potential in this property."

They had offers to go into other buildings, but the Krimmers knew that's not what they wanted. They wanted something they could call theirs.

"We were going to open up our restaurant, explore our ideas," Wes said.

Eight to nine months later, they went back with an offer.

"This was one of the few properties that was small enough where my wife and I could control everything," Wes said. "And make everything as perfect as we possible could instead of opening up a huge restaurant and were in over our heads.

"We wanted something small and intimate like this."

That, along with the desire to be in downtown West Bend, led to the Krimmers making the offer on the building. About two years later, on Feb. 27, 2015, Krimmer's opened, taking the place of what once was a Chinese restaurant for more than 25 years.

"Everything we offer here is completely different than any other menu here in the whole Washington County area and a lot different from anything

you've seen in Milwaukee, Chicago or New York," Wes said.

There are no canned foods in the restaurant. The staff makes the establishment's mayonnaise to go with the salad dressing. There are also zero frozen items.

"The fish that comes in here, we're one of 17 restaurants in the state of Wisconsin that deal with a fresh, flown-in seafood program," Wes said. "Our meat is one of the highest grades in the world. All the desserts are homemade. Everything is made from scratch."

He added there isn't a restaurant within 40 miles of Krimmer's that offers dry-aged steak, which he said takes years of training. The steaks have eight to 15 specifications that need to be met.

Krimmer's is able to do this because of Wes' connections from when he worked in Milwaukee.

"You pay for what you get," Wes said, adding, "we're bringing a lot of new ideas to West Bend."



Don and Georgianne Weigend of Jackson toast to celebrate a date night on Nov. 10 at Krimmer's Restaurant in West Bend. **John Ehlike/Daily News**