

# Wes Krimmer



## Waukesha County Technical College

Culinary Management, 2008

Owner and Chef, Krimmer's Restaurant

Wes Krimmer wanted to open up a restaurant since age 13. When he turned 14, he took his first step toward that dream, getting a job at McDonald's, and he has been a fixture in the restaurant industry ever since. Just over a year ago, his dream became reality when he opened up Krimmer's Restaurant in West Bend.

### **A Reality Check**

When Krimmer graduated from Moraine Park Technical College in 2006 with his Associate's Degree in Marketing, he thought he would be all set to open up a small restaurant. "When the time came, I realized I wasn't quite ready," Krimmer admitted. "I thought about it some more, started doing cooking competitions and realized I actually had to get a culinary degree if I wanted to make my dream come true."

So that's exactly what Krimmer did, enrolling in the Culinary Management program at Waukesha County Technical College. "I looked at a lot of culinary schools," he said, "but [WCTC] seemed to be the most professional outlet."

What impressed Krimmer most about the culinary program at WCTC were the experienced instructors, who were certified American Culinary Federation members also out working in the field. "The whole program was put together quite well," he said. "It was a lot of hands-on training and cooking."

One instructor in particular stands out for Krimmer, Chef Michael Lietzke, who passed away shortly after Krimmer graduated. "I was in one of his last classes," Krimmer recalled. "He had the most influence on me along with Chef James Holden."

## Learning the Tricks of the Trade

During his two years at WCTC, Krimmer went to culinary school during the day and worked at night. "I went to school from 7-3, and I would start my job from about 3:30 and worked until 11 or 12 every night," said Krimmer.

Even after he graduated from WCTC in 2008, he maintained a busy schedule. He worked at two fine-dining Milwaukee restaurants, gathering as much experience as he could, first at Mason Street Grill at the historic Pfister Hotel and then as head chef at Milwaukee Chophouse at the Hilton.

"I surrounded myself with all of the best chefs in Milwaukee, learning the tricks of the trade," Krimmer explained.



*Wes Krimmer and his wife, Kelsey, in front of Krimmer's Restaurant in West Bend on the celebration of one year in business.*

## Living Out His Dream

Known for its steak and wine pairing and other top-notch entrees and appetizers, Krimmer's Restaurant is a 42-seat fine-dining restaurant located in downtown West Bend. "We're doing a lot of very unique things that haven't been done out here in Washington County," said Krimmer.

The restaurant itself has been a labor of love — literally — with 28 family members and friends helping out along the way on everything from dry walling, putting in HVAC and electric, cleaning and more. His wife, Kelsey, is even front-of-the-house manager.

Kimmer's advice to anyone who might have a similar dream is to find a good culinary program and "to also work in the industry," said Krimmer. "There are a lot of long days and a lot of time away from family and friends. But the best thing for me was going to school, learning these cooking techniques and then going to a fine-dining restaurant and actually being able to produce and do what I learned that week. I thought that was really beneficial."

With a lot of hard work and determination, Krimmer has achieved his childhood dream, but he's not done yet. He plans on using Krimmer's Restaurant as a launch pad for his name brand. "We're looking to branch out in the future with a couple other restaurants that aren't all fine-dining but have something to do with the industry," he said. "Our goal is to have at least five different businesses — start with a small business and make our name grow from there."

"It's been a journey so far," Krimmer concluded. "There have been a lot of hiccups in the road, but it's a very exciting time in all of our lives."