



The Oakland Press/VAUGHN GURGANIAN

Chef Jeff Rose, Big Rock Chophouse.

Big Rock chef enjoys talking with customers

By JANE PETERSON
Of The Oakland Press

As executive chef at Big Rock Chophouse in Birmingham, Jeff Rose supervises 25 people and is accountable for all aspects of the kitchen, but he's not one to stay behind the scenes.

In fact, he prefers to venture into the dining room and enjoys greeting customers. He takes pleasure in talking about the food and appreciates honest feedback on the dishes he and his staff serve.

Those dishes include a range of hand-cut aged beef steaks, fresh seafood and cooked-to-order chops.

Name: Jeff Rose

Age: 34

Restaurant: Big Rock Chophouse, 245 S. Eton, Birmingham, (248) 647-7774. The restaurant serves classic American steakhouse fare as well as continental cuisine with flair in a comfortable, southwest Montana hunting lodge atmosphere. Upstairs is the Got Rocks Ultra Lounge, a cigar and martini bar. Next door is The Reserve, a state-of-the-art banquet facility that is available for social, corporate and community events. Big Rock boasts its own brewery, under the supervision of Dan Rogers.

Background: Rose developed an interest in cooking early on. He began as a dishwasher for a catering hall in his native New Jersey while in his teens. He worked his way through



CHEF OF THE WEEK

CHEF

FROM PAGE C-1

Michigan State University cooking for the president of MSU. He earned his bachelor's degree in hotel, restaurant and institutional management, then headed west. He worked for the Hyatt Regency in San Antonio as an assistant restaurant manager.

He moved to the Detroit area to become a sous chef at Sweet Lorraine's Café and Bar in Southfield. After two years there, he spent six years as a sous chef at Tribute Restaurant in Farmington Hills. Before going to Big Rock two years ago, he was chef de cuisine at Motor City Casino's Iridescence Restaurant.

His first week at Big Rock was during the Ryder Cup, which he calls a trial by fire. He was walking into a new kitchen, trying to become familiar with everything and

at the same time serving dishes to the many celebrities and athletes in town for the event.

Influences: Rose said Chef Takashi Yagihashi from Tribute Restaurant was a big influence, teaching him about food, flavors and how to make dishes come together. Rose said he continues to use some of those clean, simple flavors in his creations today.

Who knew?: When he's not in the Chophouse's kitchen, Rose enjoys mountain biking, techno music, Motown and jazz. He loves to travel.

Signature dish: Big Rock bone-in filet mignon. This is a 14-ounce tenderloin served with sautéed Swiss chard and white cheddar-roasted garlic mashed potatoes. He also mentions the braised short ribs, which just fall off the bone.

Coming events: During the holidays, Big Rock will host private parties. Once a month, it hosts a wine dinner.

Wednesday nights there is live entertainment at Got Rocks upstairs and a DJ Fridays and Saturdays.

Chef Jeff Rose shares the following recipe:

Butternut Squash Soup

1 piece butternut squash, peeled, seeded and diced

1 small onion, diced
1 stalk celery, diced
1 leek, diced
8 cups chicken stock
2 cups heavy cream

In a medium pot sweat the onion, celery, and leek. (Sweating involves cooking in a little bit of butter over medium heat until clear or translucent.) Add the squash and continue to cook until soft.

Season with salt and pepper. Add the chicken stock and simmer 10 minutes. Add the cream and cook 5 minutes.

Puree until smooth. Garnish with toasted pumpkin seeds.