



## **Jeff Usinowicz** **Executive Chef, Deschutes Brewery and Public House**

Executive Chef Jeff Usinowicz's passion for food developed early. Slow cooked meals, enjoyed in relaxed surroundings were a regular part of Jeff's life and this, along with dining in the great restaurants of New York City gave him an interest in cooking professionally. During his early stages as a chef, Jeff worked under the tutelage of Chef Michael Romano at Union Square Café. This was the perfect place to develop and hone Jeff's talents in seasonal cooking, as the restaurant uses all fresh ingredients from local markets and the famous Union Square Greenmarket's food vendors.

Moving away from the kitchens of New York - first to the resorts of Utah then to Portland, Oregon - the great bounty of the burgeoning Northwest food scene was a natural fit for Jeff's talents. Jeff's first chef position in Portland was at a small, well-regarded family Italian restaurant named Cozze, known for fresh seafood, regional Italian fare and a comprehensive Italian wine list.

Jeff later worked at Portland's Laslow's NW, alongside chef/owner Eric Laslow, which received the *Oregonian's* "Restaurant of the Year" in 2002. Working at Laslow's inspired Jeff to branch out; feeling the need to share his culinary talents and ideas he accepted an offer to create the beautiful Old Mill Café in Clackamas, OR. Built in 1903, the Old Mill Café was an ideal stage for French provincial cuisine prepared with ingredients from local farmers and foragers.

Most recently, Jeff further sharpened his skills as Corporate Chef of NW Hayden Enterprises, which included conceptualizing and opening 25 restaurants in Oregon, Washington and Montana within three years' time.

When the chance came to open the new Deschutes Brewery and Public House in Portland, Jeff felt he had to take it. "Working on opening the new pub has been the culmination of my culinary career," says Jeff. "This is a restaurant where I am truly able to focus on creating the best possible experience for customers." Jeff's menu is familiar, yet sophisticated. It highlights his ability to marry simple ingredients and coax out their best qualities to transform them into highly original, highly delicious comfort food with nuanced layers of flavors. Beer, of course, also plays a large part in his new menu, something he took from his extensive knowledge of wine and food pairing and translated specifically to Deschutes' award winning microbrews.

Take Jeff's signature Obsidian Braised Beef for example. Jeff wanted a darker, coffee side to the dish to bring out the deep meat taste, so he slightly reduces the beer, adding it later in the cooking process to make it more of a seasoning than a traditional meat braise. This knack for innovation yet respect for the ingredients makes for a complex, rich and melt-in-your-mouth dish that pairs perfectly with either a dark stout or even one of Deschutes' lighter ales. Jeff doesn't see the new Deschutes Brewery as a place for "pretty, fussy or tall food," he says. Instead, "I see this as a place for comfort food from the inside out. Influenced by the best ingredients, but always approachable, friendly and fun."