



Urban Times

# ARCHIVES

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This document contains these stories from  
past issues of Urban Times  
(or its predecessor, The Lockerbie Letter):

☐ FROM: SEPTEMBER 2006

Page 2: The Chef's Academy opening  
in the Cole-Noble neighborhood



Chef Tony Hanslits (right) will direct the teaching corps that includes Chef Scott Bright.

From September 2006:

# Serious students with serious goals at the Chef's Academy

**O**NLY THE PASSIONATE NEED APPLY – to the Chef's Academy, a new higher-education program debuting this month in a newly renovated industrial building at the northwest corner of Meridian Street and College Avenue in the Cole-Noble Commercial Arts District.

“This is not a cooking class,” said Jayson Boyers, executive director for the Chef's Academy – a project of the nearby Indiana Business College. No part-time students need apply.

Rather, Boyers said, the Chef's Academy is a program for people committed to becoming highly skilled culinary artists. “In this industry,” Boyers said, “you have to commit yourself to it to succeed. If this is not your passion, this is probably not your industry.”

The Chef's Academy is matching that commitment with its own staff, led by well-known chef Tony Hanslits, who has left the real world of restaurants to become the program's director of culinary education. Hanslits will lead a faculty of five chefs, one pastry chef and one steward, who will be in charge of ordering food as well as teaching about the economics side of the business.

“We have a lot to prove here,” said Hanslits, most noted for his work at his own restaurant, Tavola di Tosa, and later at Malibu on Maryland. “The spotlight is going to be on us.”

Which is just fine with both Hanslits and Boyers, who understand that the Chef's Academy will be judged by its early graduates – 18 months from now.

If the Indiana Business College research is correct, the people leaving the Chef's Academy armed with

either an associate's degree in culinary arts or an associate's degree in pastry arts won't have much trouble finding work in this city's better restaurants.

“The restaurants need skilled workers,” Boyers said, pointing to a survey Indiana Business College made of many of the city's finest restaurants. That survey resulted in a short videotape the school used as a recruiting tool.

Seventy students – the full allotment – will begin



◀ A \$3.7 million renovation is dramatically changing the look at the building which sits at the northwest corner of Washington Street and College Avenue, just east of the former home of Cash 'n Carry. Note the railroad trestle at the right rear.

the program on Sept. 18. They will find their new school fully equipped with five lecture classrooms, a library, a wireless computer lab with 44 laptops, and administrative space.

But the highlight of the \$3.7 million renovation of the 27,000-square-foot building are two kitchens where the students will spend about two-thirds of their time. The “small” kitchen can accommodate 24 students at a time; the larger kitchen can handle 44 more.

Ultimately, the Chef's Academy is designed to handle 300 students, but Boyers said the size of the first

wave of students was designed to give the program a strong start.

“We want to grow in a very measured, methodical way,” Boyers said.

Chef Scott Bright, the first faculty member hired by Hanslits, agreed that the students are the key to how the Chef’s Academy will be viewed by those people who hire restaurant workers.

“Our personal reputation is at stake with every student,” said Bright, a 20-year veteran chef who most recently operated Z Raving Chef, a high-end catering company whose realm stretched from Muncie and Anderson to Castleton and Fishers.

“We don’t want the students to embarrass us,” Bright said.

Boyers believes the Chef’s Academy is blessed with a strong first class made up of hopeful students who survived an intense two-hour interview. More than a few applicants were turned away.

The students will spend long days inside the Cole-Noble building before walking out the door with that associate’s degree.

“The response has been overwhelming,” said Boyers, who said the second class of “cohorts” will begin their studies in November, with the third group beginning in February. There won’t be any other new students until next July.

Hanslits, who has taught culinary arts at Ivy Tech State College, said he respects that program, but pointed out that the Chef’s Academy is a different level of education.

“There hasn’t been a true culinary institute in this area,” Hanslits said. “It’s a need.” The concept was enough to lure Hanslits away from the restaurant world, where he felt “I had done everything I could do.” He is enjoying the challenge of beginning a new program, and looking “to give something back.”

To succeed, Hanslits continues, students will need to walk into the building eager to learn. “We want to be really technical, teach different cooking techniques and give them a good solid foundation,” Hanslits said.

But while fundamentals will be a prime focus of the Chef’s Academy program, Hanslits does not intend for his classes to stick to tried-and-true recipes of the past.

“We are going to teach about current trends,” he said, pointing out that the entire faculty will be coming from real-world kitchens. “We’re out there,” he said of the teachers. “We know what’s going on today.”

The faculty itself will help establish the Chef’s Academy reputation in the restaurant world, but Hanslits knows that the ultimate test will be the quality of the graduates.

“As I have always said, the proof’s on the plate.”



We have a lot to prove here. The spotlight is going to be on us.”

**Tony Hanslits**

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– Bill Brooks