



Hereford on the Beach

Head chef Jason Pelham puts Hereford beef on the table for Jersey shore tourists.



The Windrift Hotel is a beach-front resort where tourists can relax in luxury and enjoy delicious Certified Hereford Beef.



by **Sara Gugelmeyer**

As a young boy, Jason Pelham loved watching the Swedish Chef on the Muppets, and he says he just always knew he wanted to be a chef. Now he's the head chef at the Windrift Hotel, Avalon, N.J., where the only beef product he serves is Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®). For his commitment to Hereford beef, Jason Pelham was honored with the CHB Distinguished Chef Award.

Pelham started his culinary career after graduating from the Culinary Institute of America in New York City

in 1999. Afterward, he gained valuable experience at several hotel restaurants and even a casino before accepting his current position at the Windrift Hotel in May of this year.

As head chef Pelham oversees more than 25 kitchen staff members and prepares food to be served in five

dining locations throughout the hotel. Although only 15% of the ocean-front tourist hotel's menu is beef, 100% of the beef served is CHB product. During peak summer season, between 1,500 and 2,000 meals a day are prepared under Pelham's supervision.

Pelham has only been at the hotel for less than a year, but hotel director Rick Wolf says Jason caught on quickly. "He only had four days of getting acclimated before we opened for the season. He was new, and he had to get familiar with the staff and the kitchen and the whole hotel while working, and he was able to do it in only a couple of weeks."

One of the first changes Pelham made as head chef at the Windrift was switching from Angus to Hereford beef. It was a change he had made with success at his previous job. His interest in Hereford beef was piqued because his family had a small hobby farm with

Hereford cows when he was young. After some research, he discovered the features of CHB products. "Initially it was because of the price of burgers," Jason says. "I found in an average month I save around 18% by using Hereford beef, just on one menu item."

He decided to try other CHB cuts. "I prepared each of the menu items with like cuts from both breeds of cattle and used our patrons and restaurant staff for blind tastings," Jason says. "100% of the time, Hereford came out on top. Through these tastings, I have found that Hereford actually tastes more robust, like beef should taste, contrary to Angus, which delivers a more watered-down flavor."

The better value and taste convinced Jason. "I started using other cuts on the summer menu. Not only did I like the savings, I also found the quality of the beef in this program to be much higher." **HW**

CHB Distinguished Chefs Program

Earning the Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) Distinguished Chef distinction requires a couple steps. The chef's name must be submitted by a licensed CHB distributor and the establishment itself must be licensed. The distributor is required to fill out an application and submit it the CHB LLC office. To inquire about the program, contact Mick Welch, CHB food service director, at 816-842-3757. **HW**

