

FOODSERVICE EAST PRESENTS

# SECRETS OF **SUCCESS**

May 2012

An ongoing series of interviews with chefs, restaurateurs and foodservice operators, Secrets of Success looks at the paths taken to professional recognition and acclaim.



## **Christopher B. Haynes**

**President, CBH Communications, Boston, MA**  
**By Foodservice East**

In his first PR job with a high tech PR firm, Chris Haynes was told that he didn't belong in the field. He went on to disprove that, because he "never quits", becoming recognized for outstanding, creative public relations and specializing in restaurant and retail clients. A near-death experience led him to believe "you can be a victim or a vampire." He chose to be a vampire. A six-month-long job in a Paris PR firm taught him "you can have a life and work" and exposed him to a world of glamour, coolness and creativity.

# FOODSERVICE EAST SECRETS OF SUCCESS

## **FSE: What led you to specialize in restaurants and high-end retail?**

**HAYNES:** My friend Mat Schaffer who was a food critic pointed out that there were all these restaurant publicists. Boston had a couple, but it wasn't a job I'd thought about or thought possible.

## **FSE: How did you begin?**

**HAYNES:** Helping a restaurant owner by writing a free press release about the place he was opening. I began to build a repertoire and ended up opening Aquitaine and No. 9 Park in Boston.

## **FSE: What is the secret of your success?**

**HAYNES:** I have a love and passion for what I am promoting and that comes through to the reporters/writers. I don't believe you can make anyone write about something they don't want to write about. I may not be the loudest publicist in the room but I am the one who will get the client a cover story/tv show.

I get to work with clients I trust and believe in – restaurants, retail, lifestyle. This sector of PR doesn't hurt anybody. I can put my head on the pillow and sleep with a clear conscience. I don't rep pharmaceuticals or businesses that might require crisis communications due to naughty behavior.

## **FSE: What campaigns have affected you the most?**

**HAYNES:** Aquitaine (which I still have today – half of my clients I've had for over 10 years) and No. 9 Park – not many people did that type of thing - also, working with Vidal Sassoon. I'm in it for the long haul and am in it for my clients, many whom I've had over the 13 years of CBH Communications including Seth Woods and Aquitaine Group, Evan Deluty at Stella's, Phil Aviles, Masa, Marc Kadish of Sunset Grill & Tap – all of whom I enthusiastically love working with today. Quite frankly, there's no other publicist in the city who can say they still have their first client.

## **FSE: What led you to plan your move to new office space in Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers?**

**HAYNES:** I see it as a way of making new connections, gaining more exposure and challenging myself.

## **FSE: How do you view your role in the publicist/client relationship?**

**HAYNES:** Just because the client is paying me does not put them in the driver's seat. They are hiring a p.r. professional and that places them in the passenger seat as I bring what they're doing to the attention of the media. I'm not assigned a client, as happens with other firms. I get to decide with clients on a working relationship. I've been on the other side and had clients just dumped on my desk. Now, I'm excited about everybody I work with.

## **FSE: What's the most extravagant event you ever created?**

**HAYNES:** Either one night with Placido Domingo at the Wang with dinner afterward at the Ritz or the Marc Jacobs all white opening party (he wore a white fencing outfit) where Duran Duran crashed the party.