

FOODSERVICE EAST PRESENTS

# SECRETS OF SUCCESS

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



## Michael Schlow

Chef and Restaurateur  
By Foodservice East

*Michael Schlow, a James Beard Best Chef in the Northeast award winner, has an interesting take on time. As society has become increasingly time-pressured in recent years, noting: "Most of us would like to eat well but we feel we just don't have enough time." His cookbook, "It's About Time," views time spent in the kitchen with a glass of wine, music and "something delicious simmering on the stove," as "culinary therapy." His book, he says, is for "the fearless and somewhat curious home cook."*

*He grew up in a family where food was important and a mother who made arugula salads, fresh from the garden. An award-winning chef, he shares easy to make recipes with creative twists with home cooks. We've enjoyed his crispy chocolate chunk cookies many times, and tip our hat to his recipes!*

# FOODSERVICE EAST SECRETS OF SUCCESS

**FSE: What led you to do a Greek restaurant? Did you know that a renaissance of sorts was going to happen to Greek places in Boston?**

SCHLOW: I have always loved Greek food and my wife, Adrienne, is Greek and so it has become an important part of our family. I have seen the Greek restaurant concepts growing across the country, but I saw that there was a need for it here in Boston. This restaurant is a love letter to my wife and her family.

**FSE: You've had a number of places close in recent years. What do you attribute that to?**

SCHLOW: I have had a number of restaurants open, too. Each case is different- leases end, restaurants are re-concepted and new opportunities are being created.

**FSE: What's been the hardest part of being a restaurateur in Boston in the past 10 years as more and more places have opened every year?**

SCHLOW: I love being a restaurateur in Boston. There are a large amount of new and exciting restaurants that have opened over the past decade. I am lucky to have a couple of restaurants that make up the culinary landscape of this city.

**FSE: Will that Boston Globe review lead you to do anything differently?**

SCHLOW: I cook for my guests, not for the critics.

**FSE: What is the hardest part of being a restaurateur/chef in Boston and elsewhere this year? Is labor still a big issue and if so, how do you find personnel?**

SCHLOW: Labor is a difficult issue across the country. It is difficult to find and retain talented staff. We have opened a few new places and are lucky to have some great people on our team. We just need to make sure that they get the training and understand our philosophy as a company.

**FSE: You've been opening in sites beyond Boston in recent years – in Hanover, NH, Washington, DC - what can you tell me about those establishments and what more you have planned?**

SCHLOW: D.C. has been great to me. The D.C. residents love Tico and The Riggsby. Their support and approval has been amazing. We just opened Alta Strada down there and it is off to a great start!

**FSE: How would you characterize your culinary perspective and how has it changed, if it has, over the years since you first began cooking professionally?**

SCHLOW: I think you always have to evolve and learn as a chef. I will never stop learning and trying new things. I love to take chances and develop as a chef. Just because I have been doing this for three decades doesn't mean I stop learning.

**FSE: What do you love most about what you do and what do you like least?**

SCHLOW: I love teaching and mentoring each new group of restaurant industry folks. At this point, it is less about me and more about how I can help mold and develop the young talent of today to make their own mark in the future. The thing I like least is being away from my family. The restaurant industry is not a 9-5 job and I can't punch in and out like a lot of other careers. It means I miss time with my daughters and wife more than I would like.

**FSE: When you go out to eat, what kinds of places/foods do you especially enjoy?**

SCHLOW: I love trying all sorts of food. I tend to eat a lot of Mediterranean and Japanese cuisine as it is light and healthy. It fits well into my lifestyle.