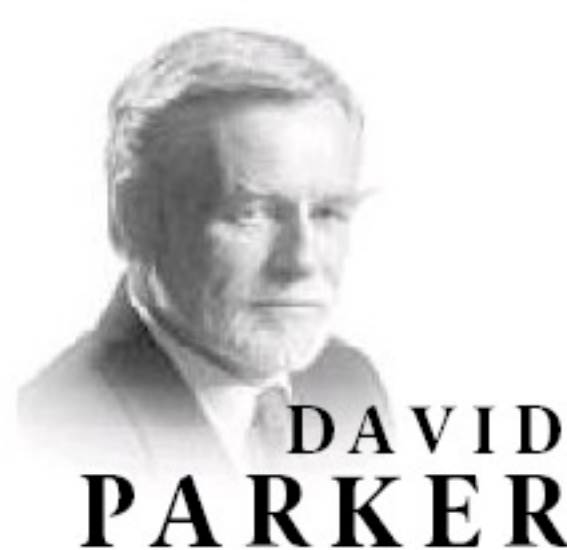


Well done! Calgary gets a Ruth's Chris



DAVID PARKER

Chances are that anyone who has travelled into the United States has eaten at a **Ruth's Chris Steak House**.

Ruth Fentel bought a Chris Steak House in New Orleans in 1965, added her name above the front door and today the company is a successful operation with 110 locations in many states.

On Nov. 5 Calgary gets a Ruth's Chris, thanks to **Brian Collins**, a former owner of **Tony Roma's** in Calgary and Lethbridge, who applied for a franchise seven years ago. He is operating partner of the restaurant that will encircle the whole of the core of the Calgary Tower on the Plus 15 level — a 12,000-square-foot area that can seat 260.

Collins has a well-experienced group of partners in the venture, including **Rick Blaskin** of Calgary who with co-owns five **Moxie's** in Edmonton and, along with Collins, is opening two more locations in the Toronto area.

Brendan Connolly and **Rob Gable**, both Edmonton businessmen, are also hands-on investors busy today at the Calgary operation.

The tower restaurant will be entered either at the Plus-15 level from the parkade or through a new, private staircase from the west side of the tower's main doors. The large dining room faces directly up Centre Street and the lounge looks out west along 9th Avenue. Four private rooms seating from 12 to 100 guests can be blocked off so that the restaurant area need never be closed while private functions are being catered.

Designed to strict Ruth's Chris guidelines, the kitchen and its equipment are exceptional. Centre stage will be executive chef **David Westerlund**, formerly with **Cactus Club**, who has been in the company's New Jersey training facility for some time experiencing what makes Ruth's Chris steaks so unique.

It starts with the beef — mel-low-tasting, 100 per cent corn-fed from the U.S., although I'm assured Alberta prime strip loin will also be a menu feature. Steaks go into 1,800-degree ovens that quickly cook both sides and seal in juices.

General manager **Marcel Kuenzler** says he will serve a good variety of international dishes including New Orleans-style seafood, but they are all unique to the chain, as are the lounge's martinis and other specialty drinks. His stock of 2,200 bottles of wine is presented in lofty wine towers.



Ted Jacob, Calgary Herald

Some of the principals of Ruth's Chris Steak House are, from left, **Brendan Connolly** and **Rick Blaskin**, along with general manager **Marcel Kuenzler**.

Kuenzler knows the Calgary market well. He was manager of food and beverage at the **Calgary Zoo**, executive chef at the **Pengrowth Saddledome** for the **Calgary Flames**, and more recently opening executive chef at **Bear's Den** along Highway 1A.

Kuenzler has been busy hiring and training staff. He needs a total of 100 full- and part-time employees, including a crew of 35 servers. His floor managers are currently undergoing seven-week training sessions in various restaurant locations in the U.S.

There are two Ruth's Chris restaurants in Toronto and the local partners opened a 10,000-square-foot Edmonton franchise last October across from the **Macdonald Hotel**, which has been successful.

I expect the centrally located Calgary Tower site will be another winner with new neighbours **Le Germain** across the road on Centre Street and the under-construction **Palliser South** office tower on the corner of 10th Avenue and 1st Street S.E.

The public is invited to **Lougheed House** for an Oct. 23 launch of a special commemorative book celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Law Society of Alberta. **James Peacock**, president of the society, and Edmonton Judge **Jack Watson** will be on hand to introduce *Just Works: Lawyers in Alberta 1907-2007*, a collection of essays illustrating the vibrant history of the law and lawyers in this province. The event starts at 5 p.m.

based **Canadian Rocky Mountain Resorts** in being honoured as Regional Company of the Year by **Foodservice and Hospitality** magazine, the only national recognition program for the food service and hospitality industry.

Company founders **Connie** and **Pat O'Connor** share a love of the luxurious but comfortable surroundings and fabulous food.

CEO **Jocelyn Flanagan** and her staff at **e=mc2** had another great year creating, producing and managing events. They figure they served 243,672 glasses of wine on behalf of clients. The space they had occupied in the Alberta Building, at the corner of Stephen Avenue and 1st Street S.W., had to be vacated to make way for **Fashion Central**. But Flanagan is happy with her new location at 625 11th Ave. S.W., which gives her double the space.

It will serve her own staff of 22 as well as a sister company called **Fuze Entertainment Solutions** — the new name for **Dew Productions**, which Flanagan had purchased, given a facelift and now runs as an independent company.

As a regular coffee drinker, the words cafe au lait do little to excite me, but put its character into beer, and surprisingly it tastes pretty good. Big Rock has a new blend of seasonal beer called Espresso Stout. If you like the dark stuff, you should give it a try.

DAVID PARKER APPEARS TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY. HE CAN BE REACHED AT 830-4622 OR E-MAIL INFO@DAVIDPARKER.CA.

Congratulations to Calgary-