Chef Kevin Aho

Chef Kevin Aho, executive chef, at The Tavern at Wild Marsh and The Tavern on the Crow was named the 2011 & 2013 National CHB Distinguished Chef. Chef Aho was nominated by Sysco Foods. His nomination, coupled by letters of recommendation, his resume, his menu and entrees, led to this honor.

Culinary Experience

Kevin Aho's background is diverse, and his talent is wide. He's been around the world and has prepared dishes for rock bands and international dignitaries. The ambassador for Kuwait enjoyed Chef Aho’s preparations. And, in the 1980’s, he privately cooked for bands including Motley Crue, Ratt, Cinderella and Jackyl when they were touring through the area. Despite what his future may hold, he says one thing is for certain: he’s now forever a fan of Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®). After a nearly two–decade connection to Angus branded beef, he's discovered the CHB program to be beyond comparison. Chef Aho has also been featured in his own cooking shows, as well as a cooking segment on a Duluth television newscast. And, he was the star in nearly a dozen local PBS television segments entitled “Cooking with Kevin.” He was named a top chef in Duluth and was presented awards for the best chili and ribs in the city, as well.
Chef Aho’s culinary career began as a line cook when he was 15. However following culinary school, he interned at five-star restaurants in Minneapolis–Saint Paul, Minn., and eventually worked as a sous chef in Duluth, Minn., specializing in French and Italian cuisine. His talent and expertise quickly grew. And before long, restaurant owners sought Chef Aho’s talents as a consultant and head chef to help open their new restaurants.

**Tasting Certified Hereford Beef (CHB®)**

Chef Aho says his customer response has been incredible, too. “We hear raving reviews,” he says. “And they ask what type of beef we offer. With the Certified Hereford Beef logo being added to our menu, diners will know. And, I love to tell Hereford’s story.” Many clients are not familiar with Hereford beef. “Once, Hereford beef was only served to royalty,” Aho says. “Now it’s making a comeback. With Angus beef you’re never sure if you’re truly eating ‘Angus beef,’ with the crossbreeding allowed in those branded programs. Three or four times a weekend, diners ask what this wonderful beef is.” Chef Aho is happy to share the Hereford story – especially with his newly awarded Certified Hereford Beef Distinguished Chef title.
"Being named the 2011 & 2013 CHB Distinguished Chef is a tremendous honor. I didn’t even think I had a chance, with over 20,000 chefs nationwide nominated. This is the biggest honor I’ve ever received. It floored me. And I’m proud to now wear the Certified Hereford Beef Distinguished Chef patch on every chef coat I wear." With all that Chef Aho has accomplished, and with his love of the CHB brand, he will no doubt bring honor to the CHB Distinguished Chef name. And no matter what his future may hold, it’s likely that CHB will be rockin’ alongside him on the journey.

**Fresh Ingredients**

No prepackaged sauces are used at his restaurants. Everything is made to order. “We make all of our sauces from scratch – we don’t serve A1® or Heinz 57® Sauce,” Chef Aho says. “We make duxelle, Diane and vioult sauces on the fly, with a pinch of this and that. Everything is as fresh as the steaks being cooked.” And, those steaks are top-quality, thanks to Chef Aho’s choice last year to feature CHB on the menu. “I had been an Angus man for the past 20 years,” he says. “But I had heard a lot about Certified Hereford Beef. I wanted the cuts to be compared apples to apples with Angus, with no seasonings or sauces. It was absolutely amazing." CHB won, hands down, based on tenderness and flavor. “When you take a filet that’s not dry aged and can cut it with a plastic butter knife, and it melts in your mouth – well, that’s one step below Kobe beef, in my opinion,” Chef Aho regards the high standards of CHB to be set apart from other beef programs. “Everything about it is 100% better, quality wise, than everything I’ve ever used,” he says.
Presentation

When it comes to the dishes Aho prepares, presentation is everything. “People stand and take photos of their plates before they’ll eat their food,” Aho says. “When the servers bring out the food and put the center of the plate in front of them, diners say they can’t eat the food. It’s too beautiful.” And, Aho says, the CHB product allows for perfect presentations. “The steaks are always a beautiful red when they come out of the package,” he says. “They never have a discoloration.”

Executive Chef Kevin Aho has awards that include 1999 March of Dimes Gourmet Chef Auction, 2000 March of Dimes Gourmet Chef Auction and the Official Best of the Best Award of Excellence in Minnesota for 2011. Chef Aho has also won numerous awards for his homemade soups and signature chili.