

INDULGENCE



(Our cover photo) An elderly woman looks on in wonder as Scott Morgan demonstrates his culinary talents at Quackenbush's. Quackenbush's is one of several Eugene businesses to recognize the gourmet market. Quackenbush's and Morgan will be holding another demonstration today from 11 to 1 in honor of the store's new gourmet section.



Good cooking requires repetition, patience and perseverance. One slip could mean a mis-fluted mushroom or below-par broccoli, or a hollandaise sauce that falls apart.

It's one of those titillating delights harkening back to Epicurus and other big eaters. It's the indulgence of the palate between the sheets, and the ultimate in catering.

But until three months ago, no one had tried to make a Eugene business out of breakfast in bed. Two University seniors, Ric Wilson and Scott Morgan, thought it worth a try. They founded the Breakfast in Bed catering service, and began tapping a previously unindulged Eugene market.

"We wanted to find something that would set us apart," says Morgan. "We called around and found no other service offering breakfast in bed, or any other forms of extravagant entertainment. We decided to go all out."

Morgan got his first taste of real class in San Francisco, an experience that would later help him model the breakfast in bed philosophy.

"One night while I was in San Francisco my girl friend rented a Rolls Royce. She bought fine champagne and caviar, and we spent the evening cruising the streets of San Francisco," he recalls. "It was great in the back seat; the windows had curtains and we could do anything. That was when I first realized how really far you can go in entertainment."

At first Morgan and Wilson worried that Eugene might not be ready for breakfast in bed. But they calculated that the student market might be ready for good food in privacy.

"I used to live in the dorms," explains Morgan. "If we wanted good food alone we had no place to go. We usually ended up at the Black Angus."

The idea caught on, mostly with sorority women who wanted to impress their boyfriends. "We expected to go maybe a month without any orders, and then to slowly pick up business," recalls Morgan. "Instead we had orders the first week."

Already the service has catered over 25 breakfasts and around 50 dinners, ranging in size from two to 45 people. They charge \$20 for breakfast and \$35 for dinner, with all the trimmings.

The key to breakfast in bed service has been sophisticated splurge. Each breakfast, Morgan and Wilson work through an elaborate agenda calculated to offer their customers "a meal they'll never forget."

Often, breakfast is purchased for wives, husbands and lovers as a surprise. Caterers usually enter their customer's house in the early morning. One begins preparing the meal while the other goes into the bedroom to surprise the customer.

"We wear breakfasty looking clothes," says Morgan. "Light blue pants and a light shirt. We act cheerful, smile and tell them their breakfast has arrived." Sometimes they play "Wake up all you children... put on the morning," on the stereo to set the mood.

The sight of two breakfasty looking strangers with smiles on their faces playing songs about morning at 6 a.m. comes as a new experience to most. Morgan recalls one old couple that sat rigid in bed nervously eyeing the caterers for the first part of the meal.

Once the customer wakes up, the caterers present the surprised loved one and the partner with a rose, fresh squeezed orange juice and a brioche. Morgan also has a harpist standing by who can bring her harp into the bedroom and strum, for an extra charge. No one has requested the harp yet.

As the clients sip their orange juice and contemplate their flower, Morgan prepares eggs benedict in the kitchen. Eggs benedict require meticulous preparation.

"Most people think they've had eggs benedict in a restaurant," says Morgan. They were wrong. True eggs benedict requires more than an English muffin, Canadian bacon and a poached egg. McDonald's can do that. The test comes in the hollandaise sauce.

"The trick is to serve the sauce within 30 minutes so it doesn't fall apart on the plate."

The eggs benedict, fresh fruit and coffee make their entrance on silver trays, often to the accompaniment of music.

When the meal is finished the customer receives a hot lemon towel to clean up. "The clients usually get over their shock right away," says Morgan. "Before long they really get into it. They start ringing their glass service bell and having a good time."

The old suspicious couple, for example, was chatting by the end of the meal. Morgan says he enjoys meeting customers.

"You have to be able to go into different situations," he says. "When you serve at a restaurant people come in and they wanna eat. Big deal."

"But when you're going into a stranger's bedroom you have to use more tact."

Breakfast in Bed has expanded with its success. Over the spring break Morgan reinvested his breakfast profits, sold everything he owned, and, with Wilson, purchased a home. They hope the house will be a place customers who want fine congenial dining may come to indulge. Morgan and Wilson have repainted the house, decorated several rooms, installed a hot tub and manicured the outside lawns.

Morgan gets to know every client before he begins entertainment. "We ask for hobbies, their line of work, their food preference," says Morgan. "By the time they will come to our house, we will be good friends."

This personal acquaintance helps Morgan and Wilson tailor entertainment to fit their clients.

"For example, a customer happens to like badminton," says Morgan, "we can arrange to have a badminton set put out on one of the lawns."

Breakfast in Bed has been contacted to do several corporate dinners, office parties and gatherings for Weyerhaeuser, Georgia-Pacific and Place Two. Morgan will appear before the Chamber of Commerce in May to talk about the breakfast in bed business.

It seems Breakfast in Bed has been accepted by the business world. Good cooking, according to Morgan, requires concentration, perseverance and someone who appreciates good food. College students have no class, he says. They would prefer steak or pancakes to an exotic dish. But the business clientele give Morgan relief. These clients appreciate a properly fluted mushroom, a precisely carved egg or a well-served fois de mere.

Morgan and Wilson personally try out every menu before they serve it to customers. A tested dinner might include steak dianne with a cool guacamole on the side made with honey and onions. Tomato dishes go well with steak, according to Morgan. Their color, texture and flavor complement the meat. He therefore might serve duchess tomatoes enriched with eggs, butter and alcohol.

"To neutralize the palate after this meal," says Morgan, "I would recommend my favorite desert: pears in glaze sauce. In this dish I stew pears with red wine and cinnamon and serve them hot with a vanilla custard sauce."

Morgan soon hopes to have a BMW to escort clients to and from the house. "I think we have found our market," says Morgan. "Our customers say there is no restaurant in town they can go to for a meal they will remember for a year."

Morgan says he will continue serving customers breakfast in bed, but he hopes to titillate new and different areas of the Eugene epicurean market.

"We're out to make people happy," Morgan explains.

Story by Jock Hatfield
Photos by Erich Boekelheide

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