

DINING

Chefs, restaurants, reviews, recipes,
culinary events & foodie features

CLOSE TO HOME

The couple who cares—Michel Lalewicz and Nancy Gorshe

Theirs is a story of persistence and commitment

By DAVID CAMPICHE
FOR COAST WEEKEND

The sun was throwing tangerine-colored rays through striated layers of lacy clouds. Below, the Pacific Ocean waited like Willy Mays with a baseball glove.

Michael Lalewicz uncorked a lovely pinot noir from the legendary winemaker David Lett, from Eyrie vineyards in the Willamette Valley, realizing perhaps that he, too, has achieved a certain fame with his cooking prowess.

What does hard work get you? More hard work. “I like it,” Michael said defensively.

Nancy Gorshe, his partner and wife, pushed a plate of soft French cheese across the counter in their Surfside, Wash., home while a crown of Oregon lamb rested on the stovetop, and suddenly, conversation bloomed, just like the mother sun, radiating intensity as it sank into the ocean. Au revoir.

Dusk hovered, just behind.

Welcome to Michael and Nancy’s life.

Detroit: the place of transformation for boy, young man and, later, master chef—a culinary bodhisattva surrounded by a dozen ethnic cultures and the spirit of his mother’s cooking. In the ninth grade he held three jobs, the most interesting of which was at a pizzeria owned by the mob. He also refinished floors and cleaned suede and leather. In between, he ran cross-country.

And Nancy: a Spokane girl who escaped a conservative milieu to become a professional lobbyist in Washington, D.C. (liberal, yes), and later, the soft-spoken maître d’ or maiden-behold-thou-art-so-kind-and-so-competent, at The Depot Restaurant in Seaview, a palace of delicacies that represents the couple’s lifeblood.

Their first meeting: A “Cheers”-like restaurant in D.C. called Curley’s Garage and Food Drinkery where Mike hung out like Norm and usurped his best friend’s interest in the lovely professional lady who stumbled into the lair of wine and fine food, which was what brought Michael



Patrick Webb

Nancy Gorshe and Michael Lalewicz are known for providing fantastic dining at The Depot in Seaview, Wash.



Colin Murphey

Chef-owner Michael Lalewicz examines The Depot Restaurant’s selection of wine.

there in the first place.

What sustains him, in fairness, is creativity. And Michael likes a good beer.

Nancy understands how to make a person feel comfortable. How to massage a friendly but professional relationship. How to be an inspiration in the community, where she has her hands in nearly every organization and tap-dances her way through the complexity of social intercourse with the dexterity of a ballerina. And she is good enough to make hard decisions. Good enough to rise to the top and stay on top. If Michael crafts the food, Nancy steers the ship.

Does the couple tire? Of course! But back at you, Michael, because, you like it that way.

And how did this tight couple earn their accolades? Well, with one persistent step after another. Nothing in the restaurant business ever comes easily. They know that as well as any professional with 20-year chevrons on their shoulders.

Theirs is a story of persistence and commitment. And perhaps several chapters titled “love.” And love takes hard work. **cw**



Patrick Webb

Chef Michael Lalewicz temporarily sets a pan ablaze while cooking in his kitchen at The Depot in Seaview, Wash.