

Cooking at home with chef Holen

Baked Alaska owner creates online cooking series

BY ALYSSA EVANS

Within 24 hours of closing his restaurant's doors in March, chef Chris Holen had a cooking video online.

In the two months since, Holen has filmed and uploaded about 25 videos. In each video, Holen talks about the history behind a food or dish, and a way to cook it. Topics range from making homemade sauce, to using foraged goods to cooking fish.

"We're all so busy with things normally in our life," Holen said. "Now we don't even know what day it is. But what we do have is time with our families to make things like risotto."

Baked Alaska, Holen's restaurant, was closed in mid-March after Gov. Kate Brown ordered restaurants to only offer takeout and delivery services.

"I went, 'What can we do?' We can't do takeout, our food is not conducive to that," Holen said. "(The videos) are a way to maintain our relationship with customers during this time. It's a comforting way to come into people's homes and still connect with diners."

Getting creative

Creating cooking videos is something Holen has always wanted to try. His experience with them primarily has come from his company Chef Outta Water, where he partners with chefs around the world to learn about their cultures and share his own.

"Not having the restaurant to go to every day gives me that time to do something I've wanted to do a long time," Holen said. "Seeing people's reactions and engagement has kept me going the whole time."

Watch the videos

Facebook: facebook.com/chefouttawater/

Instagram: instagram.com/chefouttawater/

YouTube: bit.ly/2LoqjOw

We've set it up so people can learn what they want."

The videos are posted on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. On each platform, Holen asks viewers what they want to see in the next video and answers any questions he gets.

"It's kept me creative," Holen said. "For the first week or two I had lots of things to work with as I was winding down the restaurant's inventory. As time has gone on, I've had less and less to work on. As a chef and a person, I've taught myself new things."

Learning along the way

In making the videos, Holen first decides what dish he wants to feature. The dish is often suggested by a viewer or local food producer.

"It helps me be inspired for the next video if I know what people are looking for. Even when someone asks me to make something obscure, I'll do what I can," he said.

Then he researches the dish.

"I make a cup of coffee and find out what I'm going to have to work with to go from there. I divide what I learn into history, nutritional value and something interesting about the dish," Holen said.

The day before filming the video, Holen makes the dish in a trial run to make sure everything tastes right. Then he fact-checks



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

See Page 5 **Chris Holen prepares to make a meal in his kitchen.**

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