

2021 READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

The DEPOT Restaurant enters a new era

Beloved chef Lalewicz wins Readers' Choice Best Chef once again, in time to pass the torch

BY PETER KORCHNAK

Michael Lalewicz has lost count of how many Coast Weekend Readers' Choice Awards The DEPOT Restaurant has amassed over the 19 years he and his wife, Nancy Gorshe, have owned it. He is thrilled about the winning streak. For him, it's a compliment from the community, but what matters most to him is "making people happy, that's what we like to do."

The last day of February was also Lalewicz's last as the Seaview, Washington, restaurant's chef. "I'm very tired. Eleven to twelve hours a day, six days a week, it took the wind out of my sails," Lalewicz said. Challenges wrought by the pandemic became the last straw. "We are all very dedicated here, everybody who works here works just as hard as I did. That's what made us a good team," Lalewicz said.

Gorshe, his wife, agrees. "Even though the restaurant may get the best dining award and Michael the best chef, it's really about everybody. We want to thank everybody," Gorshe said.

This includes Ashley Wassmer, one of the restaurant's first two employees and Readers' Choice Award Best Server for the second straight year. "She's like a daughter to us," Gorshe said. Having worked at the Depot for 20 years, since she was 15, Wassmer appreciates the accolade but feels bashful about it. "I really love the restaurant, obviously, and I'm lucky that I work with really good people," Wassmer said.

In total, The DEPOT won six first place 2021 Readers' Choice Awards, including Wassmer's Best Server award and Lale-



Photos by Peter Korchnak

ABOVE: From left, The DEPOT Restaurant's Jamie Gisby, Ashley Wassmer, Michael Lalewicz and Nancy Gorshe. **LEFT:** The DEPOT Restaurant in Seaview.

wicz's Best Chef award in addition to winning best burger, catering, dessert and fine dining. The restaurant was the runner up for Best Clam Chowder.

Jamie Gisby, The DEPOT's longtime sous chef, who has taken over the kitchen, admits that stepping into Lalewicz's shoes

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