

## Local Flavor Can Give You an Edge Over the Competition: A Conversation with Marc Rosen

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Opening a new hotel can be a daunting task for a chef, especially if it is only the third hotel you've worked at in your 30 year career. Fortunately, when Executive Chef Marc Rosen opened the Renaissance Boston Hotel & Spa at Patriot Place earlier this summer, he had a great team in place and had a very smooth opening.

"This was one of the easiest and best openings I've ever done," Rosen said. "I have a great team. Everyone was 'dressed for success' and we took it and ran with it."

Rosen and his team of 20 are in charge of both the banquet operations and the restaurant, Twenty8 Food & Spirits. Rosen was inspired

by the bold design of the restaurant to create a menu with a focus on regional flavors and local suppliers. The geometric-patterned booths and glass chandeliers create a unique and quirky setting for Rosen's upscale comfort food.

"Most of [the food] is all from local New England areas, which is awesome because it's fresh," Rosen said.

Even with the unstable economy and the competition from the nine other restaurants at Patriot Place, an outdoor mall adjacent to Gillette Stadium, Rosen thinks that Twenty8 has the advantage of having a unique feel and being reasonably priced.

"I've always been big on giving the guest their money's worth," he said. "We don't have a theme; we just do great regional, eclectic food. I think we are a cut above the norm."

Though he describes his menu as "eclectic," Rosen believes in keeping his plates simple and is inspired by Jacques Pepin's classic style. He had the opportunity to work with Pepin for six months during his time at the Russian Tea Room in New York City. Recently, Rosen said he's seen a shift in the industry back to focusing on the food, instead of on the chef.

"A couple of great flavors on a plate are all you need," he said. "Now it's more about the food and making sure it is consistent. It's not about being famous anymore. It's about delivering a great product."

At this stage in his career, Rosen could get caught up in the paperwork that comes with being an Executive Chef and not be in the kitchen making sure his team is putting out a great product. But that is not his style.

"I'm in the kitchen a lot more than I'm in my office," he said. "I've always been a working chef and will be a working chef until the day I get out of the business."

That's not to say he doesn't enjoy the corporate environment that comes with working for a large hotel, like the Renaissance. It allows him to spend time with his 8-year-old son and his wife while still being able to pursue his love of cooking. It was his family that brought him to New England seven years ago. After spending 15 years in fast paced life Manhattan, where he worked in restaurants such as the Russian Tea Room and the York Grill, he and his wife wanted a change and moved to Rhode Island, where Rosen worked at the Capital Grille and Schula's Steakhouse at the Providence Hilton. When the opportunity to open the Renaissance came about, Rosen jumped at the chance to have a new challenge. And so far, taking the chance has paid off.



"Everything about this place has been great since day one," he said. "Being able to cook my own food is just awesome."

With its location immediately next to Gillette Stadium, home of the New England Patriots, Rosen and the hotel are sure to have a busy fall and winter ahead of them, but he is looking forward to continuing to put out a great product to please his customers.

"Anything that happens at Gillette is great for us business-wise," he said. "Our ambiance and décor, I think, make guests want to come and enjoy."

