

Steeplechase Dining

Residents chose the name Steeplechase for White Horse Village's new dining venue, and the architects brought it to life. Executive Chef Michael Frey and Director of Dining Services Margie Hymerling are pictured proudly posing at Steeplechase Dining's entrance.

The Epitome of Dining Excellence

AT WHITE HORSE VILLAGE



BY SUSAN I. SHIBER

Every day at White Horse Village dawns with new opportunities to explore any number of interesting activities, or simply relax in quiet beauty. Set on 96 nature-blessed acres, White Horse Village is a nonprofit continuing care retirement community (CCRC) designed to enrich the lifestyles of 400 residents living in apartments, villas, and carriage homes, and 127 residents living in the Healthcare Center. With a vision to set the standard of excellence for its industry, White Horse Village provides exemplary services in senior living and across the continuum of care.

Glorious gardens bloom in seasonal color and vegetation, bocce courts, shuffleboard, and a putting green are sources of fun and outdoor social interaction. Inside, a swimming pool, spa, fitness center, dance

and art studios, library, and more fulfill residents. One of the greatest joys of living at White Horse Village is the food. Earlier this year, cuisine, ambience, and service soared to five-star status.

LOOKING PAST THE PADDOCK GRILLE

“Our dining program is outstanding, thanks to our dining team and the management company, FLIK Lifestyles,” extols Dottie Mallon, Vice President of Marketing & Public Relations. “FLIK is one of the largest providers of food management services in the country. We are fortunate to have its buying power, menu development expertise, and commitment to exceptional nutrition right at our fingertips.”

FLIK, in its discriminating wisdom, offers praise to White Horse Village, as well. The

community stood out as its 2017 National Account of the Year. It is the first CCRC to receive the distinction of Center for Excellence.

Residents agree, and over the years have savored food and friendship in the Paddock Grille. Whether they dine in, take food home, or purchase grocery items, it is a pleasant go-to spot. When there is a family gathering, special event, or meeting, Paddock Grille chefs are caterers of record, who are praised by guests.

“We uphold the highest values, and our culinary program is stellar,” exclaims Margie Hymerling, Director of Dining Services. “To provide even better experiences for our residents, we decided to create an extraordinary dining venue.” “Our main dining areas were dated,” adds Mallon. “To be competitive and attract the next generation of retirees, updates were necessary.”

In order to determine programmatic changes, Hymerling and the Senior Leadership team interviewed current and future residents and gathered valuable information from market leaders, industry executives, and experts in the culinary world. Their extensive research and due diligence revealed distinctive requests. The wish list included a desire for a full-service tavern, flexibility to purchase alcohol through the resident meal program, and personal liquor storage options. Those surveyed wanted to keep buffet-style meals, yet have formal dining, as well. Other suggestions ranged from expanding the salad bar to offering made-to-order burgers. To enhance health and nutrition knowledge, they asked to have calorie count and nutrient analyses of all foods. They also hoped to have the chef available to answer questions.

A Dining Renovation Task Force was formed; City Invincible, a full-service, multi-market architectural design firm along with Paul Risk Construction, were contracted; and the main dining area was closed for eight months during construction. Results exceed spectacular.

STEEPLECHASE IS MATCHLESS IN DESIGN & FUNCTION

Residents chose the name Steeplechase for the new dining venue, and the architects brought it to life. City Invincible's Quinn deMenna, AIA, explains. "White Horse Village is now setting the bar in life plan communities, where dining



White Horse Tavern pub and lounge – where socializing and pub dining doesn't get much better!

Dining is centered around the entire experience. Interior finishes are elegant, lush, and sophisticated without being stark, formal, or stuffy. Rustic timber and black iron accents, along with horizontal wood paneling, evoke regional equestrian imagery reinforced by horse-themed artwork.





Steeplechase Dining features both buffet and formal dining.

Save the Date

Octofair 2018

Saturday, October 13 – 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Residents, families, and countless others look forward to this annual autumn celebration. There is something for all ages to share. From fashions to quilts, homemade baked goods to new, used, and sometimes rare books, and silent auction to raffles.

Don't miss it!

venues are taking on a more hospitality approach. Dining rooms are no longer a vast space of tables and chairs, like a high school cafeteria. Dining is centered around the entire experience. Interior finishes are elegant, lush, and sophisticated without being stark, formal, or stuffy."

The project consists of 9,060 square feet of interior renovations. A dramatic stone fireplace is the entrance focal point. Rustic timber and black iron accents, along with horizontal wood paneling, evoke regional equestrian imagery reinforced by horse-themed artwork.

A neutral palette is spiced with accent colors, and patterns and texture add richness and interest. Movable shōji textured glass doors offer seating flexibility between dining rooms. "The popular *country club* Tavern," notes deMenna, "is highlighted by a table-height bar, complete with a disappearing television, a big hit with sports fans, especially on Triple Crown days. And, for the Sunday brunch crowd, there is the



To say the least, Steeplechase's dessert bar is enormously popular!

Steeplechase's Dressage dining room is for those who prefer full-service from-the-menu dining.



Porch, enhanced with black iron sconces, fans, and a soothing wood-beaded blue ceiling." "The Porch overlooks our nine-hole putting green and lovely campus," points out Mallon.

Steeplechase Dining features both buffet and formal dining. Within the unparalleled new high-end restaurant-styled venue is Meadows for casual and buffet meals, Dressage for those who prefer full-service from-the-menu dining, and the White Horse Tavern pub and lounge.

Among features too many to cover in a magazine article are personalized liquor lockers to store bottles in the Tavern, a signature cocktail list, a card room, and ample meeting space. No detail was overlooked, and logistics were essential.

“We moved the buffet four times until it was perfect,” remarks Mallon. “We made sure tables were placed to allow simple-to-navigate pathways. Bench seating was installed, which makes pulling up in a wheelchair easy. Large tables are located in quiet zones, and small ones appear in action areas. Mobility, seeing, and hearing were considered during each step of planning. Acoustic panels buffer the normal din of eating. The décor is truly stunning, and our food is superlative.”

Earlier this year, hundreds of residents, dignitaries, families, and friends celebrated the Grand Opening. The entire rotunda and hallway were filled with people waiting to see Steeplechase Dining. Astonishment and delight surged, and applause erupted. When guests tasted a wide array of food samples, happiness grew and praise never stopped. It still hasn't!

MEET THE CHEF

Michael Frey is a former White Horse Village sous chef, who moved up the FLIK Lifestyles ladder to an Executive Chef position at another CCRC. He is now back at



White Horse as Executive Chef, much to the palatable pleasure of all. Frey is a culinary arts graduate of The Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College. “I grew up in the industry,” he says. “When I was 16, I worked at Kimberlton Whole Foods. I was a chef at

Seven Stars Inn and Gilmore's before coming to White Horse Village the first time.”

Frey is on a never-ending search for ideas to make menus sparkle. He collects high-end cookbooks, surfs websites, and visits numerous restaurants. “You have to keep it fresh and exciting,” he insists. “Residents are very happy when menus and flavors change with the season. They like to see the *show* at our Friday *Cuisines of the World* action station and are particularly fond of food with a story linked to its origin. Being able to share different types of cooking all under one roof is wonderful for me and my staff.”

It's wonderful for residents, too. Visit White Horse Village, and take a tour of the grounds, facilities, residences, and Steeplechase Dining. You probably won't want to leave the community. If you're age 62 or older, you don't have to. **CCL**

White Horse Village

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