

Biography of Matt Prentice

Metro Detroiters might say Horatio Alger was a classic "Matt Prentice" story. Prentice would never suggest such a thing, but his 28-year legacy of classic American entrepreneurship has become restaurant folklore in southeast Michigan.

At age twenty, when Matthew Prentice left the Culinary Institute of America before graduating, his dreams of becoming a chef began to fade. Diminishing funds and family health problems required Prentice to return home to Royal Oak, Michigan, and go to work. When a floundering local delicatessen closed its doors, Prentice scraped together enough investment money to buy the deli in 1980.

Thanks to a savvy deal to settle the accumulated debt of the deli's previous owner, Prentice's longshot venture almost immediately began to prosper. From the beginning he built customer loyalty with unparalleled value and customer service. In 1984 Prentice teamed with developer and mentor Sam Frankel to open Café Jardin, located on the site of a former cafe in the center of the prestigious Somerset Mall. In fact, Prentice frequently succeeds where others have failed. Ten of Prentice's restaurants "rose from the ashes" of failed eateries.

Today, Prentice is a leading Michigan Restaurateur and one of the state's largest caterers. Recently, he was chosen by Henry Ford Hospital to "revolutionize" health care feeding for Michigan's foremost healthcare system where he is creating food that assists in the healing process.

The Matt Prentice Restaurant Group owns and operates nine different restaurant concepts, an 11,000 square foot artisan bread factory and patisserie and 5 banquet facilities. The company is also one of the largest off premise caterers in Michigan complete with a fleet of trucks and propane kitchens.

The Matt Prentice Restaurant Group catering operation has catered some of the largest and most prestigious events in Michigan history. It is the only major caterer in Michigan that can offer Kosher cuisine as well. Matt Prentice Restaurant Group has catered for Presidents, Governors and multiple celebrities. It is currently developing a film making catering division for Michigan's new entry into the motion picture industry.

As the corporation has expanded, the local and national media have taken note. Prentice appeared in Entrepreneur Magazine's 1992 "40 Under 40" issue, and was also named to the Crain's Detroit Business annual "40 Under 40" the same year. Prentice is frequently quoted as an industry leader in hospitality and restaurant trade magazines. Restaurants & Institutions magazine recognized Prentice as one of the nation's top "Concept Creators" in 1993 and "One to Watch" in 1995. Nation's Restaurant News, a leading trade publication, rates Prentice as one of America's top 50 "Tastemakers" for 1999. Prentice's achievements, leadership and commitment to the community earned him top acknowledgment from the Oakland Executive Association, which named him 1995 Retail Executive of the Year.

He often speaks to OCC restaurant management classes, and has been a keynote speaker at Wayne State University to MBA students and alumni and was on its Entrepreneurial Board.

Matthew Prentice lives with his wife, four children and six dogs in West Bloomfield, Michigan.