



You can tell a lot about people by the company they keep. That proverb was put to the test by misfortune and hardship on March 28, 2014, in the form of a fire at Josh and Jess Wiggins' Blue Water Grill in Millsboro.

They had purchased the restaurant from John Rishko, now a Delaware Realtor and former owner of Rehoboth's Stoney Lonen (along with Nelia Dolan, now with SoDel Concepts). Rehabilitation of the 1950s-built structure took such a long time that Josh and Jess risked losing their employees — until the proprietors of Arena's restaurants and Paradise Grill stepped up to the plate, offering temporary employment to Blue Water Grill's staff. As a result, when Josh and Jess eventually turned the key on their newly rebuilt eatery, over 90 percent of their original staff returned. This is not the sort of thing you see everywhere: Sussex County restaurants are a breed unto themselves.

Josh Wiggins is no stranger to professional kitchens. He cooked alongside Baywood Greens' opening chef Mike Clampitt at the long-gone Sea Horse in Rehoboth (Mike is now the boss at Po'Boys Creole & Fresh Catch in Milton) and also at the Gilligan's on the Canal in Lewes. Combined with Jess' front-of-house expertise, they eventually fulfilled their dream of restaurant ownership. And their hard-and-fast rule of local sourcing is evidenced by their menu. Whether it's produce, chicken, fish, beef or whatever, you can be pretty sure that your lunch or dinner grew, flew, swam or grazed nearby. ▶

PERSEVERANCE & PRIDE

WRITTEN BY BOB YESBEK
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Confronted with adversity and the unknown following a fire at their Millsboro restaurant, Josh and Jess Wiggins not only reopened Blue Water Grill, but their quaint spot on Main Street is regarded as a gem of the Delaware culinary community



ONWARD AND UPWARD: DELAWARE RESTAURANT PROFESSIONAL JOSH WIGGINS AND HIS WIFE, JESS, WERE NOT DETERRED FROM PURSUING THEIR OWNERSHIP DREAMS AFTER A 2014 FIRE.



SOURCES OF INSPIRATION: BLUE WATER GRILL OWNERS JOSH AND JESS WIGGINS MAKE IT A POINT TO INCORPORATE MENU ITEMS FROM LOCAL PURVEYORS.



Lunchtime favorites include Josh’s signature bacon-wrapped scallops and the popular broiled appetizer combo with crab dip, clams casino, crab balls and those scallops. The dinner menu offers scallop Imperial, the Blue Water pasta (penne topped with shrimp and crab lounging happily in Asiago cream sauce, alongside tomatoes, spinach, carrots and mushrooms) and the chicken roulade stuffed with spinach and sun-dried tomatoes in a roasted red-pepper cream sauce. My go-to dish at dinner is actually a special: lobster roll salad with house pepper-parm dressing and avocados on

7 p.m. (and all day Sunday) for the happy-hour bar menu, which includes special prices on bites like fish tacos, shrimp, mussels and wings.

As if the regular menu weren’t extensive enough, Josh loves to populate his Blackboard Menu with daily lunch and dinner off-menu specials. In spite of the maritime subtext of the restaurant’s name, there’s a large and varied selection of non-seafood apps and lunch/dinner entrées. One of my favorites is the marinated hanger steak entrée. Sourced from Travis Reid’s Black Angus ranch in Frankford, the dish is served with crispy

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The current menu at Blue Water Grill includes the popular “you-name-it & grits” section, where you can pair cheddar grits, fried green tomatoes and a tomato puree with your choice of fish, blackened shrimp, chicken or maybe even a crab cake or a steak if you ask nicely. Or, you can belly up to the bar from 4 p.m. to

potatoes and prosciutto Brussels sprouts drizzled with a roasted garlic demi.

In their spare time (really?!) Josh and Jess also prepare prepackaged “heat & eat” meals in two sizes for the home-bound, single retirees, people with special dietary needs or simply those who want to eat controlled, health-conscious portions. These special menus rotate every two weeks, with pickup on Sundays and Wednesdays. They are also equipped to

host and cater any type of event, with customized menus tailored directly to the client’s particular event, budget and even dietary preferences.

Things don’t get much more small-town than the friendly every-night meet ‘n’ greet at Blue Water Grill, located at 226 Main Street. They are open every day. Call 302-934-5160 to double-check their hours. See the entire menu at BlueWaterGrillMillsboro.com. 