

Celebrity chefs take over at Esmeralda

By **JEAN GORDON**

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CHIMNEY ROCK The owner of a number one Los Angeles catering company, Michael Parise, is now the chef at the Esmeralda Inn, bringing his new signature bistro to Rutherford County. And joining Parise in the kitchen is Kostas Vlanakis of Asheville, preparing breakfast and lunch specials.

Parise and Kostas prepared brunch last week for Lt. Gov. Walter Dalton, North Carolina State Park officials and guests at the dedication of the Chimney Rock historical highway marker, in front of the Esmeralda.

Parise closed his Asheville restaurant to concentrate solely on the Esmeralda.

"This is my first signature restaurant in Chimney Rock," he said. "I decided to redirect my focus from Asheville to Chimney Rock. The area has a better environment than in Asheville," he said. "I am embracing all local cuisines, chicken, beef, seafood, eggs," he said, with an emphasis on serving the finest food to the local people in Rutherford County and surrounding areas, he said.

The New American Bistro is open seven days a week for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

"We can offer all this free-range food and not break the bank," he continued. "A lot of people will do that in Asheville. We are not going to do that," he said. "This will not be a tourists trap."

A resident of Mills River in Henderson County, Parise said he fell in love with Rutherford County and the area about 25 years ago when he worked in a restaurant near Franklin. He decided to come back to the mountains of North Carolina to raise his family.

The former Los Angeles resident said he did not want to raise his daughter in California and told his wife about the Carolina mountains.

Chef Kostas also has a restaurant in Skyland.

Parise owns Cannoli Kings, voted the #1 catering company in Los Angeles. He has catered for some of the biggest names and parties in Hollywood, from Halle Berry to Michael Jackson and The Emmy's to Reality Remix Awards, his webpage reports.

He also has a new reality show coming up, "Dear Chef."

For more information, call 1-828-625-2999 or visit www.parisecatering.com.

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