

SANTÉ

kudos

clark frasier + mark gaier



After 20 years, how has Arrows changed, and in what ways has the restaurant remained the same?

When we first opened, we envisioned a stylish, casual, brasserie-style restaurant, but Arrows—and its eighteenth-century colonial farmhouse—had different plans. Everything about the setting whispered rustic elegance and romance. Our guests were looking for a special evening of dining, so Arrows evolved into an elegant dining destination.

Over the years the plank floors and post-and-beam construction remained, but the entire infrastructure was replaced. Handcrafted chairs were built to our specifications. China was designed and brought in from all over the world for the restaurant. Silver and crystal replaced glass and stainless. The kitchen was remodeled, and temperature-controlled wine rooms were added. Every year we do more to enhance the property and to maintain the beauty of the natural landscape.

Clark Frasier and Mark Gaier's restaurant, Arrows, in Ogunquit, Maine, has earned dozens of distinctions. The restaurant's exquisite cuisine, sweeping romance, rustic elegance, and environmental foresight has made it a favorite among patrons and critics. In October 2006 Arrows was named fourteenth on *Gourmet* magazine's list of the top 50 restaurants in America. In March 2008 the James Beard Foundation nominated the founders for Best Chefs of the Northeast. This month they reach their twentieth anniversary. *Santé* applauds Arrows for two decades of revering the past and growing toward the future.

Your calendar is packed with special events. What role do they play within your business model?

The year-round community of Ogunquit numbers about 800 people, but on a holiday weekend in the summer as many as 40,000 people may be staying in town. In the shoulder seasons it's important to bring in the area's locals. Special events during the slower months give guests that might come to Arrows once or twice a year another reason to visit the restaurant.

You began raising your own produce at Arrows in 1992. What was your inspiration, and how has the idea evolved?

We were moved to grow our own produce by necessity. When we first opened in 1988, there wasn't any good bread in the area. There was little good produce, and even the fish was poorly handled. Because of this, we started our own garden and started making everything from prosciutto to ice cream in-house. Today we create many types of cured meats, smoke all of our own fish, make our own cheese, use our own cranberry bog, cultivate our apple orchard, and scour the woods ourselves for mushrooms.

How have the major changes in the industry in the last two decades affected your course?

We have always had our odd and unique vision of what Arrows should be, and that is a very personal expression. We really don't pay too much attention to the trends in our industry; we just try to be honest and dedicated to making it and our other restaurants great places for our guests and ourselves.