

SUCCESS STORY

Portland District Office

LISA SCHROEDER, C.C.P.

Chef and Owner

Mother's Bistro & Bar and Mama Mia Trattoria

As passionate about slow-cooked pot roast and homemade ravioli as she is about perfectly seared foie gras, Lisa Schroeder is a mother, grandmother, chef and restaurateur devoted to providing better-than-authentic renditions of traditional home-cooked favorite dishes in her two Portland restaurants, Mother's Bistro & Bar and Mama Mia Trattoria.

In 1992, while simultaneously working full-time in marketing, catering on the side and raising her daughter, Lisa realized there were no restaurants serving the type of food she would make if she had the time. Lisa concluded that what the world really needed was a place which served "Mother Food" – slow-cooked dishes, such as braises and stews, made with love. From that moment on, Lisa was determined to open such a restaurant and spent the next eight years working toward that dream.

Lisa soon gave up her business career and enrolled at The Culinary Institute of America. While there, she was selected as one of the Top Ten Student Chefs in America by Food and Wine Magazine. After graduating with honors in 1995, she continued honing her skills at two four-star restaurants in New York City -- Lespinasse and Le Cirque. Her education continued with apprenticeships in Provence, France, at Roger Vergé's Moulin des Mougins, and at Mark Veyrat's L'Auberge de L'Eridan in Haute Savoie. In addition to this invaluable training, she toured France, Italy, Spain, Morocco and Switzerland where she gained an understanding of regional cuisine and indigenous products, affirming her belief that some of the best regional meals are not found in restaurants, but in homes, made by mothers.

Searching for a new beginning, Lisa returned to the states and relocated to Portland, Oregon in 1998. She was the Chef at Besaw's Café for two years while continuing to plan her restaurant-to-be; gathering and testing recipes, refining her menu, and planning her décor whenever she was away from the stove.

In 2000, Chef Schroeder's dream came true when she opened Mother's Bistro & Bar in downtown Portland to rave reviews, receiving the "Restaurant of the Year" award from Willamette Week. Drawing on classic cooking techniques combined with years of experience, her menu offers refined versions of traditional home-cooked dishes. Much more than simply comfort food, this "mother food" is based on made-from scratch, slow-cooked recipes, utilizing the best available ingredients. In addition, Lisa honors mothers everywhere with her "Mother of the Month" (or "M.O.M.") menu, where she celebrates original recipes from a different mother each month, along with a brief background on the Mom which shares her unique story.

In 2002, Mother's Bistro & Bar was recognized by Food & Wine Magazine as one of America's Top Restaurant Bargains. With lines literally out the door on weekends, it came as no surprise in 2004 when Mother's Bistro & Bar was voted Best Brunch by Portland Monthly Magazine, Willamette Week, Citysearch and AOL.

In August 2004, Lisa Schroeder opened Mama Mia Trattoria, inviting Portlanders to experience the classic Italian dishes she grew up on in Philadelphia's Little Italy. Remaining true to her philosophy, she serves what she describes as "southern Italian soul food" – the cuisine which resulted when southern Italian immigrants adapted the food of their motherland to the available ingredients in their new homeland.

Chef Schroeder nurtures her community as well as her guests. She was on the Board of Directors for the Oregon Restaurant Association and the Chef's Advisory Board for the American Dairy Council, co-chair for the Portland Business Alliance's Downtown Retail Council, a member of the Chef's Collaborative, Women Chefs and Restaurateurs, Slow Food, and IACP, an educator for Share our Strength's Operation Frontline, Honorary Chair of the Our House Dinner Series and a founding member of the Bridges of Hope Campaign for the Bradley Angle House, an organization committed to helping survivors of domestic violence.

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