

Deano's Steakhouse under new management

Written by MARK JAEGER

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Since 2008, the popular Deano's Steakhouse has long been the fine-dining destination to celebrate special occasions in the Village of Belgium.

That designation is still in order, but the restaurant, at 305 Lakeview Dr., is now under new management.

Since June 1, owner Dean Wester has been leasing the restaurant to bar manager Robin Baldwin. She has an option to purchase the business.

"Nothing is really changing, as anyone who has eaten at the restaurant in the past week will tell you. It is the same quality food, the same great employees and the same friendly atmosphere," Wester said.

"For the time being, the name will remain Deano's Steakhouse. If Robin buys it, she can call it whatever she wants," he joked.

Baldwin said she plans to tweak the menu a little bit, adding chicken and pasta dishes by the end of the month to the always popular selection of steaks, chops and seafood.

"We've been telling people about the change since late May, but you know how stories spread. The biggest thing people are worried about is that the restaurant is closing. The next thing they ask is if the chef is staying," she said.

Baldwin said her business connection with Wester dates back to 1985, when she took over a corner tavern he once ran.

"Dean and I go way back," Baldwin said. "Managing my own restaurant is something I have been wanting to do, and then this opportunity came along."

Wester said the decision to step back from the restaurant operation came at the suggestion of a doctor following some mounting health concerns.

He was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, a congenital disorder also known as "brittle bone disease," which has kept him confined to a wheelchair.

"I broke my hip last November, and the doctor ran a whole battery of new tests and told me I have to start making some changes in my life," Wester said.

Included in those changes may be selling his electrical company, Wester Electric, to the employees.

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"The fact is my best days of mobility are probably behind me and there are things I would like to be able to do while I still can."

Wester said Belgium is too much a part of his life to leave on a permanent basis, but he will consider taking extended trips to a warmer climate when the work demands are relieved.

"Wheelchairs and Wisconsin winters don't go together very well," he said.