

LIVE, WORK & PLAY IN CALGARY

AVENUECALGARY.COM DECEMBER 2008/\$4.95

avenue

GOING THE DISTANCE

Road racer Ryan Correy is one of 10 Calgarians changing the way the world sees our city

YEAR IN REVIEW

A look back at the follies of '08

EASY DOES IT

Outsourcing the holiday headache

WINTER LIFE LIST

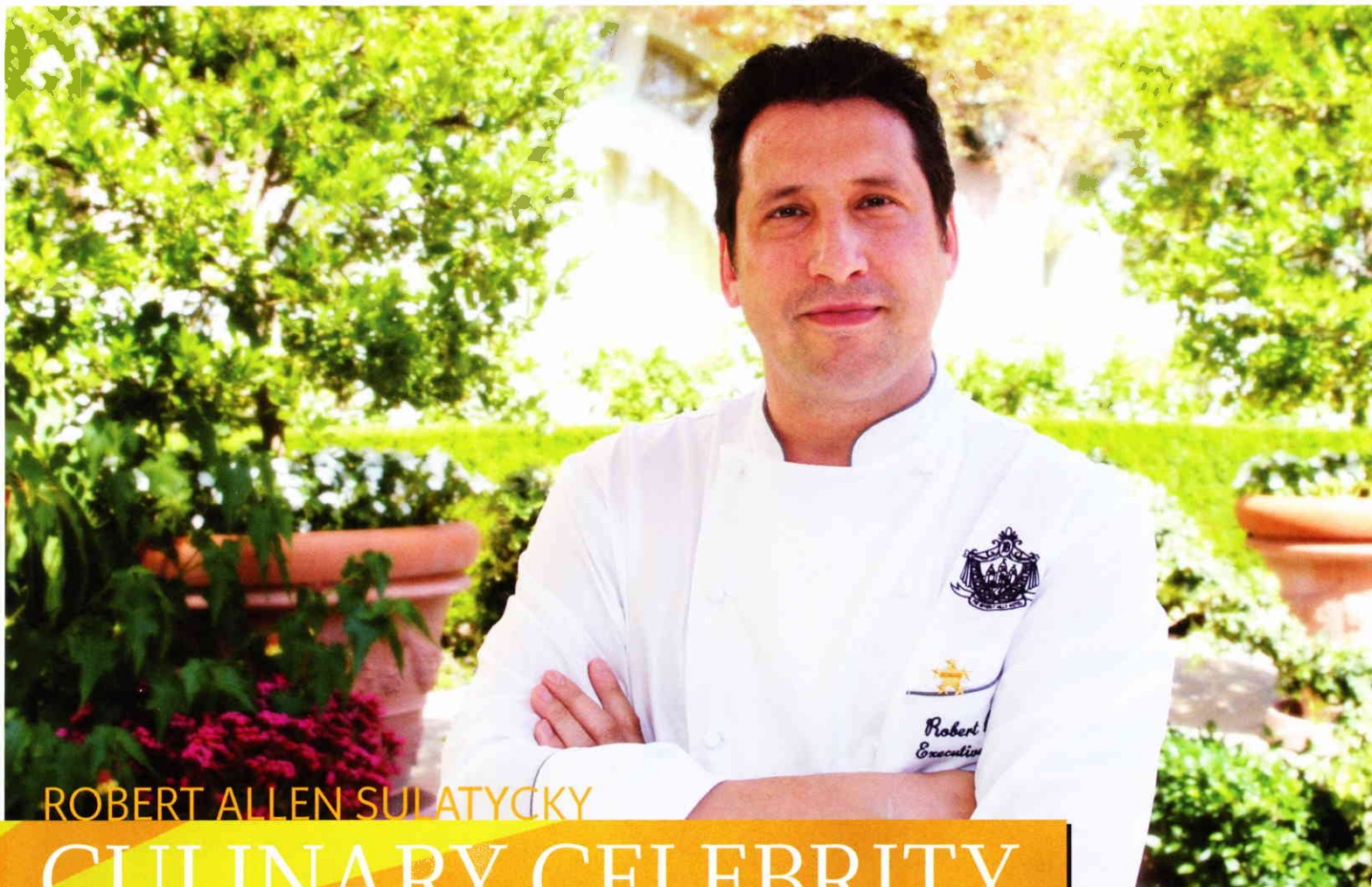
31 ways to make the most of the season

THE DUDES

Local indie rockers take on the world

BETTER TO GIVE

Our guide to great gifts in the city



ROBERT ALLEN SULATYCKY

CULINARY CELEBRITY

ALTHOUGH HIS VANTAGE point is Sunset Boulevard and Rodeo Drive, the executive chef and director of food and beverage at the tony Beverly Hills Hotel has no stars in his eyes. Robert Allen Sulatycky is grounded by his Alberta training and dedicated to mentoring his staff in the culinary foundations and philosophies he learned in Calgary.

A graduate of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) with top-of-class honours in 1988, Sulatycky, 45, found he had an affinity for culinary challenges — culminating in his appearance on the world stage of cooking contests.

"I rode my SAIT experience right to the Bocuse d'Or in 1999, which is the granddaddy of competitions held every two years in Lyon, France," he says.

Bocuse d'Or is a five-and-a-half-hour battle for culinary perfection between 24 chefs representing their countries before the scrutiny of international judges. Sulatycky was fourth in the 1999 competition — still the highest-placing

North American chef in the history of the event.

He returns to the Bocuse d'Or limelight in January 2009 as mentor-chef to Canada's entry, Vancouver chef David Wong.

While chef at Toronto's Four Seasons in 2000, Sulatycky earned a AAA Five Diamond Award. Twenty-three months later, he was whisked away to the Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago, where the iconic food critic for *Esquire* magazine, John Mariani, proclaimed him Chicago's best chef.

It was in the Windy City that Sulatycky and his wife, graphic designer Barbara Sawchuk, began to put together the viticulture pieces of a lifelong dream — making wine.

"We had travelled to California when I was in Calgary and fell in love with it," he says. "Then we started flying to San Francisco, driving to Napa, conducting wine business, and returning to Chicago on a red-eye for a 6 a.m. start at the hotel every three weeks. It was tiring."

Looking for a west-coast move, it was serendipitous that the Beverly Hills Hotel — part of the Dorchester Collection owned by the State of Brunei — approached Sulatycky

in 2005. Eight months later, he became food and beverage director with a staff of more than 300.

He says wine marketing prompted his decision to change his name from Robert Sulatycky to Robert Allen, his middle name: "Sulatycky just wasn't a great name for a wine label," he explains. (That middle name is also his father's name — Allen Sulatycky was MP for Rocky Mountain from 1968 to 1972 and went on to be associate chief justice of the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench.)

Today, Robert Allen Wines of Oakville, California, produces about 1,000 cases of cabernet sauvignon, sauvignon blanc and zinfandel. The next step, he says, is to ramp up to 5,000 cases and sell aggressively.

Napa Valley wines and the rarified air in Beverly Hills notwithstanding, a down-to-earth Sulatycky credits Vincent Parkinson, the Calgary chef under whom he apprenticed, with preparing him technically and philosophically for his success. "I learned from Parkinson the satisfaction of seeing young cooks evolve and succeed." — *Andrew Coppolino* >>