

Mississauga chef is youngest master

By STEPHANIE INNES
Staff Reporter

When Swiss-born chef Francois Sigrist first came to Canada, he acted as a trouble shooter for an Ontario catering company.

Every few weeks, Sigrist was sent to a different Ontario branch of the company.

"They would send me different cafeterias and I would help them to get straightened out," says Sigrist, who has been living in Mississauga for the past six years. "I got to know the province inside out."

Now, at 41, and recently named the youngest-ever inductee into the World Federation of Master Chefs, Sigrist still employs the philosophy he developed during his five years as a travelling trouble shooter.

"I can become a chef anywhere. All I need is my knife, three uniforms and aprons and I can present myself to any hotel in the world," says Sigrist, a chef of 26 years.

Sigrist has, in fact, cooked all over the world. Some of the more famous names on his list of dinner guests include Queen Elizabeth II,

Paul Newman, Robert Goulet, Warren Beatty, Julie Christie and Roland Mitchener.

Last fall when the Rolling Stones were in Toronto for their Steel Wheels Tour, Sigrist was commissioned to make the group a rum cake with mocha rum icing overlaid with a marzipan Rolling Stones logo.

At a wedding he cooked for and catered this summer, he received a standing ovation from the 200 guests.

A resident of Clarkson, where he lives with his wife Christine and 13-year-old daughter Alanna, Sigrist is founder and owner of the Mississauga-based Dial-A-Chef catering service. Although his list of former dinner guests reads like an international Who's Who, Sigrist says most of his clients aren't the rich and famous.

"I do a lot of anniversaries, kids' graduations, weddings, and dinner parties," he says.

Sigrist provides clients with all the service, clean-up and food according to request, and can serve up to 2,000 people at one time.

"I prefer classical cuisine to nouvelle, but if you require nouvelle, I'll do it," says Sigrist, who still sports a heavy french accent.

Between each serving of his typically nine-course meals, he announces the dish, pours wine, and makes sure his guests are happy.

"I make sure everything is done just right," says Sigrist, who calls cooking, an, "art that has been lost."

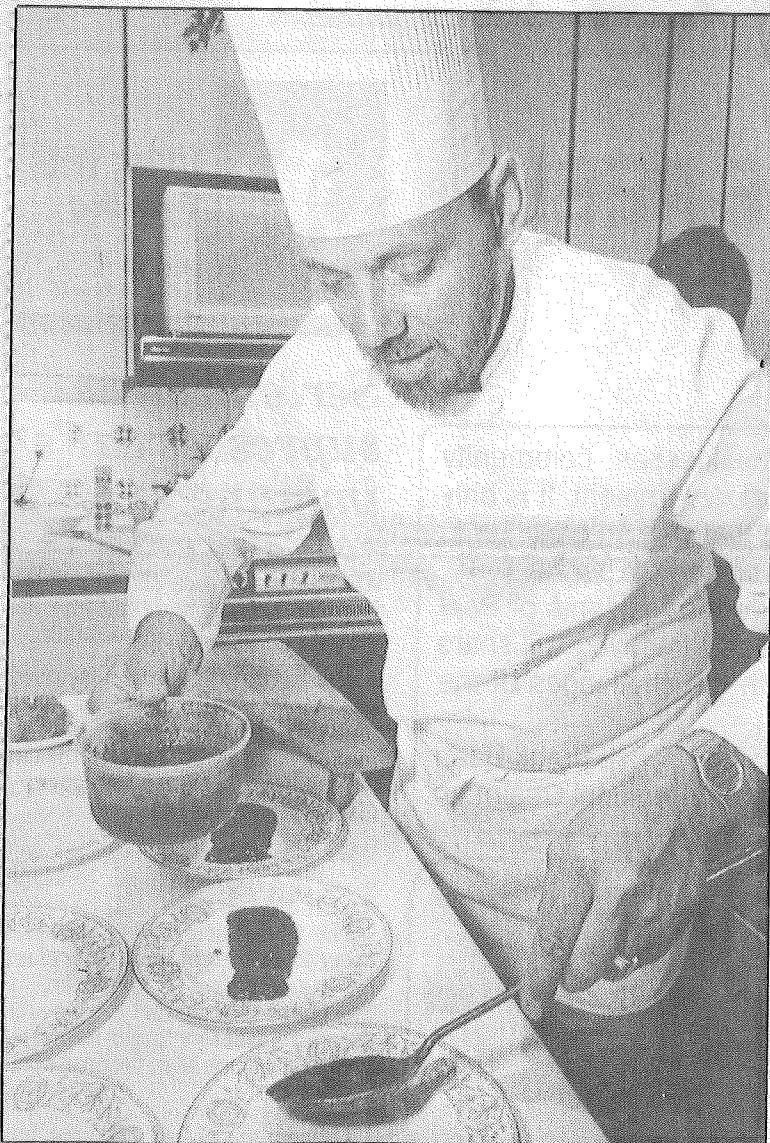
He says the name of his company, Dial-A-Chef, is often misinterpreted.

"They hear the name, they hear I'm based in Mississauga and they think of soggy green beans and roast potatoes," says Sigrist, who prefers the term chef over caterer.

Some of Sigrist's specialties include shrimps with Pernod, kiwi and jack fruit sorbet, breast of pintelle (guinea fowl) with blackberry sauce, and hand-made truffles.

When he's not cooking, Sigrist peddles a line of skincare products and has recently begun selling a line of diet cookies.

A visit from Sigrist will cost \$35 per hour plus cost of the food. To order Dial-A-Chef, call Sigrist at 823-8154.



Staff photo by Chris Horobin

Mississauga chef Francois Sigrist (above), prepares servings of his pate de lievre with Cumberland sauce hors d'oeuvre. The 41-year-old is the youngest inductee into the exclusive World Federation of Master Chefs.