

## Markus Ripperger enters new phase with Hampshire House

By Dan Murphy

Markus Ripperger's ascent from a restaurant chef for the Hampshire House Corporation to its president and CEO is a fitting analogy for the Beacon Hill-based restaurant group, which has grown from one location to four during his 23-year tenure with the company.

"Our focus is to be a company with multiple restaurants in the area," Ripperger said, "and our mantra is to provide great food and ambience, no matter what brand we develop."

A 52-year-old native of Zurich, Switzerland, Ripperger graduated from a hospitality and

culinary school in his homeland before honing his skills at restaurants in London and Southern France. In 1985, he came to Boston, where he was commissioned to duplicate the two-star Michelin restaurant where he worked in France at the Swiss Hotel (now the Hyatt). Stints as a chef at eateries at Hotel Lafayette, Sheraton Hotel & Towers and the Colonnade Hotel followed before Ripperger joined Hampshire House in October of 1992.

"I find Boston one of the most European cities in America, and it's great to have a lot of different ethnic influences that can be translated into our menus [at

Hampshire House]," he said.

After coming onboard as executive chef of the now-defunct Library Grill, Ripperger soon assumed the reins of the entire food operation at Hampshire House's 78 Beacon St. headquarters. He helped develop the restaurant concept for 75 Chestnut with Tom Kershaw, chairman of the corporation, in 1997 and launch Cheers Faneuil Hall four years later, at which time he was named corporate executive chef. Ripperger was also on hand for the 2002 opening of the now-defunct Jazz Café at Faneuil Hall, and it was in this timeframe that he earned the title of executive chef and director of operations

for all Hampshire House locations. In 2012, he helped launch the restaurant group's most recent undertaking, 75 on Liberty Wharf.

"I've seen Markus grow from a limited chef-only position to becoming a very capable corporate executive," Kershaw said. "He's had a lot of different roles with the company and grown to the point where he's running it. In recognition of that, I decided to make him president."

In his new role, Ripperger will manage all four of Hampshire House's physical locations, which include five restaurants and two retail outlets, and work with Kershaw to develop marketing programs, special events and other corporate matters.

"Markus has a team of talented managers for each operation that he has personally developed, and he works with them to develop our plans and programs, and to keep the business flowing and hopefully growing," Kershaw said.

Ripperger expects the corporation will continue to evolve with new concepts and restaurant openings, although what these might be remain to be seen.



CREDIT: Amanda Ambrose Photography

Markus Ripperger, president and CEO of the Hampshire House Corporation.

"We don't have any concrete plans right now, but as the Boston restaurant scene is always developing and changing, we always have our feelers out, looking for new opportunities," he said.

Still, Ripperger is confident that any future undertakings will remain true to Hampshire House's mission of offering guests an inviting environment in which to dine and socialize.

## Storybook Ball to raise funds for brain research

By S.M. Nichols

This year's Storybook Ball, the annual megawatt fundraiser for MassGeneral Hospital for Children (MGHfC), will put the spotlight on advances being made every day at MGHfC to treat complex conditions that affect a child's developing brain.

With more than 500 guests expected and a fundraising target of \$1.7 million, the event will be held on Saturday, October 17, at The Castle at 130 Columbus Avenue, Boston. Since 2000, the Storybook Ball has raised more than \$22 million for research initiatives and patient care programs at MGHfC.

"We've had tremendous support this year from Beacon Hill residents and businesses," said Storybook Ball co-chair Rebecca Seidenberg. "There's a real bond between the community and the hospital, and I think this year's focus on brain disorders touches a lot of families."

About 100 million Americans will suffer from a brain disorder at some point in their lives,

according to the National Institutes of Health. MGHfC and Massachusetts General Hospital, which was recently named the number one hospital in the nation by U.S. News & World Report, offer specialized brain-based clinical programs and conduct neurological research aimed at helping children, adolescents and young adults.

At the 2015 Storybook Ball, a video presentation will feature 16-year-old Josh Canales of Lynn, Mass., who was born with spina bifida (a severe birth defect of the spinal cord that can result in cognitive and physical disabilities) and has received cutting-edge care at MGHfC since birth. Today, Josh is a forward on his high school soccer team.

"While still in his mom's womb, Josh was diagnosed with spina bifida, which required surgery to close his spinal cord within 24 hours of his birth," said Ronald E. Kleinman, MD, MGHfC physician-in-chief. "Recently, he underwent a brain procedure that was pioneered at MGH almost 100 years ago, but was so far ahead of

its time, it couldn't be performed until technology caught up with the idea."

Every year the Storybook Ball takes its theme from a classic children's tale. For 2015, longtime partner Rafanelli Events will transform The Castle into Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island. During the evening, guests will bid on one-of-a-kind treasures in the form of live auction packages donated by local supporters and businesses.

The auction packages include runway seats for the Akris Paris fall fashion show in Paris; player spots at David Ortiz's golf classic in Punta Cana; a home-hosted dinner presented by Bryan Rafanelli and the chef of the Four Seasons Hotel Boston; a trip to Italy to visit the pioneering celiac disease research lab of an MGH physician; a spa retreat in New Zealand; getaways at five Relais & Chateaux inns; and an expedition to Zambia, featuring Victoria Falls courtesy of Dorfman Jewelers. For tickets and more information, visit [storybookballboston.org](http://storybookballboston.org).

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benefits the neighborhoods too and the residents who have spent their entire lives working to make their communities better," she said. "Sometimes you have growth and create jobs and have economic development, but it is also pushing our communities out of their neighborhoods."

Another piece of that puzzle is making sure the schools are of high quality and are similar in quality across the board.

She said she has sat on a school site council when her sister was in school (her sister graduated high school in June and is now in college). She said she is excited

to see a new leader at the helm in Supt. Tommy Chang, and believes that combining that with good programs, quality teachers and engaged parent communities can lead to great gains.

"We have incredible schools in our district and we do need to do a better job of highlighting the good that's happening," she said. "We also have a lot to do to make sure that balance is there across the board in all the district schools."

Another key aspect, and something she did quite naturally, she said was keeping residents informed. As a younger member

of the Council who is adept at social media, she said she began posting all of her notes and Council actions on Facebook and Twitter. It was a small thing, but she said it got a huge response and she will continue doing such things to make sure residents are informed and involved.

"I wanted to do that simply so people can know the things we were working on," she said. "I hear from people all the time who tell me it's the first time they've heard what the Council is doing. You can't expect people to be involved if they're not informed."

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