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## **A One-of-a-Kind, French-Inspired Culinary School Designed for Home Chefs Opens in Chicago**

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The Jill Prescott Culinary School Teaches

Classic French Cooking Methods and Techniques

in a Fun, Educational Atmosphere

France is considered the epicenter of the culinary world. It is a country steeped in culinary history and renowned cooking traditions that have been preserved, protected and passed along for centuries. This May these traditions come to Chicago. Founded in Wisconsin in 1988, Chef Jill Prescott has relocated her French-inspired culinary school to Chicago and is opening the premier school in the nation for home chefs -- introducing the Jill Prescott Culinary School.

"I always wanted to live in one of two cities, either Paris or Chicago," explains Jill. "Growing up in Wisconsin, Chicago has been my home away from home since I was a child. My father worked as a naval officer and pilot, training squadrons at the Glenview Naval Air Base, so my family spent many weekends in the city. Chicago is now my home and Paris is my other favorite place to be. Chicago is such a vibrant city with its culture, shops and restaurants, so it is a natural fit for me to open my culinary school here."

Housed in the Merchandise Mart's new Luxe Home boutique collection, the Jill Prescott Culinary School was modeled after the professional schools Jill attended in Paris. The largest, purely recreational cooking school in the country, this 7,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility includes three teaching kitchens: a participation Cuisine Room, a participation Pastry Room and a Demonstration Kitchen that also doubles as the filming studio for Jill's third nationally-syndicated PBS television show, "The Jill Prescott Culinary School; Professional Cooking for the Home Chef." The school includes a multi-media reception area, creating an ideal atmosphere for a client or company event or social outing. The school also features a retail store offering a selection of specialty kitchen and artisan products that are personally selected by Jill for practical and life-long use in a home kitchen.

After numerous trips to Europe gathering insight from fellow chefs, mentors and artisan food producers, Jill and the French-trained staff at the Jill Prescott Culinary School are passionate about preserving, protecting and sharing these classic methods and time-honored traditions with their students. With their engaging personalities and approachable teaching styles, Jill and Culinary Director/Executive Chef Mark Weber will guide students through the classic methods and techniques taught in the prestigious culinary schools of France to help home chefs become successful in their own kitchens.

"When you are a student in my school, I want you to experience what I felt on my first day in a Parisian cooking school," explains Jill. "I teach more than just the recipes. I want my students to appreciate food and to change the way they think about what they eat."

For example, students will learn the subtle yet significant differences between ingredients, cookware and equipment - why you should use sea salt instead of kosher salt, why you should only use unsalted butter and suggestions on where to find the highest quality eggs so your meringue is magnifique. "It is a reward for me to pass along to my students the cooking traditions, experiences and knowledge I've learned during my time in France."

The Jill Prescott Culinary School can accommodate all skill levels and schedules, offering a variety of culinary courses. Jill has fine-tuned her extensive French curriculum and condensed the knowledge of her advanced diplomas into intensive one week, weekend and one-day courses. Students can choose from over 50 different classes structured in either a participation course or demonstration class setting. Jill's teaching philosophy is simple: take the confusion out of cooking by teaching fundamental techniques and have fun while you are doing it - just as she experienced in the French cooking schools, restaurants and bakeries. At the end of most participation courses, students enjoy the meal they prepared with complimentary wine in the company of classmates.

#### An Appetite for Instruction: The Making of the Jill Prescott Culinary School

In the 1970s, living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with her two young children, Jill always found time to be busy in her kitchen, creating recipes she found in newspapers and magazines. When cookbooks didn't provide enough detail on cooking techniques, she enrolled in a French cuisine course taught at Carson Pirie Scott in downtown Chicago. There Jill learned she had a talent for cooking, a desire to learn as much as she could, and a sense she should trust her instincts. Jill had always dreamed of going to a cooking school but did not have the opportunity until the early 1980s when her father left her inheritance money and she went to Paris to fulfill her dream.

Jill traveled to France and received training at several prestigious Parisian and Italian culinary schools, including Ecole de Cuisine La Varenne, Ecole Lenotre, and Ecole de Gastronomie Francais Ritz Escoffier in Paris, France and Giuliano Bugialli's Italian School in Florence, Italy. For several more years she would return to Europe continuing to study and travel, earning advanced diplomas and certifications in cuisine, pastry and bread baking. Always an entrepreneur at heart, she had a plan when she arrived back to the Midwest. She wanted to give back and make a difference by sharing her experience and knowledge. In 1988, Jill founded her first culinary school, Ecole de Cuisine, in Wisconsin.

Teaching hundreds of amateur chefs a year, word of Jill's passionate and genuine personality grew and resulted in a half-hour PBS show, titled "Jill Prescott's Ecole de Cuisine; Professional Cooking for the Home Chef." Jill will begin production of her third season of the nationally syndicated show this autumn, which will be filmed at her Chicago school. Each episode presents a different technique, covering

topics such as stocks, sauces, braising, creams, chocolate desserts, pizza and pasta. The popular show led to a companion cookbook, "Jill Prescott Culinary School," (Ten Speed Press) now in its second printing.

In rare moments away from the kitchen, Jill enjoys spending time with her four children and playing with her dogs. She is involved with philanthropies that support causes helping at-risk youth find careers in the culinary field and helps raise money to benefit animal agencies. Jill's outgoing personality and passion for life are the driving forces resulting in the success of her culinary school, TV series, and books.

#### For More Information

Opening in May 2004 on the first floor of the Merchandise Mart, the Jill Prescott Culinary School is now offering class registration for individual students and scheduling of corporate and social groups and as well as special events. Gift certificates are also available. For more information and complete class descriptions, visit [jillprescott.com](http://jillprescott.com) or call 312.822.8100.

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