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## Gourmet Mecca Thrives in Mequon

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When the Sun-Times food staff visited the Ecole de Cuisine cooking school two years ago in Elm Grove, Wis., owner **Jill Prescott** was launching an ambitious program of classic French cooking technique classes in a cramped shopping center storefront. She was bucking the popular wisdom that claimed home cooking was dead and that warming (a.k.a. microwaving prepared foods) was the most popular cooking technique in the country. The type of school she envisioned for serious amateurs - based on professional schools she had attended in France and Italy - had seemingly peaked in the late 1970s and early '80s.

But Prescott has not only survived, she has flourished. A Midwest force in fine food who counts Julia Child as a personal friend, Prescott's move to a new, larger location in Mequon is an even more impressive accomplishment given the state of cooking schools today. In December, Prescott will open an adjacent cookware shop (with her personally selected top-of-the-line equipment) complete with an inviting fireplace and reading nook. A bakery/cafe producing authentic French bread and other delights is planned to open its doors around the first of the new year. If Prescott's track record holds true, the complex will surely become a preferred destination for cooks from Chicago and elsewhere.

Ecole de Cuisine is in Merchant's Square at 10050 N. Port Washington Rd., Mequon, Wis. For information about classes, call (414) 241-8066.

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