



Profiles *in* Excellence

Pat Schiestl is general manager of the Fishers Island Club in Fishers Island, NY

It's a place to enjoy family, friends, sports, and social activities. I am really looking forward to experiencing the other side of club life.

Q: What are your characteristics or qualities that you hope your staff emulates?

A: Be kind to one another, and be a good listener. Always be part of the team. This is a great business and a challenging business at the same time. You have to have patience.

Q: You've admitted to telling a "little white lie" when you were in your first club job. It's time to 'fess up.

A: I was working in the dining room when the chef offered me a job in the kitchen. I asked him why I would want to work in the kitchen. He said I could come to work at 1:30 in the afternoon, which would leave the mornings free to go to the beach. I was 19, working at a seasonal club in Florida, and working three shifts a day in the dining room. So I told the manager that it was my dream to cook, even though it wasn't. He let me change departments, and that was the start of my culinary career and my love of the business.

Q: What concessions to the modern game has the club made to Seth Raynor's 1926 design of the Fishers Island course?

A: Honestly, I don't think the club has made any. We are blessed with guidance from Gil Hanse, one of the top contemporary designers, and we've had a number of highly qualified golf committee chairs over the years. They've helped protect the club's commitment to preserving the integrity of the Seth Raynor design.

Q: For anyone who lives on the mainland, just getting to Fishers

Island Club is an adventure that can start on a train, include a 45-minute ferry ride and end with a short car trip. But the members must not mind the extra effort.

A: The trip from the city or surrounding towns can be frustrating with all the summer traffic but worth their time once they arrive. They let their problems drift away as they travel across the water to the island they love. It is safe, friendly, and beautiful and a place where they come to relax with family and friends.

Q: Your husband, Stefan, is the club's executive chef. Is there any hesitation in telling members to send their meal back to the kitchen if it's not to their liking?

A: None whatsoever. We are all here to provide the membership with a great experience. We can't fix a problem if we don't know about it.

Q: How do you defend your profession when you hear that private clubs are no longer relevant?

A: When I retire, I am going to join a private club and enjoy all the things that peers in my position have been providing their memberships for years. It really is like *Cheers*; everyone knows your name, your favorite cocktail, and your favorite table.



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