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# Marine cooks up new career

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By [Wade Fowler](#)  
on March 28, 2011 at 7:50 AM

James Cywner has traded in his saber for a cleaver.

The few, the proud, the cooks.

The former Marine Corps embassy guard is now the head chef of Burgundy's, an upscale restaurant situated seven miles north of Duncannon along Routes 11/15.

Cywner began his career in the Marine Corps as a combat engineer, before being accepted for Marine Security Guard Duty.

He completed a three-month course at Quantico and was stationed at the United States Embassies in first Paris and later Jerusalem.

In France, Cywner struck up a friendship with a Parisian restaurateur named Ferrand who owned a mom-and-pop sort of place right off the Chans de Lise.

"I used to go in and watch him cook, and that's what really

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got me interested. He learned from his dad.

“Chef Ferrand was a younger guy, really interesting. He’d take me to the local markets, we’d go shopping, that sort of thing. That’s why when I got out, I decided to pursue my interest in becoming a chef.”

A native of the Pittsburgh area, Cywner also has roots in Lancaster, where his parents now live.

After getting out of the Marine Corps, he toyed with the idea of getting into law enforcement, which would have been a natural career path given his military training. Instead, he decided to attend the Pennsylvania School of Culinary Arts.

He got his first cooking gig while still in school at the Old Greenfield Inn in Lancaster.

He’s been at Burgundy’s for about six months and has relocated from Lancaster to Duncannon.

He admits to a bit of French influence in the cuisine at Burgundy’s, but the fare is for the most part American.

“The owners Nick and Angie Mavropoulos are Greek, so I’m learning a little bit more about Mediterranean styles,” Cywner said. “But for the most part we offer good, classic American food.”

Cywner insists on the freshness of the meats and produce that go into his dishes and buys as much of it locally as possible.

“We’re not cutting any corners on produce or the product. People see that and really appreciate it,” Cywner said.

The Marine Corps is not the likeliest breeding ground for a gourmet chef, but Cywner relishes the transformation from sabers to swordfish.

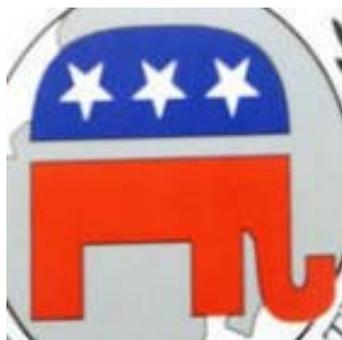
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