



**POP QUIZ** The Cooking School of Aspen has 3,000 square feet of space for cooking demos and elevated dining.

COOKING 101

# TOO COOL FOR SCHOOL

Aspen gets a revamped venue for cooking classes and private events.

BY LAUREL MILLER

Aspen has a well-deserved reputation as a culinary destination, but there's been a void in the local food scene since the original **Cooking School of Aspen** shuttered almost a decade ago. No more, thanks to Rob Ittner, owner of Rustique Bistro. Ittner purchased the former school's name and brand, and, this month, it will reopen in its new home next to Rustique. The 3,000-square-foot space will feature a state-of-the-art demonstration kitchen and dining room that will also be available for private events. "Although we have a larger space now, the concept is based on having an intimate experience with guest instructors—our classes will average between 10 to 25 students, and include a sommelier offering wine pairings," Ittner says. "Our goal is one part learning, one part dining and one part entertainment."

The school will offer two types of classes: hands-on (from \$35—think pasta-making, pie-baking or farmers market-sourced pickling classes in the summer) and demonstration (from \$55, including a three-to-five-course lunch or dinner). Ittner will be teaching some classes, as will his executive chef, Barclay Dodge, in addition to local chefs like The Little Nell's Matt Zubrod and television personality Susie Jimenez, and a roster of chefs, sommeliers and food experts from all over the world. Ittner is also enthusiastic about hosting pop-up restaurant dinners from visiting chefs and a weekly summer Farm to Table Dinner series (\$35 to \$100), which will feature produce (and sometimes guest appearances) by local growers. "This is my passion," Ittner says. "Rustique is successful, but the ability to branch out and learn and teach with others and share experiences is what I want to do for the rest of my life." 305 E. Hopkins Ave., 970.920.2002, [cookingschoolofaspen.com](http://cookingschoolofaspen.com)