

## DAVE & DEBRA CARLSON

OWNERS, TOAD HALL

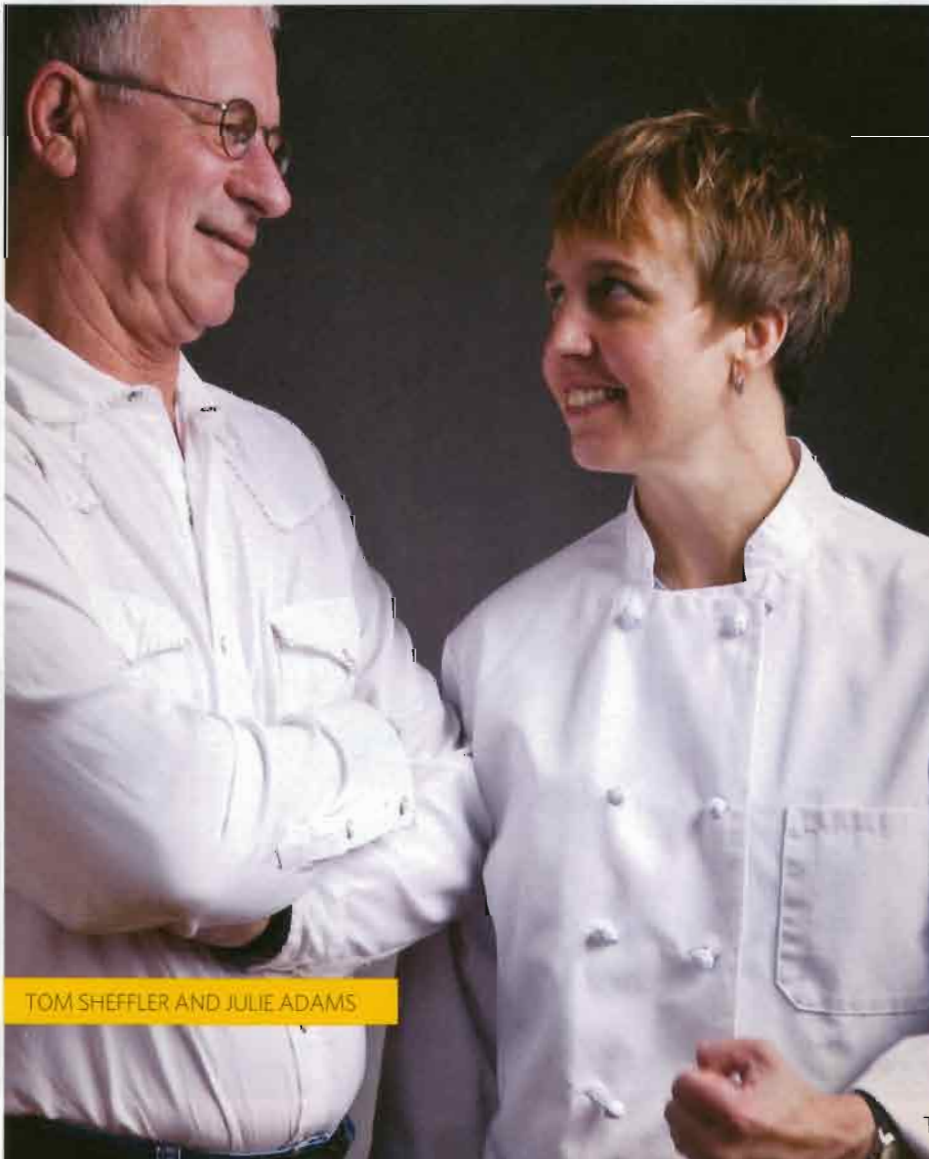
Formerly the home of Saks Fifth Avenue, the Toad Hall building has stood as an anchor in downtown Petoskey for generations. Now Dave Carlson, 37, a Marine with degrees in political economics, English and 20th Century American poetry, and Debra Carlson, a practicing optometrist, are continuing the tradition of offering specialty gifts to Gaslight District shoppers—but combining that with a forward-thinking market sensibility. “Our most frequent customer is from the Chicago area,” says Dave. “We need to be on the leading edge of trends.”

A member of the Downtown Management Board and the Economic Enhancement Committee, Dave says the city is planning for families, with a recent push to include more outdoor art and green spaces downtown, and with the children’s concert series. “The downtown events have been a big hit. People are getting ice cream and coming into the stores. They’re spending the day here.”

“Next to Traverse City,” Dave says, “downtown Petoskey is the center of economic and entertainment activity in Northern Michigan. It’s small enough to offer the historic feeling of a pedestrian downtown, but large enough to accommodate new ideas and activity.”

He’d like to see a children’s museum, extended business hours, more restaurants and entertainment venues, and the continued development of the waterfront and downtown. Other points on the wish list: a swim area, improved green spaces, development of the railway corridor, better public restrooms and more welcoming entry points.

“We want this to remain a community in which we love to be as a family,” Debra says. “What we do at Toad Hall is reflective of that.”



TOM SHEFFLER AND JULIE ADAMS

She finds inspiration for innovation in the surge of young people she sees downtown and the fresh infusion of style from longtime resorter families: “I love having two or three generations purchasing items from the same boutique.”

### BECKY PHILIPP-KRANIG

CO-OWNER, BEARCUB OUTFITTERS

It’s the Norman Rockwell experience that charms both visitors and residents in downtown Petoskey, says Becky Philipp-Kranig, 38, and that experience is what also convinces people to put down roots here long before retirement.

“This atmosphere makes you feel part of something,” she says. “It’s cozy and fun every day, no matter the season. This is really evident to us when we host nighttime events and over 300 people come out. The people here like to be part of their community, like to get out and do things. They’re looking for stores that provide more than just shopping; something fun with a small-town flair to it. Businesses downtown really recognize that, and that makes it fun for younger generations to be involved, because that’s what we want to do, too.”

### JULIE ADAMS

CO-OWNER & CHEF, JULIENNE TOMATOES

Passionate praise for a sandwich—it’s not uncommon to hear at Julienne Tomatoes, and it’s a phenomenon that humbles owners Julie Adams and Tom Sheffler. “Success is something we can never take for granted,” says Julie, 41. “On a daily basis we must continue to keep our customers engaged with quality products and superior service.” She says the leadership and community make downtown Petoskey thrive—a reason she and Tom opened the cafe in 2003. “It’s obvious when you come into our town that we take pride in it. The park, the gaslights, the grassy medians, the wayfinder signs—they’re all cool.”

She says she’s looking forward to growth in the Gaslight District, and her wish list includes a butcher, baker and brewery. “Services abound that focus on the development of new businesses. The leadership seems keenly aware of what we have here and takes action to ensure our continued success.”