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# HICKS ON SIX

With Sun Columnist **Graham Hicks**



Jul 09, 2008

21:17 pm, [Graham Hicks](#) / [General](#), 380 words

## JUST A LITTLE FAMILY BUSINESS - THE PECHETS AND STAGE WEST HOSPITALITY

With the Pechet family's Stage West Hospitality announcement yesterday of a plan to open a major hotel/convention centre/dinner theatre in Edmonton, third-generation company president Jason Pechet was expounding on the family heritage in Edmonton.

Grampa Eugene, still going strong at age 92, bought his first hotel in 1944 in North Battleford, then went on to buy and build "dozens of small hotels with large bars along the Alaska Highway."

In 1972, Eugene's son Howard, with a freshly minted M.A. in English, joined the family company and immediately set about persuading pop to take the hotel concept in a radically different generation.

Eugene must have been quite adventurous. He went along with what he must have thought was a bit over-the-top for Edmonton.

Turned out Howard's instincts were quite right.

From the day the Mayfield Inn opened out in some moose pasture in the extreme west end (At Mayfield Road and 109 Avenue) it was a hit.

The Stage West Dinner Theatre was bringing in TV stars like Gale Gordon (I Love Lucy) and Jamie Farr (MASH) plus offering a superb buffet.

The Pechets had recruited hotelier Jean Kachkar from the Hotel Mac to run the new hotel.

Raised in Syria, Jean had been trained in the "old" school of hospitality, i.e. lavish attention and quality upon your customer, and you will have him or her as a customer for life.

The Mayfield, offering excellent service, legendary buffets and brunches, and the best all-around hotel food west of the downtown, became one of the city's favourite gathering spots.

Today, Stage West Hospitality is a "little family business" with 1,000 employees. "Most have been with us so long that they're family too," says Jason.

The dinner-theatre concept is one the Pechets have upheld all these years.

Howard - always a theatre buff - will soon be recognized in the Guinness Book of Records as the "most prolific theatre producer in the world," thanks to 30 years of continuous dinner theatre - at the Stage Wests in Edmonton, then Toronto and Calgary.

"Dinner theatre isn't the same as it used to be," says Jason today.

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**Graham Hicks**



Graham Hicks is a veteran lead columnist with the Edmonton Sun, writing the popular five-days-a-week "about town" column Hicks on Six.

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"You can't get TV actors to star anymore. Reality shows have replaced sitcoms, most of those actors have their own reality shows! Those that have been successful today are booked ahead for 15 years."

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