

**Chef And His Sister Will Buy L'etoile
They Say That Little Will Change At The French Restaurant In Downtown
Madison.**

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Odessa Piper thanks her lucky stars that Tory Miller came along.

Piper, owner of Downtown Madison's L'Etoile Restaurant at 25 N. Pinckney St., is handing the reins to her protégé, Tory Miller, who has been Piper's chef for 2 1/2 years, and his sister Traci Miller. "I've been working quietly for some time to put the next successor in place," Piper said. She wanted someone who would maintain her 28-year relationships with local farmers and the Madison community. Piper had turned down an earlier, more lucrative offer because she didn't feel the buyer understood or appreciated the charm of L'Etoile, French for "the star."

The transfer of ownership will be complete in May pending approval of a new liquor license. Both Tory Miller, 29, and Piper, 52, are quick to say that little will change. "As far as culinary presentation, our tastes, our palates are the same," Miller said. "L'Etoile's mission--sustainable agriculture, using local seasonal ingredients--that's what drew me here, and that's what I'll maintain." Miller will remain head chef, and Traci Miller, 32, will oversee hospitality and business management.

"They will continue to operate it as L'Etoile," Piper said. "I'll be working very closely with them in the transition."

Piper and Tory Miller would not divulge the sale price for the business. She sold the building two years ago to Sonya Newenhouse, president of Madison Environmental Group, an environmental consulting firm with offices in the building.

Though Piper is selling the restaurant, she said this is by no means an end. She intends to teach and do public speaking, and finally satisfy her friends who have been encouraging her to write a book of recipes.

"It's just not possible to do (all of that) and be a full-time restaurateur. This is sort of the next step in my calling," Piper said.

Miller, an alumnus of UW-Stevens Point, graduated second in a class of about 25 from the French Culinary Institute in New York City.