

MARCH 2011

# Restaurant Business

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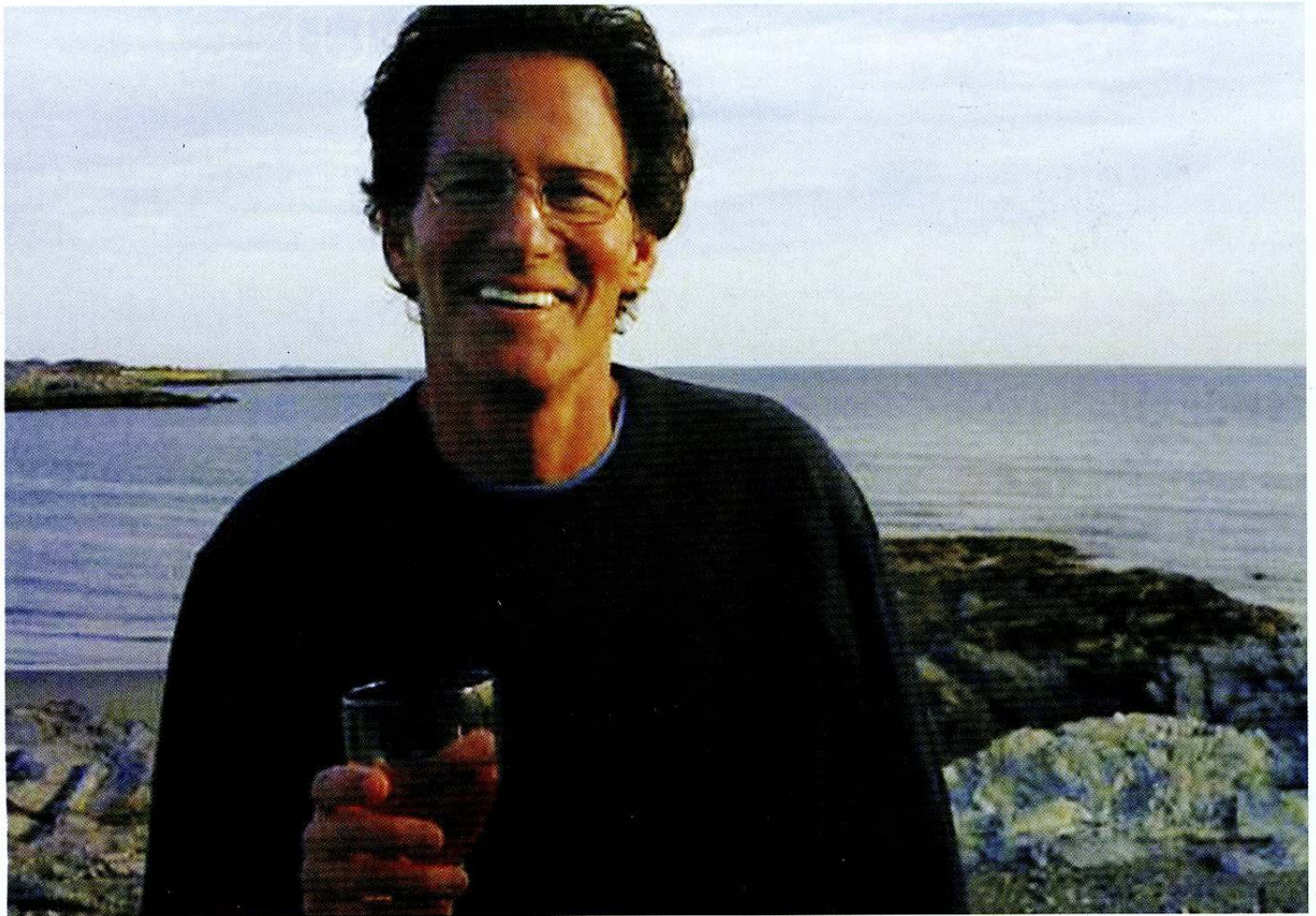
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# FRONT

## ENTREPRENEUR OF THE MONTH



## MICHAEL BAKER

### BAKERS' BEST

**ESTABLISHMENTS:** Bakers' Best Café, Newton Highlands, Massachusetts, and Bakers' Best Catering, Needham, Massachusetts

**WHAT HE'S DONE:** Starting in 1984 with a takeout-only sandwich shop specializing in fresh-roasted turkey sandwiches, Michael Baker has expanded his sphere through the years into a full-service café/retail store and an extensive catering business generating more than \$12 million in annual sales.

**WHY WE LIKE HIM:** Because it's still all about the fresh-roasted turkey. "Our original premise was based on friendly service and great products, and we've stuck with that," says Baker, 62. "I've never forgotten when I was eight years old going to the local bakery with my mom and the owner handing me a cookie. When I see my original customers coming in with their kids and their kids coming in with their kids, that's exciting."

**WHAT'S NEXT:** A 10,000-sq.-ft., state-of-the-art commissary, opened in 2007, gives Baker all the room he needs to continue building sales for the foreseeable future, with a staff of more than 100 to carry it out. "Having that many employees—including lots of depth in management—changes everything," notes Baker. "Sometimes I wish I was still carving turkey in the window, but back in those days if I hadn't shown up for work we wouldn't have been in business. Now I have a great team."

—JOAN M. LANG



BAKERS' BEST CAFE