

# Subterfuge crumbles, cook's left in a stew

By JEANNE WHITTAKER

Have you ever noticed that every time a woman says that she is a terrible cook, no one really believes her?

"Oh, that's impossible!" is the standard rebuttal. In my case, the impossible is not only possible, it's a well-documented fact. Family members, friends and associates—not one will set foot in my kitchen a second time if my cooking is involved.

And, to be perfectly truthful, the situation used to suit me just fine.

The jig is up at last, at least for me. There is a pretty Dearborn homemaker, Anne Swanson, who has made it impossible for me to go on as an out-cast among talented cooks.

My well-established subterfuge began to crumble when Ms. Swanson arrived at my office armed with a sample box of magical potions that are guaranteed, she said, to see kisses bestowed on my soups, sauces and stews.

According to Ms. Swanson, she began helping the nation's amateur chefs when she decided to slick a mixing spoon into her husband's business. He is, she said, the local company representative for the L. J. Minor Corp.

Until then, the Cleveland, Ohio firm conducted a very successful operation without Ms. Swanson's

interference. For 26 years, Minor's has provided flavor bases for stocks, soups and gravies served at just about every successful dining establishment and most top notch hospitals and institutions in the nation.

And, said Ms. Swanson, it looked as if Minor and Company wasn't ever going to listen when she plead the case of the American homemaker.

She simply couldn't understand, she told her husband, why the nation's most successful maker of concentrated flavor bases would want to keep its wares a deep dark secret from so many people.

"I mean," she explained, "they packaged their products in big drums. There was no way a woman could buy the bases in quantities she could use at home." Her own source, she said, was to pinch small amounts of the products from the sample supply that her husband kept at his office.

Being a very determined lady, Ms. Swanson finally wore down Minor's defenses. Just over a year ago she received permission to begin selling the bases in one-pound jars to any housewife, amateur chef or housewife's desire.

One ad in the May issue of Gourmet magazine, she said, resulted in so many orders that it was proved conclusively that there indeed is a market among the masses.

JUST BECAUSE I prefer savoring conversation with guests to sampling gravy in the kitchen doesn't mean I am not interested in good food. I once sat in the dark confines of the London Chop House holding a tiny flashlight while a friend, a superb cook, tried to discover the secrets of Chef Pancho's Seafood Marinara.

Although I wasn't going to copy what I saw swimming around in the pot, my friend was. She insisted that she wasn't going to leave until she knew what it was that gave the dish that something special taste.

Ms. Swanson laughed when I told her the story. Then she telephoned Philip "Pancho" Velez and asked him for the recipe. Sure enough, Pancho said the special ingredient was chicken broth made with a Minor's base.

With a chuckle, Ms. Swanson said Pancho is a consultant to the Minor Corp., as are master chefs Jean Caubet, Jan Willemse and Henry Frank.

One has to sit up and take notice when faced with a group like this one. Caubet directed kitchens for such tony places as the Detroit Athletic Club, the Detroit Club and Joey's Stables, all first class establishments.

Jan Willemse was a culinary conferee of Henry Ford I, who once asked him to advise the company food chemist on ways to use soy beans in breads,

soups, cookies, waffles, ice cream and crackers.

Chef Henry Frank presided for years over the kitchens of the Grosse Pointe Club, better known among habitués as the "Little Club." He also holds a Culinary Olympics Silver Medal.

All are devotees of the product, Ms. Swanson said. As evidence, she offers recipes each chef has prepared for her clients to test for themselves.

Ms. Swanson has named her new company The Flavour Base. "I decided to let other homemakers in on a cooking aid that I've been using for over 20 years," she said.

Under her guidance, one-pound individual containers were designed for 12 appropriate food bases, which is an ideal size for home cooking. Included are beef, ham, brown sauce, chicken, turkey, clam, lobster, shrimp, green turtle, onion, garlic and mushroom bases.

Each jar, she explained, is the base for up to five gallons of stock, enough to fill the needs of most homes for a year. Each container contains directions about how the stock should be prepared. With refrigeration the products will retain freshness and quality for up to a year.

Ms. Swanson said the bases may be ordered by writing to Anne Swanson, The Flavour Base, Box 2515, Dearborn 48213. Or, if you are like the desperate New England socialite, she will take telephone orders at 563-6870 or 563-1009.



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## Flutists slate Feb. 11 event

The Detroit Flute Association (DFA) will meet at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 11 in the Community Congregational Church, 27800 Southfield Road in Lathrup Village.

A performance will feature DFA high school members from the metropolitan area including Heidi Sandling, Amy Ridings, Lisa Lindvall, Clare Savaglio, Jodi VanDePolder and Mary Kay Allinder.

Others are Julie Mamo, Amy Ander-

son, Carol Anderson, Andrea Maurer and Leslie Bulbak.

The recently formed flute club serves greater Detroit and Windsor. In addition to having monthly meetings, the DFA sponsors flute concerts and activities.

Membership in the DFA is open to all flutists who are at least in the seventh grade. For more information call Wendy Holmeyer at 547-8514.

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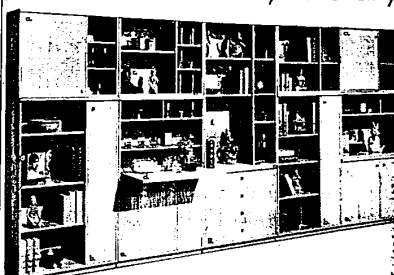
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