

Duglass whips up food, conversation

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A Detroit native who grew up "right down the street at Greenfield and Seven Mile," Grech insists he tied into cooking "no later than 5 years old. Every Wednesday, my mother used to bake bread and loved to play with it. In high school, I went to Chadey High School, which was world-renowned for cooking."

"AT 16 I REALLY blossomed and people took an interest. The head of the school got me a scholarship to study in Paris at the Ecole Hotel de Paris Jen Deraunt as a 'stageur.'"

The Gaullic flows easily from his tongue, then his eyes spark again. "That sounds better than 'student,' don't you think?"

Finishing Paris, Duglass came home. "In 1965, the Pontchartrain Hotel was being built. I got a job as night chef. It was all coming together, a great hotel and all the people from that, oh, 'golden age.'"

Then he bought the restaurant. "Nine years ago this month, from sheer compulsion, I had no choice. I would much prefer to be back here in the kitchen than out there in front, back in the womb rather than out in the arena. But if this is your gift, you have no choice."

Hyperbole and joshing are all part of the style. Duglass pauses and checks two pans of torte from the oven. One is acceptable, the other goes into the sink. He rolls some more dough, talking fluently and wryly about the art of running a great restaurant.

"I smile. I make myself very approachable. You always are attracted to the one that smiles the most. I make myself very available. After all, who am I? Just another cook?"

Oh, come, now. This from the man who rated "Best of Detroit" for catering an extravaganza? "Well, talent. That goes with it." And showmanship. The two words associated with Chef Duglass are "flamboyant" and "showman."

"I LIKE WOWING and powing them. I love the European thinking, the 18th century thing . . . you get up and go from room to room. I am

nounce dinner . . . Duglass' hands fill the air, arcane mouth-watering words run from the tongue. What would he recommend for everyday cooking or a normal party?

Ah, he wouldn't be caught so easily. "What do you want?" His eyes twinkle. "What do you like? Tell me what you like and maybe we'd do it." He shrugs and smiles wide.

"What is his secret, the 'Duglass touch'?"

"Emotion. Food has to be drama, to have texture, to fool the eye, to be a fantasy. Now take desserts. I'm very worried about desserts in this town. People here think that a dessert has to be a mocha torte that tastes like a stale bun. . . well, I could give you anything."

That's the mad caterer talking — the artist of the dining room, whose tongue-in-cheek eclectic Southfield Road dining room isn't exactly Sarricron, perhaps Versailles.

"WHEN I CATER," Duglass grins, "there's drama in store. I'm more director than producer. If I lived in Hollywood, I'd probably be internationally famous."

His mustache slightly salted with bread dough, white jacket soiled, the Culinary Coppola talks about his ultimate.

"I'd like to produce a movie, a food movie. I expect to be in manufacturing too, a series called 'Go-to-Health' . . . healthy food designed for people who are always eating out. No one is controlling what they're eating. I would intervene — quietly. I'm already reducing the amount of unsaturated fats and sodium in classic foods, as well as butter. He looks rock-stern. "Nobody should eat butter."

What would be the ultimate food fantasy? Chef Duglass smiles again, over the fox. "What do they want? Do they want drama, do they want emotion, do they want to be up-to-date or to venture into another century — past or future? A spirit of adventure? I love to please my masters. . . He gives a little bow.

"As long as they do it my way."

Chef Duglass offers recipes from his files

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Pour in Choron Sauce (which is the reduced whipping cream and tomato sauce — 1 1/2 cups whipping cream, 1 teaspoon tomato paste) minus the Bearnaise Sauce. Continue to simmer meat, and add shrimp — taste for seasoning. Add salt if desired. Keep low flame, then remove fillet and shrimp and add a little brandy, remove from heat.

Whip in Bearnaise Sauce and pour over fillet and shrimp. Serve immediately.

NOTE: If sauce is overheated, it will break, then add Choron and heat slightly.

METHOD FOR MAKING BEARNAISE

1/4 cup dry white wine
1/4 tsp. vinegar
1 tsp. dried, crushed tarragon
1/4 cup tarragon vinegar
3-4 egg yolks

Step 1 — Melt butter slowly.

Step 2 — Add to a saucepan, shallots, pepper, vinegar, wine, veal stock (optional — 2 tablespoons), bay leaf. Reduce liquid to half its volume, set aside to cool, slightly.

Step 3 — Add egg yolks to a stainless steel bowl. Add one tablespoon of cold water. Then add the reduced

liquid and with a wire whisk, whip water into the eggs, then set bowl into simmering water on a stove and continue the whipping process until the eggs are like a smooth custard. Remove quickly from the water. (This method of cooking is more difficult than it seems. One must not underwhip, nor should they overcook.)

Step 4 — Then add to the custard that is smooth and frothy, the melted butter, one tablespoon at a time, leaving the water and milk solids on the bottom.

SAUCE CHORON:

Heat whipping cream to a fast boil and reduce slightly. Add salt and

pepper and tomato paste. Whip with a wire whisk until blended (well). Remove from heat and add Bearnaise Sauce and whip quickly.

CAMEMBERT DRESSING

1/4 cups white wine
3 cups oil
1 clove garlic
4 oz. cheese
1/4 cups vinegar
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 egg
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

Mix in blender:
Egg, vinegar, white wine, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, garlic and cheese. Then add oil, slowly.

Hot gifts for Yule giving

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INEXPENSIVE LITTLE stocking stuffers that make great host/hostess gifts include a set of party ball trays in the shapes of trees, balls and wreaths. I don't know about you, but I have a heck of a time trying to keep two plain old trays I have filled, let alone these.

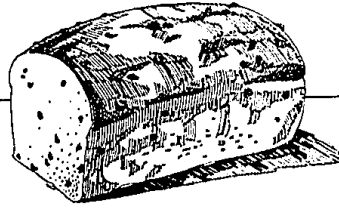
Two of this year's strangest kitchen goodies that are sure to be hits and wind up in next year's garage sale heap include something called a microwave pressure cooker and the Pop Gun.

Always struggling for more tender meats coming out of the radar box, the microwave pressure cooker is sure to be used once, then put in back of the empty cottage cheese

containers. As far as something called the Pop Gun is considered, this is a popcorn maker with a squeezable pistol-grip handle that stirs the kernels while they cook. Great. Just what my kids need, something fun in the shape of a gun.

So get out the old calculator and a little quick computation will show that it only takes these change over \$1,800 to outfit this year's great kitchen.

All the items mentioned above are available at all Kitchen Glamor locations (Redford, West Bloomfield and Rochester) and at local gourmet shops and in the housewares department of most major retailers. Prices may vary. Happy shopping!



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