

## taste buds

**chef Larry Janes**

## Fine cheese pairs nicely with pasta

I am so happy that pasta has finally been taken off the list of bad-boy starches. Now, after all these years, food nutritionists are telling us pasta is a complex carbohydrate and is actually good for us.

Ah, but what is good pasta without the customary grating of a fresh block of Parmesan, Asiago or Pecorino Romano cheese? A simple dusting. A complex outburst of taste. Of course, too much of the "so-called simple dusting" of cheese and you can undo all the good. No sense swelling on the salt content, cholesterol and fat contents of these cheeses. Why spoil such a delectable experience?

If you haven't already guessed, good, aged cheese is as important as a fine grade of pasta. You wouldn't make a cake from scratch and top it off with pre-packaged icing. Why even consider doing the same with shaker-can Parmesan cheese and a plate of steaming pasta?

Unfortunately, imported grating cheeses like Asiago, Parmesan and Romano aren't readily available in most markets and must be searched out, usually in small local Italian groceries or gourmet-type food shops. Every now and then, I stumble onto one of these super "supermarkets" that have a deli with imported cheeses, but even then, on a pound for pound variety and selection, make sure you're getting the best and freshest imported product.

ASK TO see labels and rinds of the block. Be aware that there are many varieties, both imported and domestic (some made locally) but the flavor difference when buying the true variety always stands out.

Take Asiago, for instance. Asiago cheese is golden, nutty and, in my opinion, has more flavor than Parmesan and Romano. When I want to toss a simple pasta not covered with a flavorful sauce, I always choose Asiago because it complements the pasta rather than covers it. Asiago can be purchased two ways, stravecchio (very old) and vecchio (old). Of course, the best is the very old variety but in some markets, I've seen this priced as high as \$9 per pound. Look around and you should be able to find it in the \$6-per-pound price range.

Don't think you have to purchase a pound. A quarter-pound will grate between ¼ and one cup of cheese. Be careful, once you try this flavorful and nutty variety, you'll be hooked.

When it comes to Parmesan, the best variety available is called Parmigiano Reggiano, made the same way as it was in the 10th century. This is a finely textured, golden cheese and is very hard and aged to perfection. If you want the best, this is it.

Other very dependable brands include Polenghi, Galbani and Locatelli. Contrary to popular belief, imported Parmesan should have a light sweet flavor and be slightly nutty and have almost no trace of saltiness. You'll pay even more for imported Parmesan than you will Asiago, so shop around and check out the market areas (the Windsor Farmers Market and the Eastern Market in Detroit) for the best prices and availabilities.

I AM amazed at the positive reputation and the easy availability of Romano cheese. Romano is a hard white cheese that is somewhat salty in flavor and has a tendency to be very sharp. Pecorino Romano is the best Romano available, and when you see it called for in a recipe, I suggest using half Romano and half Parmesan or Asiago for an improved, less sharp flavor.

Please turn to Page 2



Denise Parisien (left), Richard Jurkiewicz and Genieve Jurkiewicz prepare paczki at the Paris Bakery in Livonia. On Fat

Tuesday, patrons will be celebrating the Polish custom of enjoying the rich, jelly-filled doughnuts before Lent.

By Ariane Funke  
special writer

You don't have to be Polish to enjoy paczki.

Tomorrow — known to some as Fat Tuesday — people of many nationalities will flock to Polish bakeries to buy paczki (punch-key).

Paczki is a fruit-filled doughnut deeply linked to the beginning of Lent. The Polish custom is to feast on paczki the day before Ash Wednesday, traditional start of the Lenten season preceding Easter.

"It's tradition on Fat Tuesday," explained Richard Jurkiewicz, general manager of the Paris Bakery in Livonia. "You live it up before starting 40 days of sacrifice."

The Jurkiewicz family, owners of the Paris Bakery, have been turning out the delectable paczki for 40 years. They moved to Livonia from Detroit 22 years ago.

"People come in droves," said Jurkiewicz, 39, a Livonia resident. "It's beyond Polish. It's almost everybody now."

The ground rules for eating paczki are: (1) Enjoy them while

## See recipes, Page 2

they're fresh, and (2) think about calories later.

JURKIEWICZ estimates that his staff will make and sell some 2,000 dozen of the yeast-raised paczki to satisfy hordes of hungry customers. The two days preceding Ash Wednesday, which falls this week, are expected to be marked by lines of people waiting their turn at the shop on Joy Road between Inkster and Middlebelt roads.

Paczki are made with eggs, flour, sugar and yeast and then deep-fried in pure vegetable oil. Jurkiewicz said a richer dough is made in honor of Fat Tuesday.

The doughnuts are filled with fruit or jelly and covered with icing or dusted with sugar. The price is \$5 per dozen (regularly \$4.50).

"The tradition is prune-filled," Jurkiewicz said. "The most common filling, now, is raspberry."

The Paris Bakery was born around 40 years ago, in a predomi-

nantly Polish area near Michigan Avenue and Junction in southwest Detroit. Jurkiewicz's parents, Marlon and Genieve, both born in Poland, started the business.

"The business was developed on the Polish rye bread and from there everything branched out," Jurkiewicz said. "We lived above the bakery. I started cracking eggs when I was 7 years old. Somebody had to do it."

The parents, who now live in Farmington Hills, remain active in the business. Jurkiewicz's brother, Ted, who lives in Canton, also is part of the team.

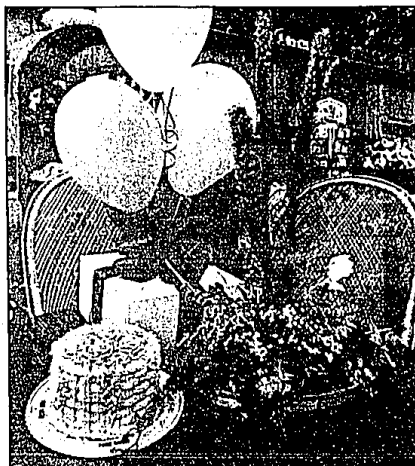
The Paris Bakery staff started to prepare the dough Sunday night, in order to meet the demand that begins Monday.

"MY MOM and just about everybody is going to take a turn at frying," Jurkiewicz said. The goal is to produce at least 40 dozen doughnuts per hour.

A Kowalski meat market in the Crossroads shopping center, at

Please turn to Page 2

## Punchy over paczki



Celebration package from the Flower Barn in Farmington includes Paris Bakery cake along with flowers and balloons.

## Offbeat cakes

They can be part of the package

By Ariane Funke  
special writer

Suppose your friend is a fast-food fanatic.

Wouldn't it be fun to surprise him or her with a birthday cake shaped like a giant taco, bulging with cheese and lettuce made from icing. Add some flowers and balloons, and you have a festive occasion.

That's the concept behind the "celebration package" recently introduced by the Flower Barn, a Farmington florist shop.

"It's fun," said Chris Lamb, owner of the store in the Crossroads shopping center at Nine Mile and Farmington roads. "I think kids get a kick out of it."

The specialty cakes come from Paris Bakery in Livonia. Lamb provides the flowers and balloons and delivers the entire package to customers.

"I remember years ago, you could buy a little cake," said Lamb, 38, of Northville. "I was looking to try

something different, to set us apart from everybody else."

Lamb started her business four years ago after working for several other florists. She has been at her present location two years.

"I ALWAYS was interested in interior design and art," she said.

Richard Jurkiewicz, general manager of Paris Bakery, found the idea an appealing way to gain exposure for his specialty cake business. The celebration package began last October.

"It took off like wildfire," Jurkiewicz said.

All the cakes are baked at Paris Bakery's Livonia headquarters, on Joy Road between Inkster and Middlebelt roads. The decorating is done by Jan Stawarz of Northville, who has attended numerous seminars on various techniques, and Jim Anskafal of Livonia, a graduate of the culinary arts program at Schoolcraft College in Livonia.

"Most everything is edible," Jur-

lewicz said. "It's tinted with food color."

Lamb, who always keeps a couple of cakes in her display case, finds the new idea has boosted her business, particularly among people who are looking for something special.

"I tell people they can do anything that suits a holiday or special interest," she said. "When people come in here, they are coming for an emotional idea, for an occasion."

One man wanted a special cake for his wife, who collects shoes. Volle, a cake shaped like Cinderella's slipper.

OF COURSE, St. Patrick's Day evokes the obvious novelty cakes featuring shamrocks and leprechauns. Easter will bring bunny-shaped cakes.

You say you want a special cake for your biology teacher?

"They did one of a green frog lying on his back with his tongue out," said Lamb with a laugh. "Those decorators are fantastic."

One day's notice is required for a custom cake, which is available in yellow, white, banana, chocolate and marble batter.

A six-inch cake, which feeds six, costs \$6. A six-inch "lace" cake costs \$8, while a small hamburger-shaped cake is \$12. Generally, prices are based on size and labor.

The customer's budget determines the elaborateness of the package.

"There is no minimum cost," Lamb said. "They can order in any cost. The fact that we deliver is the whole key. With flowers and balloons, it's something where you can bring a whole party or a cheer-me-up."

The Flower Barn is in the Crossroads shopping center at Nine Mile and Farmington roads, Farmington. Phone - 478-9173. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday and Saturday and 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday-Friday. Closed Sunday.