

taste buds  
chef Larry  
Janes



## 'Chicken' was really veal meal

What's the first thing you think about when putting veal on your shopping list? Too expensive, right?

Yours truly is a veal aficionado from way back when. If memory serves me correctly, I was first introduced to veal when Mama prepared something called "city chicken."

Looking (and tasting) like skewered chicken with a light cornmeal coating, it was actually inexpensive cubes of veal shoulder that were a byproduct of the trimmed scrap.

These tender cubes were skewered on those old, big, thick, wooden skewers that you don't see too much of nowadays, then dipped in an egg wash and lightly rolled in a seasoned cornmeal and quickly panfried.

Basically, there are two types of veal on the market, formula fed and milk-fed. Many butchers will try to convince you that formula fed is the only kind worth buying. Fortunately, it is not.

Milk-fed veal (indicating mother's milk as opposed to a special formula) is every bit as good when properly prepared and about a quarter of the price. Good veal (both types) is very pale pink, very tender and finely textured. Beware of the butcher who tries to convince you that dark red meat is veal. If you want to learn about baby beef, you're reading the wrong article.

**THE VEAL SHOULDER** is the least expensive cut of all. It may be boned and rolled for roasting and braising but if you expect the butcher to do this, expect to pay upwards of \$1 per pound extra for this service. Shoulder steaks are at best mediocre for grilling or broiling and lend themselves best to juicy casseroles and stews. The shoulder also is used for making ground veal, a light, juicy addition to any meatloaf or meat pie.

Both the veal shank and the breast are good for braising and roasting, especially when stuffed with a turkey. Good old heavy cast-iron dutch ovens and clay cookers bring out a juicy tenderness that literally melts in your mouth. Veal ribs and loin are considered together, with the ribs resting on the breast and the loin backing them up.

From either the loin or the ribs comes the famous rack of veal as well as the great chops. Chops can be broiled but they lack flavor because the meat is so lean. Broiling tends to toughen the meat, but brushing with a little olive oil before and during the process certainly helps. A quick pan fry with crushed garlic and a sprinkle of rosemary in a little butter does wonders.

Finally the rump and the leg. Scaloppini comes from this area, and these small slices are outstanding when dusted with flour and quickly sautéed in a little butter and then drenched in a squeeze of fresh lemon juice for a mouth-watering treat.

Frequently when cooking veal, you will notice the introduction of other flavors, often in the form of sauces but frequently with a light mask of herbs and spices. This is because the animal is so young (one to two months for milk-fed and four months for formula fed) that the flavor is delicate to the point of being bland. There is practically no fat (and consequently little waste). This is a great food for the calorie and cholesterol conscious, but it can make the finished product dry. Follow cooking procedures to the minute and beware of overcooking, especially the more delicate chops, loins and scaloppini.

# Angus beef no bum steer

By Robert B. Strika  
special writer

Ready for some good news? It's OK to eat beef again. Even better news? Your beef can be certified Angus "the best beef product to hit the market in years."

That's the word from George Dolph, executive chef at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Southfield. Dolph knows his Angus beef. Wellington's, the hotel's restaurant and Dolph's pride and joy, serves certified Angus beef exclusively.

Dolph is quick to make the distinction between regular Angus and certified Angus.

"The word certified is an important qualification," Dolph said. "The marbling (distribution of visible fat within the meat) it takes to be graded by government inspectors as certified Angus makes for a more tender and flavorful cut of meat."

Chef Dolph, 35, a Dayton, Ohio, native, is no stranger to quality beef. A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in 1973, Dolph has worked in some of the finest restaurants and hotels in the Midwest including the King's Island Resort in Ohio.

According to Dolph, cut of all the Angus beef grown in the United States, only about 25 percent makes it to the market as certified Angus beef. The other 75 percent can be sold as regular beef, the kind most consumers are used to buying at the market.

"THERE ARE TWO factors that distinguish Angus cattle from other cattle grown for food," Dolph said. "First, there is absolutely no cross-breeding. They are all 100 percent Angus steers. Second, none of the cattle used are over 24 months in age. This contributes to the overall tenderness in the meat." Tenderness is an understatement.

Chef Dolph orders his meats from Dress Meats in Chicago. Every lot of beef the hotel receives is hand-picked and aged in an airtight plastic wrap known as cryovac, he said. Aging meat in this manner breaks down the muscle tissue and makes for a more delicate and flavorful cut of meat. Wellington's sets its tables with steak knives but you might not need one.

The menu at Wellington's features dishes made from certified Angus beef including London Broil Fromage, Marinated Beef Salad and Tenderloin Magagnac. These dishes combine the delicate flavor of Angus beef with other flavors to create new and tasty combinations.

Non-meat eaters will not be turned away from Wellington's as there is also a variety of fresh seafoods and salads available to satisfy those seeking a lighter fare.

With Dolph in the kitchen, you are assured that fresh means fresh. Dolph insists on giving consumers what they expect and cites "menu misrepresentation" as a major flaw in many restaurants.

"If the menu says certified Angus, it should be certified Angus. If it says fresh swordfish, it should be fresh, not frozen. On this, I will never compromise."

HIS "NEVER compromise" dedication has won him the admiration of his superiors and the respect of his crew. He is a comrade, not a commander, and there is a tremendous sense of cooperation throughout the kitchen. He gives his crew responsibility, and they reward him with performance and enthusiasm.

There are a lot of sub-professions in running a kitchen. "Not only are you a cook and a psychiatrist, you are a purchasing agent, a party planner and a cost-control specialist. When someone cuts themselves, you become a paramedic. The job is all-encompassing," he said.

Please turn to Page 2



## Beefy dishes include salad, London broil

### MARINATED BEEF SALAD

When roasting the beef for this salad, it is best to use a meat thermometer, placing it in the thickest portion of meat or in the center of a uniform roast. Use the following temperatures: 120-125 degrees for rare, 135-145 degree for medium, 150-160 degree for well done.

This salad is excellent by itself, served over fresh salad greens, or stuffed into pita bread.

2 lbs. certified Angus rib eye, julienne cut (think match-stick-sized strips)  
3 green onions, sliced  
6 black olives, sliced  
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1 medium tomato, julienne cut

1 small green bell pepper, julienne cut  
1 small red or yellow bell pepper, julienne cut  
1 tsp. kosher salt  
1 small carrot, julienne cut  
1 celery stalk, julienne cut  
2 cups herbed vinaigrette dressing (below)

In a 300 degree oven, roast rib eye until desired doneness and cool.

In a large bowl, toss all ingredients with herbed vinaigrette dressing. Refrigerate at least 6 hours.

### HERBED VINAIGRETTE DRESSING

¼ teaspoon Dijon mustard  
¼ teaspoon black pepper, coarsely ground  
¼ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

¼ teaspoon dill, fresh if possible  
1½ teaspoon, red wine vinegar  
¼ cup olive oil  
1-½ cup vegetable oil  
Mix all ingredients well. Set aside.

### LONDON BROIL FROMAGE

Flank steak is often seen as an inferior cut, but cooked properly it has many virtues. For instance, it's very tender when sliced diagonally, has very little fat and is very juicy. Because it's thinner at the ends than in the center, you get both well done and rare cuts. Furthermore, it's good hot, warm or cold.

Please turn to Page 2

## 'In' cooking

## Fads don't affect country inn fare

By Anne Lehmann  
special writer

Americans have consistently sought new adventures in dining — experimenting with the trendy and exotic in both ingredients and food preparation equipment.

It seems that each year restaurant menus are lengthened to accommodate off-requested items, be it Tex-Mex, Japanese or Cajun cooking. Happily, some establishments have withstood the test of time, maintaining kitchens that produce delectable fare that is both simple yet inspired.

Country inn cooking, as it has been called, is the hallmark of the historic Holly Hotel in Holly, the Botsford Inn in Farmington Hills and the Eagle Tavern in Greenfield Village. These restaurants have quietly demonstrated that slow and steady is better than bowing to the quicksilver

lastest of the dining public. Grilled fish and meats, sautéed vegetables and sauces that aren't heavy-handed so much as they are fragrant with herbs are menu staples for each of these restaurants.

When Brad Smith, the Holly Hotel's executive chef, was asked to define country inn cooking, he said simply, "good, wholesome, back-to-basics" food.

A DOVISH eight-year veteran of the Holly kitchen, Smith prides himself on always striving to create new dishes from the freshest ingredients. One can delight in many epicurean treats at this decidedly Victorian inn, from escarots and shrimp stuffed mushrooms to sautéed Michigan rainbow trout and fillet of beef Wellington.

Besides the standard menu, the hotel offers six to eight lunch and din-

ner specials such as wild game or spring's mushroom dinner. Freshness is key to Smith, who points out, "We literally don't have a freezer on the premises." Fresh fish is regularly served as is grilled meat. Desserts are palate pleasers, likely to tempt even the most stoic dieter.

Want Holly's country inn cooking goodness at home? No problem. For the last four years the hotel has offered the unique Gourmet-to-Go service. Smith and staff are ready to pack up shop and come to your home to serve a complete seven-course dinner from your kitchen for four people or more. Host and hostess are free to entertain their guests while the Holly staff works wonders in the kitchen.

The Botsford Inn, a country inn bed and breakfast hotel, has a rich history complete with anecdotal

tales about automobile barons of days gone by.

This 1836 hostelry, which once served as a stage stop on the line between Detroit and Chicago, was purchased by Henry Ford after meeting his wife in the hotel ballroom. The restaurant is filled with Americana and maintains a century-old reputation for good food.

SONDRA BAKER, chef manager at the inn, relies on basic, wholesome ingredients to create what she calls down-home cooking. The menu boasts such staples as chicken pot pie and stuffed flounder with crabmeat and shrimp but includes six to 10 specials each evening, often items based on seasonal ingredients. The use of fresh herbs is emphasized in the Botsford kitchen, so much so

Please turn to Page 2



RANDY BOAST/Staff photographer

Sondra Baker, head chef at the Botsford Inn in Farmington Hills, is shown with inn specialties: (clockwise from bottom) veal stew, tomato rice soup and cherry cobbler.