

taste buds  
chef Larry  
Janes



## Seafood line is both real and imitation

When it comes to seafood, yours truly balances the checkbook every week, making sure there's always something left to purchase fresh seafood.

I love lobster, shrimps and go crazy over crab. So when I had the opportunity to try a "new" product called SeaLegs, recently introduced to the North American seafood market, I approached the product with a little hesitation and skepticism.

It's unlike the mock seafood selling in markets, claiming to have the flavor, taste and texture of real seafood. I purchased SeaLegs Lobster Tails with a show-me attitude. Especially since the main ingredient is surimi (fish paste), with a price tag almost half of what real lobster sells for.

Was I surprised. It is good. Real succulent, sweet, melt-in-your-mouth lobster it isn't, but when different recipes were tested in the Janes family kitchen, the SeaLegs product came out on top.

BEFORE I share my favorite recipes for this trendy, new, upscale yuppie product, I thought it would be interesting to do a little research and find out just what it is that makes this product swim.

Early products that hit the grocers shelves claiming to have the taste and appearance of lobster, crab and shrimp were really a laboratory concoction loaded with artificial flavors, colors and shreds of what used to be a throw-away fish called pollack.

The Borelson Co., exclusive marketers of the SeaLegs brand, has risen the "fake" seafood to new heights. Fake is really a misnomer with this brand because the company has discovered a way to combine real lobster, crab and shrimp with Alaskan pollack to produce a high-quality product that looks, smells and, remarkably so, tastes like the real thing.

Nothing will ever be able to replace the taste of fresh steamed seafood right from the shell, but when using this product in salads, soups and sauces, I was amazed at how well it holds up and retains its consistency and flavor.

So what's the secret? In addition to utilizing the Alaskan pollack, the Borelson Co. has incorporated a hefty percentage of real seafood into the product. The "real" addition brings this so-called "imitation" product to new heights. Of course, with the addition of the "real seafood" the product also has a very close to "real" price tag.

Recent surveys at the local markets in my area, however, found the SeaLegs products coming in at about 25 to 35 percent below the cost of the real thing. This really amounted to a big savings when I recently had to prepare a crab tetrazzini for a Janes family wedding shower.

FLAKED CRABMEAT was hovering about \$11 per pound but I found the SeaLegs imitation product at considerable savings. When the final recipe was finished and the family had wiped the last of the tasty morsels from its lips, I figured I saved about \$40. Now, of course, the Janes family is not known for its remarkable taste buds but no one, not even Aunt Phyllis, the family culinary matriarch, could discern a difference.

So if you're looking for a less expensive way to entertain with seafood, check out the SeaLegs brand products. You won't be disappointed. Bon Appetit!

See recipes, page 2.

# Bottled waters

## They're snazzy thirst quenchers

By Mary Rodrigue  
special writer

MOVE OVER, Coke and Pepsi. This is the bottled water generation.

It's been called the gourmet part of the beverage industry. The nectar of the health conscious.

And in the never-ending quest for the best of everything, consumers are quenching their collective upscale thirst more and more on the little bottles with exotic labels.

"Perrier is still number one by far," says E.J. Jonna, owner of Vintage Wine & Deli in Westland. "The more I stock, the quicker it goes. It's been accepted now. It's not a trend. It's here to stay."

Jonna says with consumers buying more imported beers and liquors, it follows that bottled waters—many from European and Canadian glacial springs—would also experience a greater demand.

BUT WHETHER it's Evian from the Swiss Alps or Absopure from Plymouth, bottled water has found a permanent niche in the marketplace.

"The country is more health conscious," says Mike Canan, manager of the Bonanza Wine Shop in Livonia. "The non-sugar waters will always be around. Perrier has been around forever."

With no sugar content, these waters might not have kids and teenagers swarming to them, but consumers in their late 20s to early 40s are keeping the demand constant, Canan says.

"Our store has a large clientele from the factories. They're tired of (soda) pop. They want something without a lot of sugar. It's a good water drink without the taste of salts or fluoride."

Bottled water comes in sparkling (natural carbonation like Perrier) and non-sparking varieties. While most taste like plain water, Perrier's new, flavored lime-mild orange, lemon and lime-is Canan's big seller right now.

LaCroix (manufactured in Wisconsin) has a stronger taste. Consumers just have to try them to see which they like best," he says.

ON THE HEELS of the bottled water are the seltzers. True seltzer is natural mineral water that is effervescent. Commercial brands finding favor with consumers are fruit flavored, naturally sweetened and without additives.

The biggest misconception people have about seltzer is that it's low in calories," Canan says. "There are about 130 calories in a 10-ounce bottle. They're appealing because the fruit flavors are very good—all natural. But it's not a diet drink."

New York Seltzer, the major manufacturer in the market, had to add the word soda to the label because "true seltzer has no sugar."

Because it's sweet, it appeals to kids as well as adults, he adds.

Michigan is the largest market in the country for New York Seltzer. A new see-through plastic can was test marketed here. It took off and is now selling all over the country."

New York Seltzer does produce a diet line.

"A NEW POPULAR brand is the Aussie Seltzer," says Todd King, Manager of Bosco's Wine & Deli in Farmington Hills. "It's not really manufactured in Australia, but it uses an Australian formula, like the Matilda Bay wine coolers. And the flavors are more exotic, like kiwi, papaya, peach and banana berry. It also comes in diet with Nutrasweet."

"People pretty much grab them in place of a pop as a refreshing drink. It's an impulse type thing. We also sell them by the single can or bottle."

Among the bottled waters, Evian is number one at Bosco's.

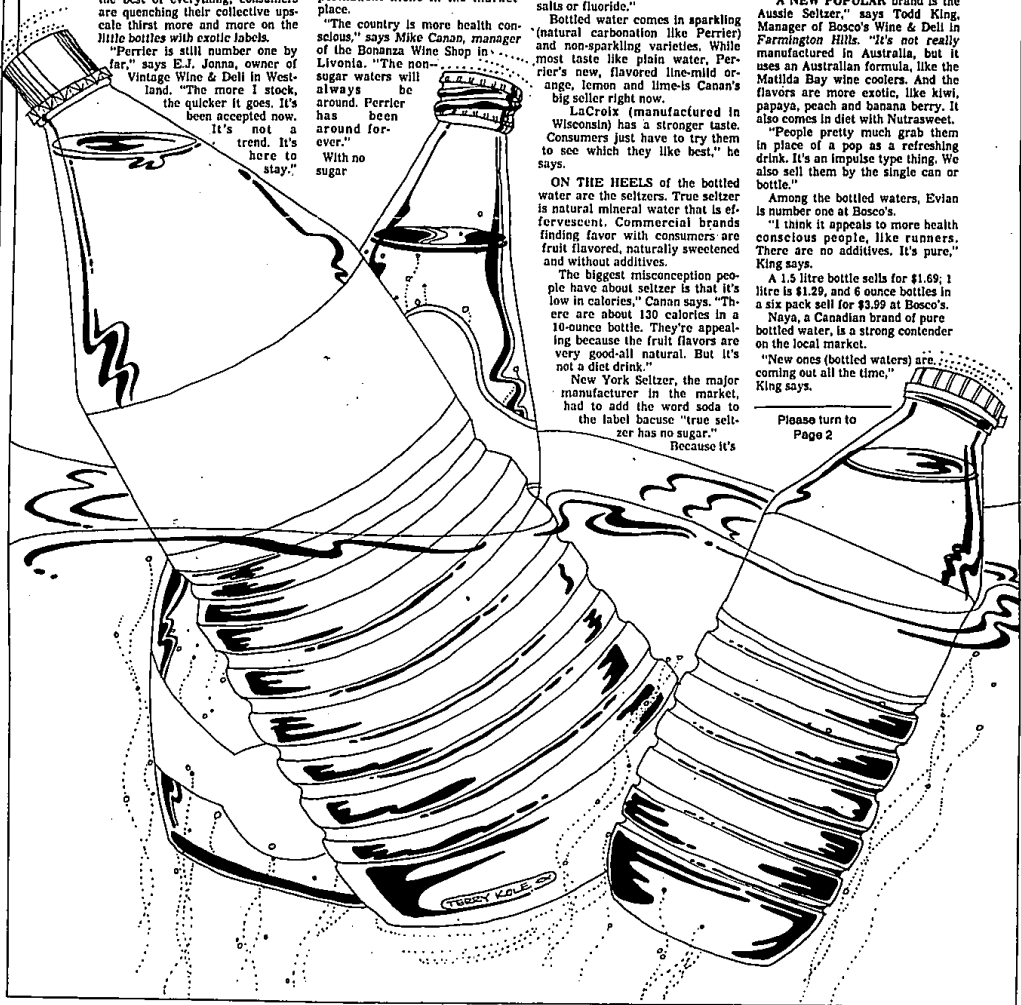
"I think it appeals to more health conscious people, like runners. There are no additives. It's pure," King says.

A 1.5 litre bottle sells for \$1.69; 1 litre is \$1.29, and 6 ounce bottles in a six pack sell for \$3.99 at Bosco's.

Naya, a Canadian brand of pure bottled water, is a strong contender on the local market.

"New ones (bottled waters) are coming out all the time," King says.

Please turn to  
Page 2



Waiter Bill Ciske serves these main-course salads at the Bates Street Cafe.

# You can keep your cool with main-course salads

By Ethel Simmons  
staff writer

What could be nicer on a hot summer's day than a fresh, cool, main-course salad for a delicious light lunch?

At the Community House in Birmingham, main-course salads are one of the specialties on a varied menu at the outdoor Bates Street Cafe. Under big umbrellas, and tables with colorful cloths, lunch is served from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays-Fridays.

Joanne Heimstadt, director of food services, said the three most popular main-course salads served at the cafe, as well as for events and business lunches catered by the Community House, are Chinese Chicken Salad, Shrimp Dijon Salad, and Broccoli, Cauliflower and Cheese Salad.

And it's not just the "ladies who lunch" or working women who like these tasty selections. "In the past couple of years, men are as receptive to salad as women — or more," Heimstadt said. "We have a Bates Street Sandwich on the menu, but men are not necessarily interested in hearty sandwiches. They're health and weight conscious."

*'In the past couple of years, men are as receptive to salad as women — or more . . . they're health and weight conscious.'*

— Joanne Heimstadt  
The Community House

Chinese Chicken Salad combines marinated chicken and a medley of fresh vegetables. Shrimp Dijon Salad is served on a bed of lettuce and garnished with fresh vegetables: Broccoli, Cauliflower and Cheese Salad is enhanced with dill dressing.

OTHER MENU offerings that tempt salad-lovers are the Chicken Salad, served on a cantaloupe; Tortellini Salad, marinated with fresh vegetables; and Croissant, with either chicken salad or shrimp and crab salad.

The Bates Street Cafe is open through

Friday, Sept. 2, weather permitting. The cafe also serves a "Picnic in the Park" 5:30-7:30 p.m. Thursdays during the city's "In the Park" outdoor concert series in Shann Park. A menu of light summer salads, changing each week, is available, as well as fried chicken, Le Dog and burgers.

In addition, the Community House caters on a daily basis to D'Cafe at the Troy Design Center. The cafe is open to the public from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays. "The menu is almost exactly the same (as the Bates Street Cafe) in the summer," Heimstadt said. There are hot and cold daily specials and homemade soups, too.

Here are the recipes for the three most popular main-course salads at the Bates Street Cafe. Both the Chinese Chicken Salad and the Shrimp Dijon follow the guidelines of the HeartSmart program.

### CHINESE CHICKEN SALAD

- (per person)
- 6 ounces breast of chicken (bone)
- 1/4 head lettuce or mixed greens
- 1/2 tomato

Please turn to Page 2.