

Scouting local kitchen shops

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BILL BRESLER/staff photographer

Behind Bon Homme

Chef Greg Goodman is seated in the Cafe Bon Homme, which he opened in 1986. The elegant restaurant is entered through black wrought iron gates on Penniman Street. Inside, the decor resembles a French cafe. (See review of restaurant on front page of this section).

And Kitchen Glamor with stores in Redford, Rochester and West Bloomfield is considered to be the grandfather of them all. This family-owned operation has always maintained a full line of quality cookware, cookbooks and kitchen accessories. Throughout the '70s it brought the greats of the American kitchen, such as Julia Child, James Beard and Richard Olney, to their demonstration kitchen. They shared with us their expertise in a way that has never been duplicated. Today, Kitchen Glamor is probably Williams-Sonoma's strongest competitor in Michigan.

Founded in the wine country of California in 1956, Williams-Sonoma is now the largest retail distributor of kitchenware today.

The Somerset store was the 60th store, just a year ago when it opened. By now, the chain has grown to 75 stores. Although there have been rumors of other Williams-Sonoma shops opening in Michigan, the Somerset store is the only one in the state.

Founder Chuck Williams has been involved with cooking and shopping for cooking equipment throughout Europe for much of his life. When he opened his first store in Sonoma, it was stocked with wares from Spain, Portugal, France, Denmark, Germany and Italy.

By the early '60s his reputation as a purveyor of fine European cookware was known to all the great American cooks. James Beard, Helen Evans Brown and Julia Child would stop by his store every time they came to San Francisco. In 1973, the catalog business was started with the help of Ed Marcus of Nelson-Marcus. Within a few years, Williams was regarded as a master in the kitchen-shop business.

FOR THOSE of us who were addicted to collecting gourmet kitchen gadgets then, the Williams-Sonoma catalog was an oasis filled with specialized kitchen items and gourmet foods unavailable in the Detroit area.

Gadgets such as fresh truffle shaver, French banneton bread molds and Italian balsamic vinegar could be discovered by reading the "Catalog for Cooks," long before these items could be found in the retail shops.

In 1978, Williams sold the company to Howard Lester for \$100,000. Although Williams is no longer the owner, he is very much involved with the day-to-day operations as director and vice chairman of the board.

What's the secret for such success? When I posed that question to David Smith, manager of the Som-



JIM HEDER/staff photographer

Karen Breckenridge, an employee at Williams-Sonoma in Troy, demonstrates a popcorn popper at the store.

set store, he replied, "The thing which the company stresses is that we give legendary customer service. We will do whatever is necessary to please the customer. Our customers expect quality. Everything we sell Chuck Williams approves. He still goes on buying trips all over the world, and that's what made it the store it is today."

So what's hot for the holidays? According to Smith, what Williams-Sonoma, Somerset, is expecting to be hot are espresso makers, coffee grinders, coffee beans and all the accessories to go with them. The traditional Christmas imported foods such as panettone (an egg bread with raisins, orange and citron from Milan), Italian panforte (a rich confection made with almonds, hazelnuts, candied fruit and spices) or Christmas plum pudding are consistently popular year after year.

Three years ago, Chuck Williams published, what else - the Williams-Sonoma Cookbook and Guide to Kitchenware (1986, Random House, New York). Many of the recipes that have been printed in the company's catalog over the years can be found in the book. In the introduction the author describes his career and how he built the Williams-Sonoma business.

As you would expect, there is a significant chapter entitled "Equipment." Here in good detail Williams discusses the purpose and care of 400 specialized pans, knives, tools and electric machines. Most of his recipes I've tested have worked.

These recipes are from "The Wil-

iams-Sonoma Cookbook and Guide to Kitchenware."

GINGER-ORANGE STEAMED PUDDING

There is quite a lot of ginger in this pudding, but it doesn't taste too strong.

- 8 ounces (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 5 eggs
- 1 tablespoon brandy
- grated peel of 1 orange, colored part only
- 1/4 cup fresh orange juice
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons ground ginger
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 cup crystallized ginger, finely chopped

Butter mold and set aside. Heat a teakettle full of water. Cream butter and sugar together until light. Beat eggs lightly and add to mixture. Add brandy, orange peel and juice. Sift flour, ground ginger and soda together. Add crystallized ginger to flour and then combine with the batter-egg mixture. Beat until smooth and spoon into prepared mold.

Cover, place in pot and pour in enough boiling water to reach 3/4 way up sides of mold. Cover pot and simmer for 1 1/2 hours.

Turn pudding out onto plate and serve warm or cold with whipped cream, sweetened and flavored with vanilla, rum or liqueur.

Equipment needed: 2-quart steamed pudding mold with cover, 8-quart stockpot.

Serves 8 to 10.

PEAR WALNUT BREAD

This batter bread is fast to prepare, and it's unusual in that it contains no shortening. The texture is very special.

- 1 cup all-purpose white flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 cup (6 ounces) moist dried pears, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 egg
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and butter and flour a loaf pan.

In a bowl, combine flours, sugar, salt and baking powder. Mix well. Stir in the pears and walnuts. In a separate bowl, beat the egg and stir in milk and lemon juice. Add the liquid ingredients to the flour mixture and mix well.

Pour into prepared pan, and bake for 1 hour until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center of the loaf comes out clean. Remove from pan and cool on rack.

Equipment: 8 1/2-by-4 1/2-by-2 1/2-inch loaf pan.

new products

MICROWAVE BAKING

Wilton Enterprises has introduced MicroBakes, a new line of microwave cake pans. Created for use only in the microwave oven, the pans come available in a variety of basic, novelty and holiday shapes.

MicroBakes pans are sold in decorating, craft and department stores nationwide. Retail price is \$4.49. Pans also may be ordered directly

from Wilton Enterprises, Woodridge, IL 60517.

The pans are sized for packaged microwave cake mix or other recipes designed for snacks or small families. The line of 15 pans includes shapes for such occasions as a child's birthday party, a snack for family or friends, or a last-minute holiday dessert.

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