

# She hates to cook but comes up with winner

Admittedly, there are people who love to cook.

Whole Industries have been developed around cooking supplies and gadgets, books, magazines and fancy gourmet foods which all enhance and promote cooking. And yet, there are also people who learned everything they know about cooking from Peg Bracken's "I Hate to Cook" cookbook.

This week's Winner Dinner Winner, Sue Scerbo, makes no bones about cooking being one of her least favorite things to do. With five children, though, cooking is a daily necessity and she jokingly admits that if she could go to the grocery store and buy food pills, she would.

Despite her sometimes overt animosity toward the kitchen, Scerbo, who hails from Birmingham, submitted a delicious menu that always receives rave notices from her family. Featuring Sweet and Sour Ham served over rice, a mixed green salad garnished with mandarin oranges and beets, and a delectable caramel sauce that is perfect for dipping apple slices in, this is one meal you will be delighted to make for your family — instead of dinner reservations.

With four children playing soccer and two playing hockey this fall, Scerbo and her husband spend a lot of time shuttling from one sporting event to another. A very supportive and involved mom, she helps out in her children's schools by being a room mother and participating in the various fund-raising events that take place throughout the year.

FOR SIX YEARS, she has volunteered her time teaching students at Quarten School how to make and decorate panoramic eggs at a series of classes called Fabulous Fridays. The eggs are made out of molded sugar and decorated on the inside as well as on the outside with frosting. The students learned, in the space of three different Fridays, how to write with frosting as well as how to make flowers, bunnies and little chicks for their individual eggs.

Presently, Scerbo is eagerly anticipating a trip to Spain, to visit her daughter who is studying in Madrid,



family-tested winner dinner

**Betsy Brethen**



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer  
Sue Scerbo of Birmingham cooks for her husband and five children. When she serves Sweet and Sour Ham over Rice, her family raves.

as well as the prospect of not having to cook for the two weeks she will be gone — a fact that would give a woman cause to celebrate. Spent no Spain.

Thank you, Sue Scerbo, for supporting this column and congratulating on being this week's Winner Dinner Winner. Wishing you a safe and happy trip and until next week, we'll be back.

One last note, please don't forget to take a minute of your time and send in your family's favorite stew or soup recipe.

## Observer & Eccentric

### Winner Dinner

#### Menu

**SWEET AND SOUR HAM OVER RICE**  
**SALAD GREENS WITH MACHUS DRESSING**  
**CARAMEL SAUCE WITH APPLES**

#### Recipes

##### SWEET AND SOUR HAM OVER RICE

The subtle sweet and sour flavors of this dish offer a nice change of pace for your taste buds. Colorful and easy to make, this recipe makes enough to feed six. It can be made in advance and reheated just before serving.

- 2 1/2 cups precooked rice
- 1 can apricot halves, 16-ounce size
- 1 1/2 pounds cooked ham, cut into strips (3 cups). Turkey ham works well and is lower in salt and calories.
- 2 green peppers, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup vinegar
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 4 tablespoons cornstarch

Cook the rice. Drain apricots and save the syrup. In a large saucepan, combine the syrup, ham, green peppers, 1/2 cup chicken broth, sugar, vinegar, butter and soy sauce. Boil then cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

Blend the cornstarch and 1/4 cup chicken broth and add to the ham mixture. Add apricots and cook for a few minutes until

mixture is slightly thickened. Remove from heat and spoon over rice. Pineapple chunks can be added also.

##### SALAD GREENS WITH MACHUS DRESSING

Mix together your choice of salad greens and add 1 can of mandarin oranges and some sliced beets. Dress with Machus Salad Dressing, available in all Machus restaurants and bakeries, and toss well.

##### CARAMEL SAUCE WITH APPLES

Good for dessert as well as for a snack, this recipe for caramel sauce is quick and easy to make. Once made, place in a bowl with sliced apples surrounding it. Let everyone dip his or her own apple slice in the yummy sauce. This sauce is also wonderful served over vanilla ice cream or yogurt.

- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup whipping cream

Combine sugar, butter and cream in a heavy-bottomed pan over low heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and whisk for 1 minute. Store in a bowl surrounded by crisp apples.

## Shopping List

- 1 small piece of cooked ham, weighing approximately 1 1/2 pounds, or use leftover ham (turkey ham works well, too)
- Rice
- 1 can of apricot halves, 16-ounce size
- 2 green peppers
- Chicken broth
- Sugar
- Brown sugar
- Vinegar
- Butter or margarine
- 1/2 pint whipping cream
- Soy sauce
- Cornstarch
- Salad greens
- 1 can mandarin oranges
- 1 can sliced beets
- 1 jar Machus Salad Dressing or salad dressing of your choice
- Apples

## Notes

# Troy resident one of finalists in avocado cook-off

(AP) — Ellen Knollenberg of Troy was among five finalists in the recent McCall's California Avocado Cook-off. She submitted a recipe for Avocado Frittata.

Betty Shenberger of Beaverton, Ore., was awarded a \$5,000 grand prize as winner. Finalists were flown to New York for the cook-off in McCall's Park Avenue test kitchen.

The judges rated Shenberger's salad tops in appearance, texture and flavor.

Slices of avocados and pears, and steamed asparagus and green beans were arranged on a bed of lettuce.

The dressing was made with

pureed avocados, safflower oil, sour cream and seasonings.

The contest was co-sponsored by McCall's magazine and the California Avocado Commission, a non-profit organization financed by 7,000 California avocado growers.

Here is Shenberger's winning recipe: **SALAD WITH FLUFFY AVOCADO DRESSING**

- Salad:
- 1 ripe avocado
- 1 ripe pear
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 1 bunch (16 stalks) asparagus
- 3/4 pound green beans, trimmed

Dressing:

- Non-stick cooking spray
- 1 or 2 green onions, sliced
- 2 ripe avocados
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 cup safflower oil
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 3 heaping tablespoons sour cream
- 12 leaves butter or red leaf lettuce, washed and crisped
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 thin slices prosciutto,

cut into strips

Pare and slice avocado in half lengthwise; remove pit. Halve and core pear. Cut each avocado and pear lengthwise into four slices. Dip slices into lemon juice; drain. Reserve remaining lemon juice. Set aside avocado and pear slices.

In a large saucepan, in steam basket placed over boiling water, steam asparagus and green beans until tender crisp. Immediately place in bowl of ice water to stop cooking. When vegetables are cold, drain.

Pat dry with paper towels. Cut tips from asparagus; reserve remainder for another use.

For dressing, grease skillet with non-stick cooking spray; place over medium heat. Add onion; saute until tender, about 3 minutes. Place onion in food processor with reserved lemon juice.

Pare and halve avocados; remove pit. Cube avocados; place in food processor. Add salt, sugar, pepper, oil and mustard. Puree and transfer mixture to a bowl, with rubber spa-

tula, fold in sour cream.

Arrange lettuce leaves, asparagus tips and green beans on each of 4 to 6 salad plates, dividing evenly. Top with some dressing, sprinkle with Parmesan and prosciutto, dividing evenly.

Garnish each plate with avocado and pear slices. Makes 4 to 6 servings; 1 1/2 cups dressing.

Note: If desired, salad may be made ahead of time, covered with plastic wrap and refrigerated; the dressing keeps several days.

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