



Monday, January 7, 1991 O&E

taste buds

chef Larry Janes

Taking measure of 1991

Here I sit, gazing into my crystal measuring cup, trying to once again discern the culinary trends for 1991. This is the list for what's hot and what's not in the kitchen.

I'm going out on a limb with my first prediction and bucking all the type I'm receiving from manufacturers and retail establishments regarding electronic breadmakers.

This definitive "gotta have" gadget, introduced last year and supposedly gaining in popularity, will end up being the \$300 crockpot that will soon be drawing dust in the fruit cellar. Yes, sales will continue to be strong but once our weight-conscious society wakes up and smells the bread, they will soon realize that the tiny loaves these mind-boggling gizmos produce are the reason for the additional belt loops and "button moving" on our garments.

Personally speaking, these breadmakers are a lot like my programmable coffeepot and just not worth the effort of filling and programming after a hard day at the office. I predict they will be readily available at many garage sales when people find they're just too big and bulky for storage.

On the other hand, another electronic kitchen wonder, the combination espresso-cappuccino machine, will slide into the breadmaker's place as the "must have" for the remaining cold winter days and nights.

SINCE EVERYONE has his or her chance at Andy Warhol's proverbial 15 minutes of fame, you can say goodbye to folks like Martha Stewart and Paul Prudhomme. As far as Stewart is concerned, I know of no one, even Momma, whose house, garden and kitchen all look like they came from the pages of *Better Homes and Gardens*, and Stewart's signing with Knart was like putting beluga caviar on sale at the A&I. In regard to Chez Paul, etouffée, s'il vous plaît, is now passé.

Motown is still riding high on the apron strings of Heartland cooking, especially when it comes to restaurant menus featuring the likes of \$14 meatloaf and mashed-potato-blue-plate specials. Look for cookbooks that will be featuring the likes of rain forest nuts and other ecologically sound ingredients from relative unknowns.

As much as I hate to admit it, the crystal measuring cup is predicting a boom year for kid-type food items. With the majority of moms and dads now working till after 5, the microwaveable market will continue to operate on high power. Even food companies such as Mueller's — whose pasta has been the proverbial Wednesday night staple in many homes — are now introducing rock star, dinosaur, spaceship and teddy bear-shaped pasta that will have our evening meals looking like something from a circus big-top-catering van.

Speaking of catering vans, the food-to-go market will prove that Yvonne was just a couple of years premature with her cuisine-to-go routine. Look for prepared food prices to fall slightly as the competition increases, especially in major supermarkets and gourmet delis.

Look for the fresh herb market to blossom this year, especially with basic herb staples such as basil, oregano, chives and mint being grown in just about every garden and upon any windowsill. The Spire Islands display shelf will be relegated to the back of the grocery store, with fresh herbs soon taking over a major portion of produce department shelves.

Lastly, as the measuring cup begins to cloud over, coming soon to market shelves in time for the great diet of 1991 will be fresh and smoked sturgeon now being farm raised and mass produced.

Starting from Scratch



It's just as easy as packaged mixes

By Phyllis Kreger Stillman
special writer

MOST OF US have happy memories of time spent in the kitchen watching someone, usually our mother or grandmother, as she baked.

The memory comes complete with a cold, windy day outside and a warm, fragrant, safe kitchen inside.

For some of us, the memory may extend back in time to encompass a wood stove and a week's supply of fresh-baked bread. For others, the memory is more recent, with a modern range and chocolate chip cookies.

Whatever the image, these are happy memories of magic times where flour and other simple ingredients were transformed into spectacular goodies — an afternoon well spent.

NOW WE zoom to the present, with two-career couples, single parents and not a moment to spare.

The best we often hope to achieve in the kitchen is throwing together a prepared mix.

To do otherwise would be foolhardy, given how long it takes to make anything from scratch, how difficult it is, and how many dishes would have to be washed afterward, right?

MAYBE NOT. Baking from scratch can be as easy, simple and fast as using a mix, if you choose the right recipes and read through them before beginning, keeping in mind how you can minimize the steps involved and the number of dirty dishes produced.

When you bake from scratch you create something of your own, something that tastes better than anything that comes out of a box.

In the process, you can link up with those magic afternoons from the past, and with the people who created them with you.

BAKING FROM scratch also addresses one of today's major health concerns: nutrition. When you bake from scratch, you know exactly what goes into what you serve.

Take pancakes. The ingredients used in pancake mix are virtually the same as those used if you make the pancakes from scratch, so the

nutritional content may be the same — but maybe not.

You don't know, for example, how much salt or sugar was used in the mix. If you make the pancakes from scratch you can control the amount, or even eliminate sugar and salt completely.

You also can use whatever kind of flour you want — whole wheat, rye, buckwheat, unbleached white — in place of the highly processed flour used in the mix.

AS FOR TIME and dirty dishes, if you compare making pancakes from scratch with a regular (as opposed to instant) pancake mix, you may be surprised to find that, using flour instead of mix, you need add only three extra ingredients — sugar, salt and baking powder — to the egg, oil and milk you have to add to the mix anyway.

You can make the batter with one bowl, one measuring cup and two measuring spoons. With the mix you use only one less item, a measuring spoon.

Another example is brownies. The ingredients listed on a package of brownie mix are sugar, enriched

bleached flour (flour, niacin, iron, thiamine, mononitrate, riboflavin), shortening (contains one of more of partially hydrogenated soybean oil, beef fat), cocoa processed with alkali, salt, leavening (tricalcium phosphate, monocalcium phosphate, baking soda) and artificial flavor.

Notice that, along with all the ingredients you can't pronounce, the type of shortening used may be beef fat; the exact type is unspecified.

You also don't know how much sugar or salt was used.

If you make brownies from scratch you can use the type of shortening you want. You can also use a less-processed flour, reduce the amount of sugar and reduce or eliminate the salt.

AS FOR cleanup, you can stir the brownie mix in one dish. If you use the recipe for brownies that follows, you also use just one dish, although in this case it's a saucepan.

Looking through any good cookbook, you will find lots of recipes that are easy to prepare, are simple when it comes time to clean up, and taste wonderful.

Please turn to Page 2

Executive Chef Ed Janos with broiled Atlantic wolffish over grilled vegetables, with lobster and herb sauce.



Photo by Gary Warren

Too Chez changes but still on top



Two Chez restaurant in Novi is going into the new year with a vibrant new look and its exciting, more comfortably priced menu earning a special place in the hearts of serious restaurant-goers.

Whatever 1991 brings, Too Chez is a little more recession-proof than it was at the start of 1990 when, as Chez Raphael, it was one of the most expensive and refined restaurants around.

Today, its style is much more eclectic but its reason for being, the menu, is as promising and interesting as ever.

CHEF Ed Janos can be counted on to take everyday foods and turn them into extraordinary entrees.

He does such things as serve chargrilled tuna over a spinach salad with artichokes and roasted pearl onions, finished off with a wine and thyme sauce (\$15.50).

He serves many entrees "over" something else.

Scallops recently were served over a salad of cucumber, broccoli, tomatoes, corn and black beans (\$16.95). Atlantic wolffish came over a potato pizza with mozzarella cheese, bacon, tomatoes and broccoli, then was lightly coated with a garlic-cream sauce (\$15.50).

Although the results of such presentations can look more like a stew than an artistic creation, they are inviting and definitely make dining at Too Chez an adventure in new tastes.

A MORE "ordinary" dish we sampled was

crisped duck and shrimp (\$15.95) served with roasted potatoes, onions, pea pods and a superb sherry and sesame sauce with peppers.

Though the shrimp were a tad overcooked, the duck was excellent and the overall impact of the entree was pleasing.

Take slices of Jamaican strip loin and serve it over a stir fry of spicy corn, leek, peppers and mushrooms and, again, you have an interesting and very tasty dish (\$16.50).

INDEED, THERE is hardly anything boring on this ever-changing menu, which is oriented to guests in a looseleaf binder.

The menu covers several pages (including a lengthy, excellent wine list), but flipping through the binder is a welcome alternative to trying to concentrate on a recitation of special entrees that never does give the diner a good idea of how the entrees are prepared.

Salads, soups and side dishes are a la carte, driving up the cost but allowing diners the opportunity to mix and match as they please.

IN THE salad department, Too Chez has an excellent spinach salad served with slivers of sheets, oranges, gorgonzola cheese and pineapples.

Appetizers, or "small courses" as they're called here, include an interesting "reduced-calorie" white fat venison pate that is served over a vegetable salad with a red wine vinaigrette.

The pate resembled salami, was shaped like a slice of bread and had a much milder taste than we anticipated.

The restaurant is noted for its Bailey's chocolate soup, but you also can't go wrong

Please turn to Page 2