

taste buds

chef Larry Jones

Make your own family cookbook

Aunt Phyllis' Chicken Enchilada Casserole gets rave reviews at every family gathering.

Cousin Nyla's Applesauce Cake always elicits requests for seconds.

Whenever I visit my best friend, John, in Okemos, I always hope his Sautéed Venison Tenderloin with Onions is on the menu.

Most of us have fond memories of special recipes that are linked to a particular relative, friend or social gathering. The food, the people, and the function are equally important elements of any occasion where food will be served.

But sometimes those recipes get lost or misplaced, diminishing food traditions.

After a recent trip to Phoenix, Sedona and the Grand Canyon, I met a small family that had just produced a family cookbook. "Food is the fabric that binds us all together," said Becky Berry, a Mesa, Ariz. resident who conceived the cookbook project as a way to preserve the heritage of her mother's family, the Millers.

When I think of all momma's recipes scribbled on tattered and torn yellow paper, not to mention a compendium of recipe boxes stuffed with clippings and other hand scratched delights, I begin to feel that someday, the monumental task of sorting through will be all mine.

Compiling a family cookbook requires much organization. In addition to requesting family recipes, there is the compilation, sorting, testing, typing, planning the content and format, the design, and finally the production.

Professional cookbook publishers charge varying amounts, but in general, it will cost about \$2.50 per book for 200-300 books of 150 recipes each. For 1,000-1,500 cookbooks, with as many as 1,500 recipes each, expect to pay about \$5 per book.

Using a print shop, professionally typeset books will cost the most, about \$5.50 for 2,000 copies of a 400-page tome. The least expensive way to publish a family cookbook would be to type or computer-input the recipes, then photocopy the pages, and do some in-home binding at a cost of about \$2 each for 150 recipes.

Granted, there aren't a lot of people out there with 1,000 family members who would be willing to plow down a five spot for a family cookbook. If I could only find the time, it would be nothing to distribute a few hundred copies of the Momma Jones' Classics. After contacting a few professional cookbook publishers about data for this story, they all seemed to echo the same phrase: Delegate tasks. Appoint different people to review recipes, test, taste, proofread, illustrate, type and distribute.

The Berry family from Mesa included just about all immediate family members in the project and after an initial order of 300 (plus an additional 50 from a press-overrun) sold out within 2 weeks. It wasn't long before friends, neighbors and even the Mesa Public Library gift shop began placing orders and now in its third printing, the book has surpassed 3,000 copies sold.

Of course, you needn't have to go through a professional publisher to write a family cookbook. Search out a copy of "The Family Heirloom Cookbook," G.P. Putnam, New York, copyright, 1990 about \$18 which is really a loose-leaf notebook with how to sections, dividers, forms, anecdotes and filler pages of kitchen hints. A rainy day and a good friend in town, along with this book, is all that's keeping you from creating your own family heirloom.

STRIKING IT RICH AND TASTY WITH

OLIVE OIL

By Gori Rinachier
special writer

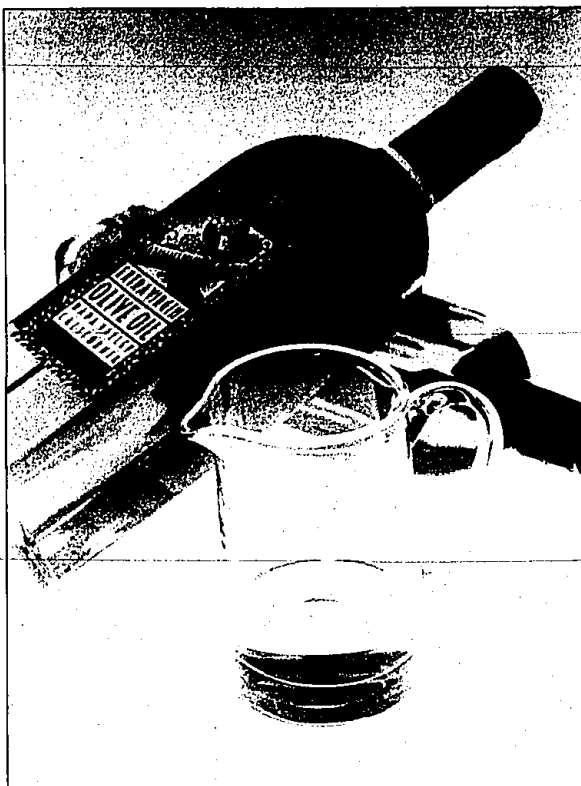
THERE'S HARDLY a day that goes by when I'm not cooking with olive oil. Whether it's sauteeing vegetables in a pure olive oil for a summer frittata or mixing an extra virgin olive oil with vinegar and herbs for my very best salad dressing. Olive oil is the most precious commodity in my kitchen.

Why refer to an olive oil as a commodity? Although an everyday, pure olive oil such as Berio, Pignol or Sasso is relatively moderately priced at \$8, or \$9 for 1.5 liters, an elite, extra virgin olive oil such as Bada or Colibuono costs about \$20 for a 1/2 liter bottle. Twenty dollars for a 1/2 liter bottle may be considered extravagant. Is it worth it? Well, that's a matter of taste!

WITH THE new awareness of healthy food preparation, there has been a proliferation of olive oils in the grocery store and gourmet markets. Choosing an olive oil has been elevated to an art much like that of appreciating fine wine. No doubt, choosing the right one has probably already begun to bewilder your mind, as well as your palate. Understanding how olive oil is processed, and the criteria for labeling, will help you to select the oils which best suit your needs.

Olive trees thrive mostly in Mediterranean countries. About 95 percent of the world crop comes from the Mediterranean. A small percentage comes from California. And although Italy may be synonymous with olive oil to most of us, Spain actually leads in olive production. Yet, to most gourmets and food professionals, Italian olive oil is the finest on earth, and I can't disagree.

THERE ARE over 60 varieties of olive trees. The flavor of each of them varies upon the specific soil content and climate. Generally, the oils from Northern Italy are full-bodied, velvety smooth with a strong olive flavor which is often peppery. Olive oils from the south of France are golden



in color, lighter in weight than the northern Italian oils, and often taste fruitily. They're ideal when blended with a raspberry vinegar for a salad, and especially nice when used for a mayonnaise or mayonnaise-based sauce. Spanish oils are generally full-bodied, or heavier than the Italian oils with an earthy flavor which is often described as coarse. One exception is L'Estronell, an extra-virgin oil from Lerida, in northern Spain. It's smooth, has a good olive flavor, and retails for about \$7 a 1/2 liter.

Olive oils not only differ in flavor, quality, color and price, but also in their use. The super premium, estate bottle oils are handmade from the harvesting to the grinding of the olives between stones for extraction of the oil. These are extra-virgin oils with up to 1 percent acidity, they're sometimes found in grocery stores, but more often in gourmet food shops like

the Merchant of Vino (Birmingham, Troy and Southfield), Williams-Sonoma (Somerset Mall, Troy and Laurel Park Mall, Livonia), J. Hirt and Rocky Peanut Co. (Eastern Market, Detroit).

THESE AND other extra virgin olive oils should be reserved for salads, or drizzled over a bruschetta appetizer of toasted, crunchy bread, fresh sliced tomatoes and fresh basil leaves or tossed with garlic into a pot of hot linguine and grated Parmesan cheese. High heat destroys the delicate flavor of extra-virgin oils to say the least.

Marc Joanna, manager of Birmingham's Merchant of Vino is always on the lookout for the newest in top quality olive oils. For everyday sauteeing and pan frying, Joanna suggests cooking with pure olive oil such as Berio or Colavita.

"Since most extra-virgin oils have a low smoking point, around 300 degrees, using an expensive oil for cooking is a waste of money as well as of a fine oil," he said. "Although, I do recommend using extra-virgin oil with some delicate foods which burn easily, like garlic." Pure olive oils like peanut oil have a smoking range just over 400 degrees up to 450 degrees.

An extra virgin oil legally can not be extracted with the use of heat or chemicals, those designated extra virgin can only be pressed once either by hand or mechanically. Some are filtered for clarity and some are not dependent upon the philosophy of the bottler.

Pure olive oil, on the other hand, is an oil which consists of a blend of refined olive oil and virgin olive oil. The process of refining the oil can be either a chemical or a physical process.

Premium-estate bottled extra-virgin olive oils like this one are often found in gourmet shops. Olive oils courtesy of Williams-Sonoma, Laurel Park Place, Livonia.

JIM JAGDFELD via staff photographer

TWO TYPES OF OIL

Dividing olive oils into two categories for cooking/sauteeing and eating may be oversimplifying the subject for many connoisseurs but it can be a helpful tool at the market. Here's a list of favorite olive oils available in the Detroit Metro area:

Pure Olive Oils:
(Cooking-baking-grilling)
Philippo Berio, Italy - Moderately priced
Pignol, France - Expensive

Extra Virgin Oils:
(Uncooked sauces-losses-salad dressings and dips)
Ranieri, Italy - Moderately priced
L'Estronell, Spain - Moderately priced
Premium-Estate Bottled Extra-Virgin Oils:
Bada a Colibuono, Italy - Expensive
Mandanti, Italy - Expensive
Villa Nicola, Italy - Expensive

HELPFUL TIPS:

- Light is harmful to olive oil, so store it in a cool dark cupboard.
- Most oils should last six months when stored properly.
- Oils kept in green glass bottles with screw-top caps will last longer than those in clear bottles or cork or plastic stoppers.
- It's better to purchase small bottles if you're using the oil sparingly.
- If the oil has turned rancid, it will smell and taste very bitter.
- When outdoor temperatures reach above 85 degrees you may want to store the oil in the refrigerator if you don't have a wine cellar.

Pepino's: Garlic by any other name

DISHING IT OUT



Ahhh, garlic. Surely there can be no greater measure of a good Italian restaurant than the depth of its involvement with that heavenly plant. Ahhh, Pepino's.

Pepino's Restaurant, at the corner of Pontiac Trail and Walled Lake Drive in Walled Lake, is a good, family-style Italian restaurant. Its popularity is currently keeping customers lined up on Friday and Saturday nights, the meal is still well worth the wait.

THE DECOR of the small, dimly lit restaurant speaks volumes. Plastic tablecloths and plastic flowers let diners know that the restaurant is interested in a casual and comfortable clientele. The smoky restaurant has three rooms, one with cozy booths - usually reserved as the nonsmoking section - and the other two with varying size tables.

The restaurant is noisy, and at times it can be a chore to hear from one end of a table of six to the other. The bar, where many of the waiting diners while away their time, stretches across the main room, making it undesirable as an "intimate" dining spot.

But diners come to Pepino's for its

friendly atmosphere - and the food. And here they are not disappointed. Dinner starts with a heaping basket of typical garlic bread and breadsticks, and the not-so-typical excellent cold northern bean salad. Appetizers range from \$2.95 to \$6.50. The sauteed mushrooms with Madeira, with accompanying garlic of course, was very good. The angel hair pasta with pesto had good flavor and texture.

ENTREES RANGE from \$15.95 to \$19.95 and include six specials. On

a recent Saturday, those ranged from baked sword with casino butter and charbroiled prawns with jambalaya rice, to pan fried liver, onions and bacon, baked chicken with rosemary and garlic, roast prime rib of beef au jus and charbroiled smoked pork chops with sauerkraut. Specials and menu entrees come with soup or salad. The dinner salads are the all-too-typical iceberg lettuce and tomato wedge. The soups, on the other hand, are truly a labor of love. The black bean, available year round, is thick and flavorful.

The minestrone is a flavorful blend of fresh vegetables in a good thick stock.

Pepino's best known entree is the extremely popular pan fried boneless rainbow trout. Restaurant owner/chef Joe Bernardi said the Walled Lake eatery sells more trout than any other restaurant in Michigan. The recipe for the delicate coating on the light fish is "my own," Bernardi said, keeping mum about details other than to say it was "developed over the years."

THE RESTAURANT has a good



Joe Bernardi, owner/chef of Pepino's, presents lamb chops, Osso Buco with polenta, baby back ribs, and Rainbow Trout, Meuniere.

PEPINO'S RESTAURANT ★★

118 W. Walled Lake Drive, Walled Lake, 624-1033
HOURS: Monday-Thursday, 5-10 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 5-11 p.m.
Reservations accepted for parties of six or more only.
PRICES: Appetizers, \$2.95-\$6.50
Entrees, \$13.95-\$19.95 (includes soup or salad, potato, vegetable)
Desserts: \$2.95 range
Visa and MasterCard accepted.

RESTAURANT RATING GUIDE

- ★ Average
- ★★ Good
- ★★★ Very Good
- ★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★★★ Superb

selection of fish, including fresh Lake Superior whitefish, fresh Norwegian salmon charbroiled with casino butter, and lemon sole. Veal sauteed with wine, lemon and white grapes.

Veal lovers will not be disappointed. A recent evening found the popular Veal Pepino's, sauteed with green peppers, mushrooms and onions - tender and flavorful.

Restaurant reviews are written by four staff members on a rotating basis. Any questions or reviews should be directed to Keely Wygonik, Food Editor, Observer & Eccentric, 36231 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or call 953-2105.