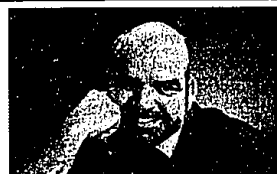


MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1994

TASTE

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TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JAMES

Souper suppers warm winter weary families

Winter has taken its toll on the spirit. I am ready for spring. The snowblower has been used too much this winter. Dad's hip has been bothering him far too much, and momma gets cranky when bingo is canceled due to bad weather.

The James Gang kitchen has been simmering for weeks with steaming pots of chili, bean soup, lentils, and a connoisseur's choice of prime winter vegetables. If it can be made with carrots, cabbage, onions, squash and potatoes, it has been made and devoured, not in a heat of passion, but for the need to be heated and warmed.

So it was with interest that a new cookbook by Arthur Schwartz crossed my path. The advanced promo that precedes every text claimed this cookbook was "healthful, practical and economical as soup as a main course is a natural for the way people eat today."

What caught this writer's eye was that Arthur Schwartz was the author of a previous tome called "What To Cook When You Think There's Nothing in the House To Eat."

Simple dinner

Just like I feel right now, and short of a can of Hormel chili, there's nothing in our house to eat. The thought of going grocery shopping on a cold, blustery day had me examining all my options.

It was simply too good to pass up; the old recliner, a steaming hot cup of coffee, an old afghan and the furnace being turned up to a soul-warming 70 coupled with a copy of Schwartz' "Soup Suppers" (copyright 1994, Harper Perennial Publishers, paperback, \$16).

Like Arthur Schwartz, I too hail from a serious soup-making, soup-eating family. Soup was seldom served as nourishment for the soul and the mind, but simply as sustenance. Soup was a supper and often a hearty lunch when coupled with a Velveta laced grilled cheese sandwich. But as age begins to set on this horizon, soup has begun to take on the cloak of something more than just food to eat.

On a cold winter's day, soup steams up the kitchen windows painting a Dickensian effect on the window pane. Soup fills the air with a steamy warmth. The aroma of soup fills the lungs with pungent bursts of pepper, healing blasts of garlic, soothing whiffs of cream, and nourishing spoons full of heartiness. The results are the same whether I simmer a stock all day long or simply empty a few cans of Progresso soup into the pot.

During the bleak winter days of February, nothing warms the cockles of your heart more than soup. Schwartz' "Soup Suppers" is by far one of the better soup cookbooks to cross my path.

Sampling recipes

Being a lover of Oriental soups, my first attempt at one of Schwartz' recipes was Norman Weinstein's Hot and Sour Chinese Soup. I am proud to say that I know of Norman Weinstein and have tasted his soup. (For the uninitiated, Norman is THE Chinese cooking teacher in New York City.) The recipe was as complete as the one in my files and also offered serving suggestions (what to pair with the soup) variations for the vegans amongst us and tips on preparation and storage.

Schwartz claims that this recipe "was and is an even better cold remedy than chicken soup. Pepper clears the sinuses. Vinegar provides a healthy dose of vitamin C." The book is peppered, by the way, with recipes garnered from other noted cooks.

Speaking of other cooks, folks like momma might be a tad overcome by recipes requiring saffron pistils, chopped coriander, cellophane noodles, and celery root. The recipes are for people who are comfortable in the kitchen, and have a basic source for foodstuffs not usually found at the cornerIGA. If you know your way around a renovated Farmer Jack, finding some of those gourmet items won't be difficult. When I asked momma if she knew what Cotichino sausage was or where I could get it, she looked at me like someone was asking her to how to fly to the moon.

On a more positive note, the recipes that came into fruition on my stove were all easy, tasty and of the stick-to-your-ribs variety that not only offered sustenance for the body, but also for the soul and the mind. If you like to make soup you will enjoy the book and what it has to offer.

See Larry James' family-tested recipes inside. To leave a message for Chef Larry, dial (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then mailbox number 1886.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- You don't have to be Polish to love pączki. They're not just an ordinary doughnut.
- Lucy Mitchell grew up in a restaurant family. Her supper suggestions are super.

SANDERS HOT FUDGE LOVE AT FIRST BITE

■ Sweet tooths everywhere ache with love for Sanders cakes and ice cream toppings. Fans share recipes for their favorite desserts.

By RENEE SKEGLUND
SPECIAL WRITER

Some say "SANDers," but most say "SAUNDers." It doesn't matter. However you pronounce the name of Detroit's oldest and most famous confectioner, the image evoked is the same: creamy, gloriously rich hot fudge sundaes and cream puffs.

Like many present-day suburbanites, I cut my first sweet tooth at the counter of a Sanders store. A shopping trip downtown with my mother was never complete without a stop at Sanders palatial shop on Woodward Avenue. It's no wonder my single sweet tooth soon developed into a full set of sweet choppers.

I'm not alone. Suburban hearts everywhere beat with love for a hot fudge cream puff or a thick wedge of - be still my heart! - Bumpy Cake. I'm sure if you tested a true Sanders lover's blood, it would come out hot fudge positive.

"I was always a strict hot fudge man, a hard-core hot fudge man," said Jay Emerson of



STAFF PHOTO

Delicious dessert: Stephanie Mellen puts finishing touches on her award-winning Sachertorte Pie made with Sanders Bittersweet Fudge Topping.

Plymouth as he reminisced about his boyhood trips to his favorite Sanders store in Farmington. "Nothing's better than a plain hot fudge sundae with bananas on top."

Emerson, a technical graphics engineer and free-lance magazine writer, recently had his first fiction story published. However, coming up with the just right words to describe the taste of Sanders Milk Chocolate Fudge Topping proved difficult. "Mmmm, ooohh," he said a first, then settled for the simple statement, "there's just no other hot fudge like it, period."

Thirty years ago, Emerson's mother, Juanita, created a heart-stopping concoction that has since become a family legend. It consists of layers of sponge cake, hot marshmallow fluff, ice cream, as-

sorted Sanders toppings, and a banana buried somewhere in the middle. That hidden banana makes eating the dessert an adventure, said Emerson. "Every time you take a hunk out, you might get a piece of banana, you might not."

When all the Emersons get together for a family dinner, "Hot and Cold Spongy Delight" is usually on the menu. "It was a whole family project between Christmas and New Year's," said Emerson. "We kept improving on mom's original recipe. We were all there, my mother, my sister, her boyfriend, her kids, my girlfriend, my daughter, and Hobbs, my 5,000 word African Grey parrot. He eats everything." Will Hobbs eat Spongy Delight on Valentine's Day? "Maybe," said Emerson.

If Jay Emerson is a real hot

fudge man, then Stephanie Mellen of Troy is a real bitter-sweet chocolate woman desperately in love with Sanders Bumpy Cake. "I'm very particular in how I approach a slice of Bumpy Cake," said Mellen, an author, illustrator and motivational speaker. "First I eat the top, then the sides, then the cake. Of course, I eat it in a very ladylike way, with a fork, not my fingers."

Mellen is a creative woman whose recent book "The Crystal Rabbit" is being considered for the Newberry Medal Award. She also is a bit of a competitor, especially when it comes to baking. After winning third prize in a community festival baking competition one year, she was determined to do better the next.

See SANDERS, 2B



Wines from southern France, tasty, affordable

Wine Selections of the Week

Sauvignon blanc makes the easiest food match with white meats and an endless variety of seafoods. Their price tags make them even more appealing. The best sauvignon blanc around is 1991 Beringer Vineyards Knights Valley Meritage (\$10).

Others we have enjoyed are:

- 1992 Buena Vista Lake County Sauvignon Blanc (\$9)
- 1992 Lakeview Sauvignon Blanc (\$9.50)
- 1993 Markham Sauvignon Blanc (\$9)
- 1992 Preston Cuvée de Fume (\$10.50)

The best buy is 1992 Hope Ridge Sauvignon Blanc (\$5).

Recent releases of chardonnay recommended are: 1992 Fiebert Barrel Select Chardonnay (\$12), 1992 Clos du Bois Chardonnay (\$13), 1992 Markham Chardonnay (\$15) and the 1990 Sterling Vineyards Winery Lake Chardonnay (\$20).

FOCUS ON WINE



ELEANOR & RAY HEAD

have priced hotel rooms in Aix-en-Provence, southern France will continue to escalate in popularity with Americans.

The wines of southern France are also becoming popular with Americans because French producers have done three important things - improved the quality, kept the price down, and given the wines varietal (grape) names that Americans recognize.

"There was no demand and no premium for extra effort until the 1960s," writes Hugh Johnson, British author of the "Modern Encyclopedia of Wine" (Simon & Schuster). "Then educated wine-

makers and merchants began to realize that it was only the grapes that were wrong, the soils and climates of hundreds of hill villages have enormous potential."

Since June 1992, the wines of Les Jamelles have been available in southeastern Michigan. They are flavorful wines from the Vin de Pays d'Oc which includes the southern Rhone, Midi, Provence and Languedoc-Roussillon (LON-gwuh-doo-roo-see-YOHN). Negotiator Melvyn Master knows this region well since he co-authored "The Wines of the Rhone" (Faber & Faber).

For size comparison, the Languedoc-Roussillon region alone contains 800,000 potential vineyard acres - one-third of the vineyard acreage in all of France. It extends along the French Mediterranean coast from the Spanish border to the Rhone River.

"Ten years ago, the French government was subsidizing many farmers and wine co-ops in southern France," Master explains, "but the quality was poor. The quality was less than standard because the farmers grew as many tons per acre as possible and were paid regardless of the quality."

See WINE, 2B