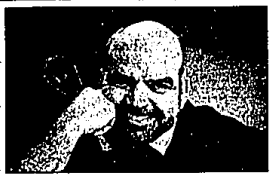


MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1994

# TASTE

## TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JONES

### How to pick and cook your catch of the day

**W**ithout a doubt, this is the time of year when retail fish sales escalate. In addition to the Lenten season, thoughts of spring and summer are on the minds of just about every dieter.

Hoping to shed unwanted pounds, hoards of health conscious cooks will resurrect any and all fish to new heights.

Unfortunately, in doing so, most fish will become the punching bag of the masses, due mainly to improper storage and over cooking.

#### Choosing fish

You've read it here once, and you'll read it here again, when it comes to choosing good fish you have to know a good fish (person). If have limited culinary skills, you shouldn't buy fish that's best broiled or poached. Likewise, if your skills were gleaned from the Johnny Kolakowski School of Culinary Arts in Wyandotte, you need to choose a fish more suited to frying than baking.

For the record, it doesn't matter how fresh the fish is, or if it's been sitting on a tray wrapped as tight as a drum in cellophane. Even deader-than-a-door-nail fish that have been beheaded, skinned and boned need to be well refrigerated (on ice) and vented to retain their freshness. So do your homework. Your responsibility doesn't end when the check-out cashier says "have a nice day."

#### Storage tips

When the you and the fish arrive home, as soon as possible, remove the fish from its wrappings, fill a colander with ice and place the fish to rest in a free crisper drawer in the refrigerator.

Change the ice and/or drain the water daily and your fish should remain fairly viable for up to two days.

If your idea of learning all there is to know about fish is to read a book while peddling away excess pounds on a stationary bike or treadmill, one of the best books ever written is "Fish: The Basics" by Shirley King, (copyright 1990 published by Simon & Schuster, \$24.95.) This book is an illustrated guide to selecting, storing and preparing all kinds of fresh seafood.

A little harder to secure but generally available at most public libraries is James Beard's "Fish Cookery" (copyright 1954 by Warner Books).

In typical Beardsian style you relish his literary descriptions that include: "Filets of sole should be fried at a temperature of only 365 degrees and Only until they are delicately brown. Otherwise you will have a dish that resembles sawdust and (one) that has no more flavor than the breeding material that it surrounds."

Of course, you can skip both books and simply plopp some frozen cod onto a pie plate and smother it in spaghetti sauce and bake it until it resembles nothing more than the sauce.

#### Cooking techniques

There are a few cooking techniques that rank as personal favorites when it comes to cooking fish.

First off, whenever the fishmonger suggests a firm fish like tuna, swordfish, marlin or halibut, the grill immediately gets fired up. If you don't have a grill, you can broil. No need to shake and bake, simply douse with a good Italian dressing or better yet, a homemade vinaigrette and four minutes on one side and three on the other over a hot fire is all it takes.

Anyone who has ever written or taught about proper fish cooking will suffice to say that the second biggest mistake most consumers make is that they cook the fish far too long. Sushi is no family favorite but then neither is something dry and discolored. When the fishmonger points out thin filets like yellow lake perch, rainbow trout, smelt or sole my favorite non-stick skillet gets a paper thin coating of butter or margarine while the filets flip in a seasoned flour sprinkled with some pepper, paprika and salt. Nothing fancy and nothing as overpowering as a cajun seasoning for these tasty beauties and when they emerge from a fast pan-frying then need nothing more than a light shower of lemon juice. (Yes, fresh lemon juice).

When the soul and the waistband demand something lighter and healthier, I've been known to swath a filet of salmon, cod, catfish or walleye in a few friends of fresh dill and wrap it in parchment paper. Set it in a baking dish, and bake at 350 degrees for no less than 30 minutes. The fragrance of dill will fill the air.

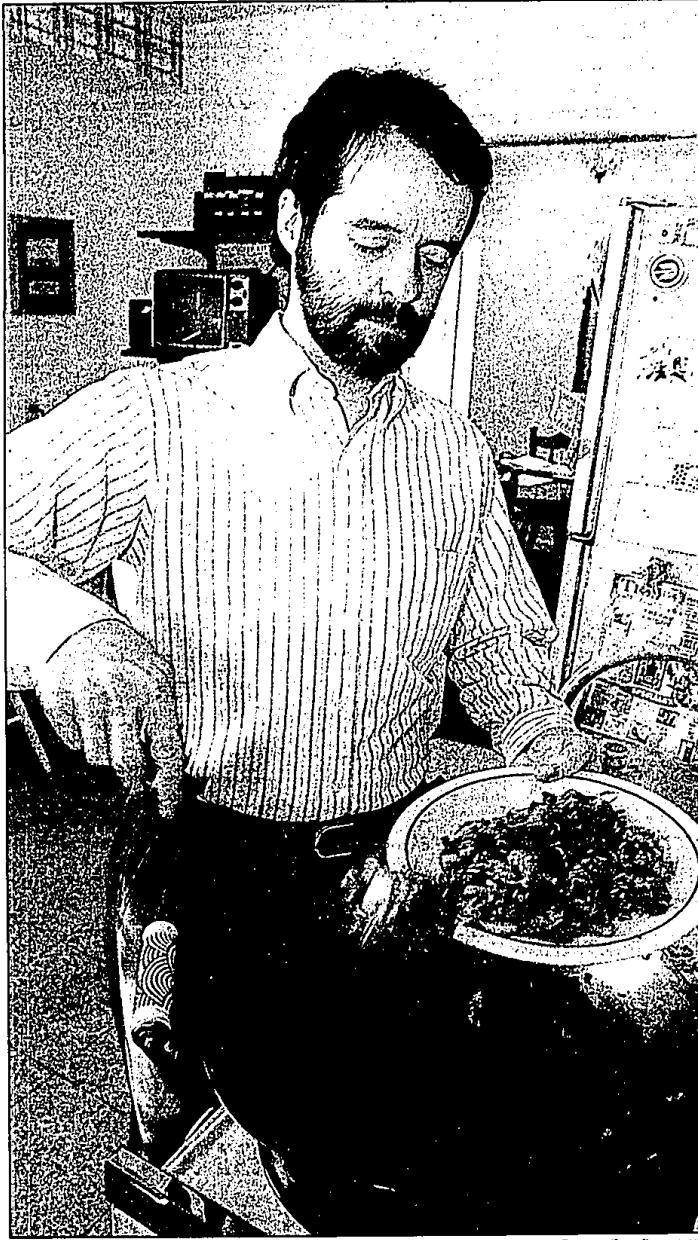
To leave a message for Chef Larry Jones, dial 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then mailbox number 1836.

## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

■ American Connoisseur gourmet marinades make chicken special. Meet the men who started this Birmingham-based company two years ago with a \$2,500 credit card loan.

■ Spinach pie gets a recipe makeover that reduces fat grams per serving from 46.4 grams to 4.9 grams.



ART EMANUEL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## COOKS FISH OUT RECIPES TO PLUNGE INTO LENT

■ If you're not a vegetarian, meatless Lenten meals can be blah. Don't feel like a fish out of water. Three area cooks offer options to macaroni and cheese.

BY SANDRA DALKA-PRYBY  
SPECIAL WRITER



With the arrival of the Lenten season comes, in many homes, the arrival of meatless meals, especially on Fridays. For many this means old standards - macaroni and cheese, a tuna casserole or cheese pizza.

This year you can forget blah meals. Three area cooks will help you escape from the ordinary and show you how to put a little zip into your meatless meals.

Brian Black is one cook who feels compelled to follow a meatless regime at certain times during Lent. His faith is one reason for this; his job is the other. He is a Roman Catholic deacon assigned to St. Ives Church in Southfield.

Deacon Black and his wife Lyn (unlike priests, deacons are allowed to be married) make seafood stir-frys during Lent.

"Stir-frys are healthy, taste good and are easy and fast to make," Black said. "Another great thing about stir-frys is that you can use almost any vegetable that you have in the refrigerator. I find that making stir-frys is relaxing and creative. I also like the fact that stir-frys can be low in fat, which is important because we are trying to stay fit," he said.

The Blacks, including Matthew, 9, and Rebecca, 6, don't limit their enjoyment of seafood and vegetable

See, COOKS 2B

Stir fry: Brian Black, a Roman Catholic deacon assigned to St. Ives Church in Southfield, stir-frys with a sweet shrimp stir-fry with colorful fresh vegetables.

## New Italian wines, flavorful, affordable

### Focus on Wines



EUGENIO & RAY HEAD

It's inspiring to meet people who genuinely enjoy their work. When people are excited about their work, you detect it in their voice and the glint in their eyes. We have experienced more and more

conversational competition over who works harder, or who has the most problems or puts in longer hours. It's refreshing to find folks who admit they enjoy life or receive some pleasure from their job.

Eugenio Spinozzi likes his work and isn't afraid to tell his story. We have met many enthusiastic people who work in the wine industry, but Spinozzi's excitement is infectious. The bonus for you is that the wines he represents are now available in area restaurants and shops.

Spinozzi lives in central Italy's Abruzzi province and is in partnership with Sam Levitas, an American. Together they select quality Italian wines for import to the U.S. through their New York-based company Tricanna Imports. They have a personal, sometimes familial relationship with each of the wine producers they represent. Each of Tricanna's wines is produced by a family who is proud of the tradition and winemaking history of their region.

Spinozzi considers himself a vintner, even though he doesn't make the wines. He gives his clients advice on topics ranging from winemaking to label design.

"I have a little bit of me in each of the wines I sell," he says. "A successful winery is like a suc-

cessful restaurant, it helps if it is family-owned. I try to become a part of that winemaking family. I am proud to have discovered each of the wines I represent and the contribution I've made to their continuing success."

Another important part of the good news about the Tricanna wines is that many of them are affordable. Today, too many Italian wines come in fancy packaging with inflated prices so few can afford to drink them. We think you'll find value in many of Tricanna's brands.

Vigna Del Re is a quality Tricanna brand including a chardonnay, pinot grigio, cabernet sauvignon and merlot for \$8. These are fresh and fragrant wines for everyday drinking. Especially flavorful whites include the 1992 Villa Frattina (\$13), a single estate pinot grigio with elegant flavors and concentrated fruit. The 1991 Gavi Figini di Gavi (\$14), grown in the Italian Piedmont, boasts a rich texture and pear and apple flavors characteristic of the cortese grape. The 1992 Illuminati Trebbiano d'Abruzzo "Costalupo" (199) is grown in the state of abruzzo between the Adriatic Sea to the east and the Appennine Mountains to the west. It is a wine particularly well-structured for country dishes such as pasta, polenta, and chicken.

The 1991 Illuminati "Cialfo" (\$15) is a rich, textured wine made of trebbiano, malvasia, garganega and riesling. This is a white wine that will complement lamb and veal as well as fish and mushroom sauces. Arnela is a white grape of the Piedmont region. If you taste 10 different wines made from arnela, each will be different.

See WINES, 2B

### Wine Selections of the Week

Two attractive zinfandels from the Dry Creek Valley are the 1991 Preston Zinfandel (\$12.50) and the 1991 Dry Creek Vineyard Zinfandel (\$14).

Merlot seems to be the darling of red wines right now. We have tasted a host of good ones:

- 1990 Chateau St. Jean Merlot (\$17)
- 1991 Clos du Bois Merlot (\$16)
- 1990 Kenwood Merlot (\$16)
- 1991 Markham Merlot (\$17.50)
- 1991 St. Clement Merlot (\$20)

If you prefer cabernets, try:

- 1991 Clos du Bois Cabernet Sauvignon (\$13)
- 1990 Kenwood Cabernet Sauvignon (\$17)

The 1990 Clos du Bois Maristone (\$22) is a tasty blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot, malbec, cabernet franc and petit verlot, the five Bordeaux varietals.

