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# TASTE

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## TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JONES

## Here are some of my favorite things

From time to time, I get the opportunity to meet many of you face to face. You have readers say hello at Pine Knob concerts, community art fairs, malls, the Eastern Market and the grocery store.

By far, the most asked question concerns one or another of my favorites. Just like you, I have favorite restaurants, cookbooks, hangouts and gadgets.

This column is dedicated to everyone who wants to know some of my favorite favorites.

I'll begin randomly with no one favorite overshadowing another favorite. If you've had the opportunity to visit the Leelanau Peninsula this summer or are planning a fall color tour, visit my favorite place - Woodland Herb Farm, 7741 N. Manitowish Trail, Northport. The smells are intoxicating and check out their selection of homemade vinegars. My personal favorite for the last 10 years is their Wild Leek Vinegar.

Tapawingo in Ellsworth, the Rowe Inn, (East Jordan), and Peto and Mickey's, (Charlevoix) continue to be trendy crowd pleasers, but Stafford's Bay View Inn in Traverse City and Charlevoix still makes the best baked fish in a brown paper bag.

### Relatively speaking

You've undoubtedly heard me mention my wonderful Aunt Phyllis in this column. Her potato salad is the best I have ever tasted. She only makes it at Christmas and the summer, my cousin Mike, comes up from Alabama in the summer to visit. Well, Aunt Phyllis asked me to tell you that the City of Trenton is sponsoring a "Taste Of" coupled with a Beyond & Somewhere in Time Party at Elizabeth Park on Sept. 17. Momma is from Trenton and I grew up tobyoging on the hills and riding the ponies at Elizabeth Park. I'll be there to taste the best and enjoy the activities. Call (313) 675-7300 for more information.

Speaking of fun times, I'll make a quick dash from Trenton to Schoolcraft College's Culinary Extravaganza on September 17 at the Waterman Center on campus to taste specialties from some of the best restaurants in metro Detroit. Proceeds are used for culinary arts scholarships. This is the best benefit of the season folks so call (313) 462-4417 for more information and tickets.

You've just gotta love the updated cooking classes at Botsford General Hospital and their new facility the Botsford Center for Health Improvement on Grand River in Novi. I'll be in a class that caught my eye - "Is There Life After Schnitzel?" Call (810) 477-6100 for a schedule.

Speaking of fat, lovers of fat free products will surely appreciate the Fatwise catalog devoted entirely to fat-free foods. Not just fat free but also organic. These products were selected because of their superior quality and taste.

These are the best in the industry. To request a catalog, call 1-800-773-8822. Personal favorites are a fat free "Salad Dazzler" that tastes as good brushed on a chicken as it did in my salad.

### Appetizing reads

What's my favorite magazine? I'll always subscribe to "Bon Appetit" and "Gourmet" but anybody who cooks should have a subscription to "Cook's Illustrated." It's expensive (\$24.95) and published bimonthly, but I anticipate the arrival of every issue. Write to Cook's at P.O. Box 59046, Boulder, Colo. 80322-0046.

I'm a stickler for sharp knives. I keep my knives razor sharp with a Chef's Choice knife sharpening system. If you have good knives and want to keep them sharp, this is the only electric sharpening system on the market that I would entrust my Henckles and Tridents to.

You can find them wherever good cutlery is sold. Ask for a demonstration, it's worth it. My favorite cookbook at this moment is I just received a promotional copy of "Friends in the Kitchen" by Nancy Lindsay, (copyright 1993 by Lalo-Lin, \$16.95). This cookbook is patterned after a church fund-raiser cookbook, and features favorite recipes of Lindsay's friends in their kitchens. It's not trendy, and many recipes call for "store bought" something or another, but these are the types of recipes I was raised on. My momma should be in here.

See Larry Jones' family-tested recipes inside. Chef Larry is a free-lance writer for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave a voice mail message for him dial (313) 953-8047 on a touch-tone phone, then mailbox number 1886.

## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

■ Cranbrook's Honey and Apples Festival, a sweet taste of fall.

■ Act now or you'll miss the 1993 red Burgundies.



Harvesting herbs: Judith Ille prepares herbs for later use in her Rochester Hills kitchen.

## Cooks dig growing their own

# HERBS

BY DAWN NEZDHAM  
SPECIAL WRITER

A love of herb gardening and a love of cooking often go hand in hand, and they meet in the kitchen. Inch for inch, an herb garden may be the best investment a cook makes all year.

"People are looking at their diets and being more self-conscious," said Judith Ille of Rochester Hills. "They're looking at different ways to eat."

And these healthier ways of eating sometimes surprise people.

"It makes the food taste so much more interesting," Valerie Boguslawski of Farmington Hills said about cooking with herbs. She named a few combinations of slightly unusual flavors, such as mint with carrots or in pea soup, "somehow it makes a whole different dish. As you get used to using your spice rack, you don't reach for the salt anymore. You experiment."

Flavorful herbs allow the cook to cut down or entirely eliminate salt. And they provide such wonderful tastes: fish with a lemon sauce is good, but a lemon-dill sauce is divine. "You can't have an herb garden without basil," said Katherine (Kip) Smith of Birmingham. This sentiment is echoed by Boguslawski,

who calls basil "the queen of herbs." Nearly everyone with even a mildly green thumb has made pesto at least once, and basil also flavors Italian dishes, pizzas and much more. Toss basil leaves in with a mixed-greens salad for a new taste.

Boguslawski likes French tarragon, roses, lavender, parsley, sweet cicely, sage, winter savory, chervil, onions and chives, regular and garlic. Sweet basil is a favorite "in everything," she said. She likes to chop basil leaves in a food processor, place with water in ice cube trays and freeze.

"I pull them out all winter to give soups and spaghetti sauce, a fresh taste." She prefers to freeze basil in ice because the herb turns black if whole leaves are frozen. That's not bad, just unappealing, she said. Boguslawski freezes herbal butters to give her breads a special touch throughout the winter. "Basil turns the butter green and you have to tell people it's OK, it's supposed to be that color," she said. Rose petal butter is nice on toast for a tea.

One of Smith's favorite herbs is lovage, a perennial herb with celery-like foliage. It tastes like a strong celery, and Smith adds the leaves to soups and stews. Its hollow stalks can be used as straws in a bloody

Mary cocktail, she said. To preserve her lovage harvest, Smith either dries the leaves or preserves them in oil.

Rosemary is a tender perennial in Michigan, which means it can be grown outdoors in the summer and brought indoors for the winter. It is good paired with meats or potatoes. Dorothy Brown of Livonia loves rosemary, and said every year she tries to nurse a plant through the winter, often without much luck. In her household, it's an Easter tradition to serve a roast leg of lamb stuffed with slices of her homegrown garlic and sprinkled with rosemary.

All herbs are popular now, as people look to add flavor to diets while cutting fat and salt. While there are the usual favorites - basil, parsley, rosemary and thyme - some new herbs occasionally make their way into the American garden and kitchen. Smith calls cilantro the "herb a la mode," referring to its current popularity.

Cilantro tastes good in a fresh salsa or tomato salad, and can be mixed with corn, black beans, onion and lime juice for quick salad. It's also a nice flavor for Mexican dishes. Cilantro is sometimes called Chinese parsley or coriander, although coriander actually refers to the dried seeds of the plant.

Gardeners who have "thyme" for cooking any thyme of all sorts is another favorite, as much for its variety of flavors as its beauty as a plant.

"If I could only grow one herb in my garden it would be lemon thyme," said Ille. She uses it to make cookies, adds it to soups, flavors fish with it. It's also a good pot pourri ingredient, she said.

A more unusual herb finding its place in many gardens is chervil. said Smith. It has delicate licorice-like flavor and a myriad of uses from salad dressings to eggs to meat. It is suitable wherever parsley is used.

Sweet cicely also has a licorice flavor, and is an herb with a lot of natural sugar, Smith said. Its flavor and pretty leaves make it a good addition to a fruit salad.

Lavender is another favorite herb, although its uses are more than culinary. It suggested putting dried lavender sticks in mugs in buns and tossing them in the dryer to give clothes and linens a beautiful smell. In the kitchen, lavender can be an ingredient in cookies or even salad.

"An herb is a plant that's useful," said Ille. "You can make just about anything an herb."

See recipes inside

## Here's the scoop on Chef Lou's fat free ice cream

BY BARBARA WILSON  
SPECIAL WRITER

"I scream, you scream, we all scream for..." OK. OK. It's a bit cliché, but everyone would be screaming from the mountain-tops if they found a truly guiltless ice cream every bit as rich and smooth as the fat-laden variety.

Well, Chef Lou DeCillis of West Bloomfield has done it. The guru behind Savino ice cream, sorbets and ices, has been working for four years to come up with a fat free ice cream that meets his standards. It was the advent of the defatted coconut bean that made it all possible.

"I didn't want people to buy it because it's fat free," Chef Lou said. "I wanted people to buy it because it tastes really good."

A graduate of the world-famous Culinary Arts Institute and a New York native, Chef Lou considered a bit of a culinary "geek." While his classmates were dabbling in sauces, he preferred ice sculptures and frozen desserts - carrot-raisin ice cream and gin sorbet.

"I always loved ice, the kind you find in New York everywhere you go," Chef Lou said. He started a catering business in New York and, when visiting a friend in metro Detroit, was introduced to learn he couldn't buy ice here. He packed up his belongings and moved to where his talent was needed most.



Guilt-free dessert: Chef Lou DeCillis samples his fat free ice cream.

Chef Lou worked odd jobs to support a little ice cream parlor in Livonia where he mostly gave away free samples of ice. He set up his own ice cream production plant in Plymouth for awhile, but soon found he couldn't keep up with demand.

This is now his 18th season in the frozen dessert business and his seventh year with Stro's serving as his manufacturer and distributor of the Savino label.

Chef Lou says the secret behind the great taste of his new fat free ice creams is that they are made with no chemicals that leave an uneasy aftertaste. For the health conscious, it's also important to note that these treats have no cholesterol and about half the calories of other

fat free ice creams - only 122 calories per half-cup serving.

Savino is offering two lines of the fat free treat. Savino's Fat Free Super Premium Ice Cream is sold only in pints. Chef Lou says it's the richest ice cream around. The pints range in price from \$2.49 to \$2.99 and come in vanilla, chocolate, strawberry (with big chunks of Michigan strawberries), chocolate raspberry, cafe mocha (for real coffee lovers) and caramel.

For most of us, a pint really means one serving. It's so hard to stop after a half-cup serving. But Chef Lou says not to worry, but call his hot line, 1-800-Chef-Lou to share your story and relinquish your guilt. Chef Lou knows where you're coming from, he's finally pushing a weight battle recently dropping 65 pounds, ice cream and all.

Chef Lou Fat Free Premium Ice Cream is sold in half gallons and is about \$4.70.

"I wanted it to be the heaviest half gallon in the store," he said. The half gallons come in mocha fudge mousse, red raspberry ripple (fantastic), double chocolate ripple (to die for) and vanilla (made with the whole vanilla bean).

Chef Lou is always experimenting with new flavors and may substitute with a new one every once in awhile. Savino's other products, as well as the fat free lines, are available locally at some Kroger stores, Arbor Drugs, Shopping Center Market, Nino's and Vie's World Class Market. They are also available in six other states.

