

# Taste

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## Observer & Eccentric

Inside:

Strawberry-rhubarb fruit crumble recipe

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### 2 UNIQUE



KELLI LEWTON

Final touches make lasting impression

**W**hen I make that dish it doesn't look as good as yours" or "it always tastes good but doesn't look nice." These comments, and many more like them, are consistently being brought to my attention by students and clients alike. In a professional kitchen, there are many stations including broiler, soup and sauces, and pastries to name a few. But the one station where presentation skills are put to the test is my personal favorite Garde-Manager "Garde-jay."

#### Playground for creativity

Early in my career, I found this station to be a virtual playground for culinary creativity. My first (what I considered) real position of substance in the restaurant world was at Opus One in Detroit with then Executive Chef Peter Loren.

I ran the day shift Garde-Manager department. My days were filled with fabulous tasks such as making mosaic terrines, pates, designing flow, layout and garnish for extravagant buffet platters, and my most favorite of all, making ice cream. I still hold my ground that I was the first person to make Oreo cookie ice cream.

At Opus One I acquired one of my present day "ooh and ahh" skills — making butter roses. Although, I swore at the beginning I'd never be able to meet production demands of this difficult task, Chef Loren would just grin and say, "just practice you'll get there," and I did.

A Garde-Manager's duties could vary from A to Z, depending on the house where he/she worked. This department normally produces all cold sauces, dressings, pates, terrines, salads and cold hors d'oeuvres.

#### Ingredient for success

The key ingredient for successful presentation of a dish is attention to detail and proper garnish.

The new professional chef defines garnish as "An edible decoration or accompaniment to a dish."

For example, let's take a commonly prepared dish such as beef tenderloin, always a nice addition to a cocktail buffet. It presents nicely as a main center item, and is a substantial and elegant food for entertaining. When approaching the task of garnishing a tenderloin platter, some questions you might want to ask yourself are, "What do I like to eat with beef?" "What goes with beef tenderloin?"

After thinking, you might come up with a design such as: Herb & Pepper Crusted Tenderloin of Beef presented with caramelized balsamic onions, roasted peppers, a sprig of thyme and a roasted bulb of sweet and sticky garlic all arranged on a large white platter with petite rolls for sandwich making.

These items combined will make a fabulous presentation, and taste good too. It is what you want your presentation to be — functional, good tasting, and pleasing to the eye.

Have you ever been to a restaurant with a few friends, where everyone ordered something completely different, but each plate came garnished with a big hunk of purple kale? You quickly move it to the side, or off the plate completely, to better maneuver your food without "purple forest" interruption."

These are the principles Garde-Manager work against. The whole concept, in a nut shell, is that garnish should be related to and in good taste with the main item.

Corn relish would be a fabulous addition to a turkey platter, perhaps garnished with a bouquet of sage.

Shrimp cocktail with lemon wedges is another example of garnishing. The

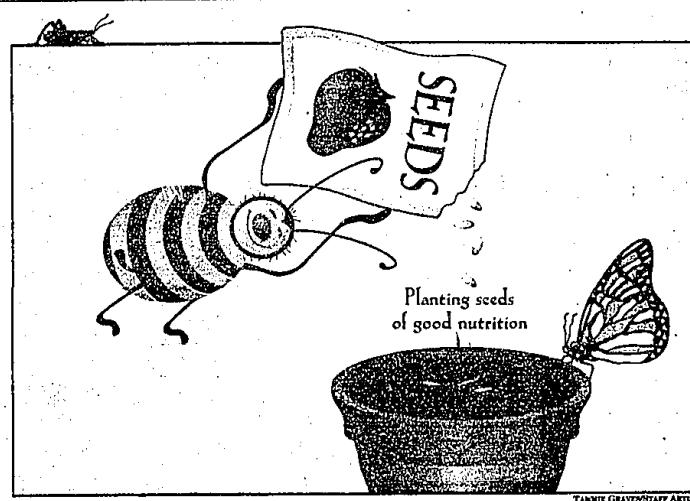
Please see 2 UNIQUE, B2

### LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

Focus on Wine

Passover desserts



TAMIE GRAVEN/STAFF ARTIST

## SPRING INTO ACTION

By PEGGY MARTINELLI-EVETS  
SPECIAL WRITER

**T**ake a Fresh Look at Nutrition" is the theme of this year's National Nutrition Month celebration.

Since this is the time when we begin to think about gardening, I'd like to plant seeds of good nutrition in your mind. You can plant them in your garden once the threat of frost has passed.

A garden doesn't have to be elaborate to be enjoyable. In fact, you don't even need a yard. A few pots placed on a sunny deck or porch can provide a summer and autumn's worth of wonderful herbs, vegetables and fruits.

When planning your garden there are a few factors to consider: the herbs, vegetables and fruits that you enjoy eating, the adaptability of those plants to Michigan's growing conditions, the amount of space you have, and how much time, energy and money you want to invest. I urge you to think about planting for variety.

#### Turn over a new leaf

Green leafy vegetables such as spinach and kale are ready to plant and harvest early. They are a great source of potassium and fiber.

Swiss chard is easy to grow. It is a source of beta carotene, and delicious when quickly blanched and seasoned with salt and pepper.

Arugula, another leafy vegetable, will add zip to your salad bowl. Most salad greens are easy to

#### Frozen flavor

Here's a trick from Lisa Iacobelli, a wonderful Italian cook: Whether you grow your own herbs or purchase them fresh from the supermarket, here's a good way to preserve them.

First, thoroughly wash and dry your herbs. Remove leaves from stems, particularly if the stems are tough. (Lisa only removes the large stems from basil. The smaller, tender stems she leaves intact.) Put the cleaned, dried herbs in a freezer bag and seal it tightly. When thoroughly frozen, crumble the herbs and remove all air from bag. To use, just add some of the frozen, crumbled herbs right into soups, stews and pasta souces.

My friend sprinkles frozen basil and oregano right on top of her homemade pizzas. You can really taste the fresh difference.

grow, and along with peas and onions, can be planted outdoors in mid-to-late March.

Green beans, green onions, cucumbers and zucchini are also quite hardy and will add variety to your diet. Carrots are a great source of beta carotene. Starches such as potatoes or corn give us carbohydrates.

Herbs you start from seed now can flavor dishes year-round. Easy-to-grow herbs include parsley, cilantro, oregano, sage, mint, marjoram, rosemary and thyme. All of these are perennials, and will come up year after year.

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#### Sowing seeds

Tomatoes and peppers are good vegetables that must be started indoors in mid-March or purchased at a nursery for late May or early June planting. Watermelon and cantaloupe can be started indoors as well. Sowing seeds at home can be rewarding and educational. Children love to see the seed they plant grow into food. It's a good way to teach them about eating a variety of vegetables. Many times children are more willing to try a new vegetable if they watched it grow from a seed.

#### Grocery store fresh

We are very fortunate since we can enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables all year long. Produce from around the world arrives fresh daily.

In March strawberries, rhubarb, asparagus and artichokes are in peak season.

April brings tomatoes, oranges and snap beans into our markets in greater supply and quality.

Look for cucumbers, bell peppers and sweet corn in May.

Be adventurous. Try a fruit or vegetable that you haven't tasted before.

Peggy Martinelli-Everts, R.D., of Clarkston, is a registered dietitian and director of clinical operations for HDS Services, a Farmington Hills-based food service and hospitality management and consulting company.

Please see OSCAR, B2



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HOFFMASTER  
Party preparations: Michael Jacobson (left), Cindy Franklin (center) and Harriet Jacobson are getting ready for a "Reach for the Stars Academy Awards Night Celebration." Chocolate roses are one of the many surprises awaiting guests.

#### Oscar Party Tip Sheet

**■ Think Hollywood** — Dress up as your favorite celebrities and your guests to do the same. Add style and flair to your room with a few inexpensive party favors like gold-colored napkins, paper plates and balloons.

**■ Keep your guests on the edge of their seats** — Hold an Oscar pool. Ask guests to select their "picks" from a printed sheet of nominees for major categories, including "Best Movie" and "Best Director." Add a few categories of your own like "First Oscar Winner Whose Special is Cut from the Best" or "First Oscar Winner to Thank the Academy." Create a dramatic finale by awarding the winner of the pool with a bouquet of flowers.

**■ Spotlight on food** — Serve a variety of hot and cold dishes that are easy yet elegant. Arrange the stations at convenient locations around the Oscar-viewing area to ensure easy access to the food and a clear view of the TV. This also helps keep people out of the kitchen while you work.

American Dairy Association

## Add Lentil Sauced Rotini to your cancer fighting arsenal

### LENTIL SAUCED ROTINI

1 teaspoon olive oil  
1 medium onion, chopped  
1 medium carrot, chopped  
2 teaspoons garlic, minced  
2 cups reduced-sodium vegetable broth (I like Pritikin)  
1/2 cup green lentils, rinsed  
1 bay leaf  
1 teaspoon fresh thyme or 1/4 teaspoon dried  
6 Italian plum tomatoes, chopped (2 cups)  
4 cups spinach leaves, washed and torn  
Freshly ground black pepper to taste  
12 ounces Rotini, cooked according to package directions  
4 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, grated

Cook Rotini according to package directions.

In a nonstick skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onions, carrots and garlic. Sauté for 3 minutes, or until the vegetables are softened.

Add broth, lentils, bay leaf and thyme. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer 15 minutes.

Remove bay leaf. Add tomatoes. Cover and cook for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the lentils are tender.

Sir in spinach. Cover and cook for about 5 minutes, or until spinach is wilted. Season with pepper. Add to warm, cooked rotini. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Serves 6.

**Food values per serving:** Calories, 364; fat, 1.2g; saturated fat, trace; sodium, 103mg; cholesterol, 23mg.

**Food exchanges:** 4 starches, 4 vegetable

**Look for Main Dish Miracle on the second Sunday of the month in Taste.** Muriel Wagner is a registered dietitian and nutrition therapist with an office in Southfield. She publishes "Eating Younger," a quarterly newsletter with recipes and nutrition tips. To subscribe, send a check for \$13.50 to "Eating Younger," P.O. Box 69021, Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069.

### MAIN DISH MIRACLE



MURIEL WAGNER

I trust that you didn't trade your bran flakes for a doughnut after you heard the news that fiber might not prevent colon cancer. Hold on to that can of beans, too, it may come in handy after this brief discussion.

Cancer is a complex disease. It's not likely that a single nutrient will turn out to be the sole protector. But, there's no argument that a high fiber diet lowers your chances for other diseases like high blood pressure, diverticulitis, non-insulin dependent diabetes, stomach and lung cancer.

My shortest and best dietary advice is to increase your intake of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy, while reducing your intake of meat, sugar and alcohol. Besides, it may turn out that the fiber level in the study under discussion (at the bottom of the 25-35 grams recommendation) was too low to be effective.

This was the thinking that led to this month's recipe selection. Lentil Sauced

Rotini is low in fat and loaded with fiber and vegetables. It also has lots of those cancer fighting antioxidants like lutein in the spinach and lycopene in the tomatoes. All these nutrients, and a wonderful flavor, combine to make this recipe one of my favorites.

Rotini is macaroni in a corkscrew shape. I make it my pasta choice often. Those little squiggles trap the delectable sauce better than plain spaghetti. The small amount of freshly grated Parmesan cheese in the recipe adds less than 2 grams of fat per serving; it's really a flavor bargain.

Lentils are the short order cook's friend. Unlike other dried beans, they are thin-skinned, need no soaking, and cook more quickly than their dried bean cousins. Green lentils are actually green to brown and cook to a soft texture and taste.

The sauce takes well to cooked meat, poultry, canned fish, or shellfish for an additional flavor accent. But you don't need it for protein, B complex vitamins or iron. You may find this recipe a tasteful reason to try more vegetarian main dishes.