

Artist Thomas Jacobs stands next to the stain-glass mosaic Big Boy that he created for the restaurant chain. The statue is on display at Cranbrook Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills.



American Icon turns artsy

Big Boy, the chubby kid who wears red and white plaid overalls, has turned elegant and has been seen hanging around sophisticated art museums rather than at the family style restaurant where he's mascot.

Big Boy is spending the season covered completely in thousands of shimmering mosaic tiles on display at Cranbrook Art Museum in Bloomfield Hills.

Cranbrook graduate and artist Thomas Jacobs of Chicago designed the mosaic after being inspired by the big kid while he was working on a "touch-up artist" for Boy Boys based in Warren.

Big Boy gave Jacobs the statue in 2001 and it was fully painted in the typical Big Boy way. Jacobs spent one month stepping the pain and spent another two months hand-cutting the stained-glass mosaic. Then 300 hours in three weeks time was dedicated to applying the tiles

on the giant kid.

He hopes to donate it to a museum or other non-charitable group.

"I get compensation knowing the statue could be enjoyed by hundreds or thousands of people. I'm interested in what the artwork will do for the viewer, not for me."

For viewer Tony Michaels, CEO of Big Boys Restaurants, this statue is the most exciting he's ever seen.

"While we've seen many Big Boy statues over the years, all of which we considered works of art, we have never seen one as aesthetically attractive as this," Michaels said. "We're honored that (Jacobs) chose one of our statues to preserve in this way. I'm sure."

For more information call (877) 462-7262.

- By Lana Mini

Easy meals ready in short order

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cooks can put together easy summer meals or snacks in short order by taking advantage of quick-cooking mushrooms and everyone's fondness for pizza and burgers, even meatless ones.

A tasty portobello mushroom pizza made with a prepared pizza crust topped with the mushroom slices, red bell pepper and mozzarella takes only 10 minutes in the oven or on the grill to be ready, hot and fragrant. A Greek-style pizza starts with pita "crust," topped with sauteed white mushroom slices, onion, tomato, black olives and cheese. The Parmesan portobello "burgers" served with a savory roasted red-pepper spread are sandwiched in conventional toasted buns.

SAVORY PORTOBELLO PIZZA

(Preparation 15 minutes, cooking time 22 minutes)
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium-sized onion, thinly sliced
1 small red bell pepper, cut in strips
2 portobello mushroom caps, sliced
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1/2 teaspoon oregano or Italian seasoning, crushed
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
One 12-inch pre-baked pizza crust
1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 450 F or prepare grill. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and bell pepper, cook and stir until tender, about 5 minutes. Add mushrooms, garlic, oregano, salt and pepper; cook and stir until mushrooms are tender, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle 1 cup of the mozzarella over pizza crust; spoon mushroom mixture evenly over surface. Top with the remaining 1/2 cup cheese. Place pizza on a baking sheet or pizza pan, or directly on grill. Bake or

grill until cheese melts, about 7 minutes. Makes 6 to 8 slices. Nutrition information per serving: 431 cal., 16 g fat, 8 g pro., 38 g carbo. Recipe from The Mushroom Council

GREEK MUSHROOM PITA PIZZA

(Preparation 15 minutes, cooking time 15 minutes)
Four 5-inch pitas
1 tablespoon olive oil
12 ounces fresh white mushrooms, sliced (about 4 cups)
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup diced plum (Roma) tomatoes
1 1/2 cups (6 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese
6 ounce can solid white tuna in water, drained and flaked
1/4 cup sliced, pitted black olives
1/3 cup (2 ounces) crumbled feta cheese

Preheat oven to 450 F or prepare grill. Place pitas on a baking sheet or pizza pan, or grill, turning once, until lightly toasted, about 5 minutes; set aside. In a large skillet, heat oil until hot.

Add mushrooms and onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid evaporates, about 5 minutes. Add tomatoes; cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 3 minutes; set aside.

Sprinkle each pita with 1/4 cup of the mozzarella; then layer with equal amounts of the tuna, olives, feta, mushroom mixture and remaining mozzarella. Bake until cheese is melted, about 7 minutes. Serve immediately sprinkled with oregano leaves and crushed red pepper, if desired. Makes 4 servings. Nutrition information per serving: 449 cal., 19 g fat, 29 g pro., 42 g carbo. Recipe from The Mushroom Council

PARMESAN PORTOBELLO 'BURGERS' WITH ROASTED RED PEPPER SPREAD

(Preparation about 10 minutes, cooking time about 20 minutes)
For the spread:

1/3 cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
1/4 cup finely chopped roasted red pepper
1 garlic clove, minced
1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
For the burgers:
1/2 cup toasted wheat germ
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 tablespoon Italian seasoning blend
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 egg whites
1 tablespoon water
4 portobello mushroom caps (3 1/2- to 4-inch diameter)
Cooking spray
4 whole-grain rolls
Four 1-ounce slices part-skim mozzarella cheese
4 slices tomato, optional
Red leaf lettuce or spinach leaves

To make the spread: Combine mayonnaise, red pepper, garlic, and lemon juice in small bowl; set aside.

Heat oven to 400 F. Spray bak-

ing sheet with cooking spray. To make the "burgers": Combine wheat germ, Parmesan cheese, Italian seasoning blend and salt in shallow dish; mix well.

In a second shallow dish, beat together the egg white and water until frothy. Dip mushroom caps into beaten egg whites, then into wheat-germ mixture, coating completely.

Repeat. Place mushrooms stem-side down on baking sheet. Spray lightly with cooking spray.

Bake 14 to 18 minutes or until mushrooms feel tender when pierced with the tip of a sharp knife and coating is crisp. Top each with 1 slice mozzarella cheese; bake 1 minute or until cheese is melted.

To serve: Spread mayonnaise mixture on inside surfaces of rolls. Place warm mushroom, tomato and lettuce on roll bottom; cover with roll top. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 350 cal., 16 total fat (6 g saturated fat), 30 mg chol., 950 mg sodium, 32 g carbo., 4 g dietary fiber, 21 g pro. Recipe from Kretschmer Wheel Germ

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