



Sampling of Bahamian life is captured along Nassau's waterfront as a local vendor tends her straw and vegetable stand (Photographed by Sue Rosiek)

Fishermen, vendors lend Nassau charm

By SUSAN ROSIEK

NASSAU, BAHAMAS—Day or night, visitors will never run out of things to do or sights to see in Nassau.

Located on New Providence Island, Nassau, the busy capital of the Bahamas, is flourishing. Opportunities for relaxation and entertainment are endless. And, Nassau offers a refreshing mix of native Bahamian inn and modern luxury hotels and resorts.

During the day vacationers can enjoy golf, tennis, fishing, swimming, sailing and other water sports. For sightseers, horse-drawn surreys are available for tours through the town and around the island.

Another attraction is Bay Street, in downtown Nassau, with its open-air markets stocked with a variety of handmade Bahamian straw products.

An interesting side trip is walking along the pier as fishermen unload their daily catches, and listening to local vendors as they trade fresh fruits and vegetables.

Other Nassau highlights include the busy harbor, where schooners and international ships are constantly coming and going. Tourists also can explore the old colonial forts scattered along the countryside, visit government offices at Parliament Square and stroll through many lush tropical gardens.

Along with its miles of white-sand beaches, Nassau offers an exciting nightlife. Large hotels, nightclubs alive with calypso music, and gambling casinos are just a few of the night spots. Paradise Island, connected to Nassau by a bridge, features the second largest gambling house in the Western Hemisphere.

The restaurants and small cafes throughout the city offer interesting menus. The Bahamian dishes with conch, grouper and other local shellfish are delicious and well worth sampling. Nassau eateries also can accommodate the hamburger diehards.

Located off Florida's east coast, Nassau is interesting, exciting and most important to northern guests,

warm (winter temperatures range in the mid-seventies). Tourists are welcomed and treated well, which only serves to complement the balmy climate, and colorful setting.

Depending on the time of year, golf, fishing and tennis tournaments are offered. The Bahamas "Goombay" Festival, from early June until early September, features parades, dances and a host of other local activities.

Hotel accommodations in Nassau are available to suit every taste and budget. Flight service to Nassau is available from Detroit on Air Jamaica. Air service to the 700 other out-islands is available on Bahamasair, the local airline.

Tour under auspices of Bahamas Tourist News Bureau.



A FISHERMAN looks over his conch catch of the day

Cuisine and Duglass

Everything went wrong that day

My story begins, shortly after lunch was served, in the massive main kitchen of Detroit's Hotel Pontchartrain.

The aroma of broiled cheese from the Onion Soup Gratinée Les Halles, floated about the soiled, stainless-steel, into the midst of an inevitable confrontation with dispirited employees walked an unmistakable lady attired elegantly in a subtle fashion of silk, her coiffure of sterling radiance done in a style befitting a duchess.

After our introduction by the director of food and beverage, Mel Stradon, and the usual pomp that goes with intros, we parted ways.

There was something, perhaps the sound of her kind, unaffected voice, that left a warm feeling and a sense of complete composure. The exquisite scent of her perfume assured me of a lasting relationship.

I CAN, without reservation, reveal that it wasn't wine and roses from then on. Before my triumph as a professional chef was established, we had our differences of opinion.

One incident I recall very clearly was a pre-wedding dinner. We had gone over everything to assure perfection of the menu.

FLEUR D'ARTICHAUTS
AUX CRABE
GNOCCHI PARISIENNE GRATINÉE
PETITE TOURNADO BRILLANT
SAVARIEN SAUCE PÉRILOUXINE
POMMES SOUFFLÉS
CREMSON GARNI
DEMI TASSE
FRASE FRACHE
AU CHOCOLAT BLANC

The mood was to be set in grey and soft white, accented in silver with lacy Boston ferns with subtle flames enhanced by a buffet of personalities in the chic restaurant Méditerranée.

On the morning of that eventful day, my producer man telephoned me to say that he was unable to obtain fresh strawberries due to a strike in



By

DUGLASS
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California. On the previous evening the hotel unexpectedly was filled to capacity. A storm brought a planeful of people from Europe, who were touring the United States.

NEEDLESS TO say, breakfast and lunch became a hassle, and most of my time was spent translating our menu into French and back into English to the server. (My French wasn't that good but helping people order my food in a foreign language was loads of fun.)

James Beard and I did a show together in the Versailles Ballroom for a social benefit that evening and he left an out-of-town guest for me to entertain until the departure of his plane the following afternoon.

After the morning trauma, I was finally ready to prepare the carefully detailed dinner menu for the soon-to-arrive guests. I was again interrupted, this time by lowering flames, dancing their way up to the sprinkling system from the sauté station where advanced cooks prepare delicate fare.

The flames managed to set off the fire alarm and the cooling water descended like the rains of Ranchipur, pouring down the oven shelves onto the range and down the slick sides of the oven to the floor with its soft continuous flow, like a receding tide, and into the freshly bathed dining room.

THE SCENIC water ballet continued its cascade of falls like the fantasy falls of Villa de'Est.

The strawberry on top of the sundae was when two of my employees telephoned to report they were sick—one hour before dinner was to commence. I was, by then, beginning to develop a slight headache. This was a disaster.

The details are still too nerve-racking for further comment.

HOWEVER, the duchess entered my kitchen, like a gracious hostess would do at the finale of a meal, looking as lovely as she could be in black lace and a yard of diamonds around her soft marble shoulders.

Her delicate face had an expression of disfavor. I stood there in awe, not believing that this day could have ended in such a cruel way.

Why have all my priceless peers survived the times and I have failed? What could a 25-year-old chef do in front of a duchess but simply reply in a humble way, "I'm sorry."

Months passed by, without us speaking. I was completely shattered and childishly pouted about the kitchen, purposely avoiding my contact with my lady fair.

FINALLY, spring arrived with its healing charm, and the social event of the season, the May opera brought a series of dinners very much like the one mentioned earlier in this article, with the exception of the dessert.

Fresh snow was formed into a mountain with a sculptured spiral staircase formed by fresh strawberries stepping about the form, making this dessert very impressive.

Fresh limes were hollowed out and stuffed with sugar and lime chutney for the dipping process to be done by the guest.

When the menu is a triumph, a chef well deserves the personal praise that I received from my buddy, Bernard Gerstenson.

The food was exquisite, the drink divine, the flowers lovely, and the company sparkling. A good time was had by all. Thank God!

STRAWBERRY STAIRCASE

For 6 people
6 fresh limes cut in half widthwise.
Like a flower
3 quarts fresh strawberries
About 3 gallons of fresh-fallen snow
Wooden toothpicks (box)
1 pint whipped, whipping cream
1 tablespoon of sour cream
A few drops of pure vanilla extract
Some granulated sugar
About 8 dozen or two lemon leaves
1 cup of granulated sugar
Water

METHOD ONE

To form the cone simply take the fresh snow, and if it is flaky simply add a few drops of water to make it more compact. If you have a china cup or a cone-like device that is about a foot-and-a-half tall, this would save you a lot of artistic trouble in forming the geometric cone.

Step One: Fill the cone device with the moist snow, packing firmly. Turn over on a round service tray like you would a jelly mold.

METHOD TWO

On a 10-inch dinner plate or service tray, preferably round, place a paper daily. This will absorb moisture and prevent the cone from sliding.

Start off by taking the moist snow in small portions and pack it in the bottom. Continue to build up to a peak like a sand castle.

If the metal instrument is too cumbersome, simply embrace the cone with your hands, which are protected by the rubber gloves. With an upward and downward motion and a slight amount of pressure starting from the base, one can form the cone professionally.

With the plain toothpicks in hand, begin at the peak of the cone and insert one pick halfway into the peak. (This could represent the star at the top of a Christmas tree.)

With one piece of string about three feet long, tie one end around the toothpick already in the cone and form a spiral from the top of the pick around the cone that extends for three complete turns, extending to the bottom of the cone where you will secure the string with another toothpick.

The spiraling string will indicate the insertion of the rest of the toothpicks.

Following the string and at a half-inch interval at the top, push in the toothpicks as you progress down the tree, increase the interval or space of the toothpicks to compensate for the larger strawberries that will be used in the lower part of the cone.

Then, remove the string and store the cone in a freezing atmosphere.

Method for Limes

To form the flower effect, use a marking pencil on the lime and draw a zig-zag effect. Then with a thin paring knife, insert this instrument into the lime on the zig through the center and then on the zig.

Continue this process all the way around the fruit. Twist the fruit to separate it, and with your thumb nail inserted between the membrane and the pulp, loosen the fruit slowly in a circular motion until the pulp is removed.

Continue this process until all limes are completed. Squeeze the juice into the whipping cream and add the vanilla and sour cream and stir. Set aside.

In a heavy saucepan, add the sugar and water, bring to a boil and cook



Strawberry Staircases: Berries ascend fresh-snow cone

until the sugar turns a golden brown. Dip the base of the lime in the sugar candy and then immediately place in the center of a dessert dish.

Continue the process, allowing two lime flowers for each dessert plate. One will be filled with the cream and the other with the granulated sugar. Each plate is placed in front of each guest. The strawberry cone that has been arranged with strawberries is to be placed in the center of the table and garnished at the base with lemon leaves.

The method for serving is simply to have your guests pluck a strawberry, by the ball and dip it in the cream and then the sugar and finally eat the succulent fruit. Finger bowls should accompany the strawberry staircase with a chilled champagne.