

\$10 gourmet meal plus lots of advice



Charity Sucek stirs chocolate for Creme Au Chocolat En Petits Pots (Photographed by Kathy Willons)

By ETHEL SIMMONS

For less than \$10 you can whip up a gourmet dinner for four. French cooking authority Charity De Vio Sucek dished out this, and a lot more, in the way of culinary advice on a recent trip to Birmingham.

Food, apparently, is just like plants, she said, and you must treat them that way.

Madame Sucek wore a grey dress that matched her hair and a bright yellow apron that matched the cooking pot in which she made Creme Au Chocolat En Petits Pots.

In a softly accented voice and with expressive facial and hand gestures (when she wasn't busy stirring or demonstrating), Madame Sucek crooned, "You are dealing with living things and you must treat them that way."

THE AUDIENCE tittered when she said, "Never cook if you are unhappy. You upset all those things."

Madame Sucek went on, "Every pot is your friend. Take care of them. Many chefs have special pots to do this and that. They carry their own set of knives. The knife fits into my fist, they say. If I use someone else's knife I'm sure going to cut my fingers."

In the Kitchen Shop of Jacobson's Store for the Home, she demonstrated her culinary artistry, aided by a male assistant. A large overhead mirror

gave the women in the audience another view of the kitchen creativity. Madame Sucek cautioned, "I do not buy cooking wines. That is tabu. Now the wine that you serve with your meal you cook with."

YOU CAN save wine left from a meal, for cooking. Just tilt the bottle sideways so the cork stays wet, she said.

She added cognac to the chocolate turning smooth under the spoon. "Every time you add a new flavor, you have a new dish."

Next came the addition of egg whites, already beaten frothy in a copper bowl.

She started preparing the meal backwards. After the dessert came the chicken, for Chicken in the Style of the Auge Valley.

Madame Sucek said the chicken was about eight weeks old and artificially raised. She explained chickens don't have the flavor like in our grandmother's day.

"YOU HAVE to do something to give it flavor," she said. "You can give it a lemon-bath, or massage it with butter or oil. It's the same thing as a facial, what massage does for you. It makes it feel good."

The chicken, already decapitated and dressed, was obviously making the best of a bad situation.

Madame Sucek's delightful cooking lecture-demo continued. Bits and pieces cut from the chicken were set aside for the stockpot.

"You don't throw anything away. Your soups and your sauces are only as good as your stocks."

She placed the chicken in a frying pan and, as it began to cook, took the pan and shook it.

"IF YOU'RE a good cook, nothing should stick to the pan. Don't poke at it with forks or knives or you'll ruin the glaze. Pick up the pan in both hands and shake. Everything should move," she said.

When it came time to light a match to the concoction, she pointed out

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Adding egg whites to the dessert mixture

"You always flame with a warm brandy rather than cold. The nicest flame comes from Southern Comfort because it's 100 proof and gives you a blue flame."

The chicken pieces were removed from the pan and the pan displayed. What's left on the bottom was the glaze, which most people just wash off under the faucet but should be used, for it's the secret in making the sauce.

The first course came almost last, the Potage Bajet. Madame Sucek began with fresh-frozen peas "because that's all I have."

SOUP FOR tasting was passed under in paper cups but shown first in an attractive tureen.

"It is part of your service," she said. "Good food deserves this."

The demonstration was winding up. Broccoli Agnencourte was quickly and easily made, the vegetable retaining its bright green color after steaming.

The entree was placed in a serving dish, tilted so it could be viewed in the mirror in all its splendor. The audience burst into applause.

Earlier Madame Sucek had spoken of the beneficial effects of yogurt ("It's a very healthy food") Her final comments were on:

- Meal that is packaged, so you can't touch. She wants to: "You package everything, then put all kinds of chemicals in foods that poison you. I rebel against this."
- Meal planning. "You have to be organized. Study your menu. Start out with the dish that takes the longest time, needs relaxing or cooling."

Cuisine and Duglass

Enjoyment of fine wine, quenelles, fellowship

When good friends together, together, the attraction for the evening is centered on the vine-ripened substance of France. Le Vin

Chateau Pichon Lalande—Most Popular

Chateau Ausone—Second in running

Carruades de Chateau Lafite— Rothschild—Ready

Chateau Figeac St. Emillion—Ready

Chateau Montrose—Return to the caves for two-three years

Chateau Batailly—Return to the caves for two years.

The guest responsible for bringing the French celebrities was Dr. Pat Doust Baill, for the Chapitre du Michigan, of the world-renowned Chaine des Rotisseurs.

Dr. Doust deplors all wines not conceived from the grape. However, he feels since alcohol is absorbed through the stomach the other wine-like fruit brew is better for you than the hard stuff, primarily because of its low alcoholic content.

HOWEVER, COMMENTED the doctor, the longer you taste wine the greater your appreciation becomes. One may find initially great enjoyment with the sweet wine and gradually prefer to lean toward the drier variety.

The year 1964 was a very good one for claret. It usually takes 6 to 12 years for cabernet sauvignon and merlot grapes to mature fully, and he strongly feels that these should be drunk within that period.

The art of tasting wine can be extremely difficult. And it can be as simple as enjoying the sublime liquid, after aerating its carbinon bouquet, while swirling the clear glass that was filled only one-half of the way.

This principle gives the wine life and creates an aromatic scent. The second sensation, while sipping, is rolling the grape broth around your taste buds from the tip, which is sweet,



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DUGLASS
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then the edges, which are salty. The sides are on the sour kick, while the bitter is in the back, looking for a good balance of bouquet.

AFTER SWALLOWING a few seconds later, the palatable pleasure of the aftertaste should linger on.

As the gala continued to flourish, four perspiring, thirsty, exhausted culinarians were frantic tasting and basting the little savories in a kitchen of very moderate size.

Whoever said that "too many cooks spoil the broth" would surely turn over in his grave had they been there in the 12 x 6 kitchen.

Simple savories were served in a grand style, to honor the noble vines of an excellent vintage.

QUENELLE DE VOLAILLE CHES AMIS

- 3 quarts cold water
- 34 pounds stewing chickens parts
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 fresh carrot cut up
- 1 turnip cut up
- 2 stalks celery cut up
- 3 leeks cut up
- 1 clove garlic crushed
- 1 bouquet garni (thyme, bay leaf and parsley wrapped together)
- 2 large onions that have been injected with whole cloves.

Add the first two ingredients to a heavy stock pot, or kettle. If more water is needed, do so. Very slowly, bring it to a boiling point, removing any scum that may appear on the surface because it is unsightly.

Add the cut-up vegetables about one hour or so later. More water should be added.

If this recipe interests you for a consommé, then add ice cubes, four egg whites plus the shells, to the broth at this point. However, since the recipe is for a sauce, it will be necessary for a clear consommé.

Reduce under a low heat for about three-four hours. At midpoint, the chicken will be done, and we are going to use it in this recipe, so do with it what you may.

AFTER THE reducing process has paled into a finale, strain. You should have about six cups of a very fine broth, to which you will add the bearnaise manie (four tablespoons soft butter to four tablespoons flour that has been mixed together with your hand, hence the name; the consistency will be smooth).

With a soft wire whisk, whipping vigorously to achieve a velvety complexion, cook for about 15 minutes on a low heat, preferably in a heavy saucepot. This will prevent the sauce from scorching.

Add a liaison of one egg yolk and one cup thick cream (sour cream and buttermilk in equal proportions will work nicely) to a quart bowl and whip together for a second.

Then add half the hot veloute or chicken sauce to the liaison and whip to your heart's content. Set this sauce of excellence to one side with one-

quarter pound of sweet unsalted butter unwrapped alongside, until the quenelles are done.

QUENELLES OR LIGHT DUMPLINGS

4 breasts of chicken, skinned and freed from any unsightly fibers, cut up, ground twice finely, in a cold bowl.

Add the ground mixture with two egg whites and blend thoroughly. Add a pinch of ground sage and nutmeg.

about one-half teaspoon salt and some seasoned salt with a little white pepper.

Whip until smooth. Then add about five tablespoons sour cream, one at a time. The mixture will be like a fluffy paste. In a three-inch pot add hot water, halfway, and let it simmer.

With a teaspoon initially dipped in water, scoop out a teaspoonful, forming an oval shape as best you can. Gently setting the quenelles in the simmering water, poach for about five minutes.

Remove the dumplings and in a casserole, whip the butter into the sauce and pour over the chicken quenelles and serve.

If the quenelles are to be for a dinner party, they may be prepared a day or two in advance and covered with a clear wrapping. I would suggest not using foil. My experience has been that it oxidizes after being under cold storage for a period of time.

Vouvray is a medium dry white wine that goes very well with this dish.



Wine complemented by savories (Photographed by Barbara McClellan)