



The Happy Cooker

by Elaine Susan Stulberg



A glamorous new eatery-and-responses to readers

It is a time for beauty and glitter and one of the most beautiful spots to partake of these festivities is the recently opened Sydney's restaurant in Troy. Sydney's is housed in the old Bonaventure restaurant on Big Beaver Road.

No doubt about it — their new restaurant is special. Using a limited menu with 16 entrees, Sydney Harris followed a plan which is being successfully utilized by only four other eateries in the country.

While the restaurant is a combination Steak and Seafood house, with five days notice Sydney's will prepare any entree or procure any wine from anywhere in the world.

WE GET LETTERS:

"Kindly explain what 24 individual small clam shells or small ramekins means," writes Mrs. G.M. Franch of Farmington Hills.

I am certain your question is in connection with the shells used for the crab meat cocktail recipe which appeared in my Dec. 3 column. They are cherry-stone clam shells. Cherry-stones are served at all seafood houses and can be found on the menu of many fine restaurants. The shells are discarded after customers have devoured the clams and restaurants are happy to give them to diners upon request. In fact, they will gladly give you a bag of them. Once you get them home clean inside each by removing the muscle with a sharp knife. Wash them in your dishwasher and they are ready to use. Best of all, you have them for years — and the price is right! As far as ramekins are concerned, they are small, ovenproof containers. For seafood recipes I prefer using the type that resemble a clam shell. They can be purchased in the kitchen wares department of most stores or specialty shops such as kitchen Glamour and Wells Fargo.

Ms. Kristine Brannen of Westland writes, "Can you give me names and places to get local cookbooks

from restaurants, gourmet cooks, etc?" Ms. Brannen adds, "I sent for the one you just published, 'Cuisine International.'"

Unfortunately your letter didn't reach my desk until Dec. 13. Although cookbooks are in short supply so close to Christmas. However, I am familiar with three excellent volumes which I think you will like. "A Treasury Of Great Recipes" by Mary and Vincent Price (\$10) is an introduction to fine wine, and break bread with the famous actor-cook and his wife. They give exact recipes from many of the world's most famous restaurants. "Meet, Eat and Enjoy Detroit" by Mary Conway and Harry Satchwell (\$7.95) was recently reviewed in this column. It is a thorough reference book for restaurant and food lovers. Included is a cornucopia of recipes from Detroit's gourmet, respected restaurants, chefs and media celebrities. "Someone's in the Kitchen with Dinah," by Dinah Shore (\$6.95) includes many of her favorite recipes as well as those of her "Show Biz" friends. The books can be purchased at E. Dalton Stores (Northland Branch), Southfield. Thank you for mentioning that you purchased my book "Cuisine International," however, I did not write that book! The title of my cookbook is "The Happy Cooker."

Troy's Mrs. Jo Giroux requests a repeat of Charley's Chowder which appeared in an October column. This chowder is the creation of Executive Corporate Chef Larry Pagliaro of the C.A. Mier Corporation who presides over all of the firm's restaurant kitchens.

CHARLEY'S CLAM CHOWDER
2 ounces of olive oil (by volume) 3 medium size cloves of garlic (smashed)
2 ounces onions, chopped fine (by weight)
3 ounces celery, chopped fine (by weight)
A titch each of oregano, basil and thyme

6 ounces stewed tomatoes, chopped very fine (by volume)
¾ gallon water (by volume)
1 pound boneless fish (pollack or turbot) (by weight) 2 ounces clam base (by weight)
1 ounce parsley, chopped fine (by weight)
Salt to taste

Method of Preparation:
Place olive oil in large pot, heat on stove until very hot. Drop into the hot oil the smashed garlic cloves. Note: Cook the cloves of garlic until golden in color. Important that you do not burn the garlic as this will ruin the taste. Remove the cloves from the oil. While oil is hot add the onions and cook for a minute or two. Add the oregano, basil and thyme and cook for minute. Add the celery and cook until translucent in color. Add the finely chopped tomatoes and cook for about 20-25 minutes, stirring to prevent sticking. Add water, fish clam base and cook for an additional 15 minutes, uncovered, at full heat.

(Reason: To remove moisture and concentrated fish bacteria and the extract oils for flavoring the chowder.) Add salt, cover the pot and keep cooking for another 20 minutes at low heat. Stir often by whipping to break up the fish and blend the flavor. When serving add the chopped parsley. Note: If Clam base is not available, substitute ¾ gallon clam juice for specified quantity of water and do not use water at all. Recipe serves 6.

"I need help," writes Dianna Graves of Birmingham. "I have the main dish this year for our progressive dinner group. We have decided on an Early American Christmas (1800-) which will be held a bit after the holiday."

Colonial Americans were not blessed with the tender cuts of beef we have

today. Everything required long, slow cooking to make tough cuts palatable. Our ancestors cooked pot roasts, spiced beef, stews and many recipes which, today, would not be considered festive enough for a Christmas entree. Wild fowl were easy to obtain with the best loved bird being the wild turkey. My suggestion for your dinner group's entree is rock cornish game hens. They became a prized delicacy when the United States began importing them from England during the 1800s. Today's little birds have a more delicate taste, better texture and are moister than those of early Americana. With a wild rice or rich bread stuffing and the accompaniments others will be bringing (delected from your letter), the little hens should prove to both economical as well as gastronomical.

ROCK CORNISH GAME HENS

¾ cup uncooked wild rice (when cooked, approximately 3-¾ cups)
4 cups water
½ tsp. salt
½ pound butter or margarine
1 onion chopped
4 ounces can mushrooms, sliced and drained of liquid
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
¼ tsp. thyme
1 tsp. parsley flakes
4 1-pound Rock Cornish hens
4 tps. melted butter or margarine
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
½ tsp. paprika
1 cup water

Rinse rice in several changes of cold water. Place rice in large saucepan with water and salt and bring to boil. Reduce heat to simmer and cook 45-60 minutes or until rice is soft. If any water remains when cooking is completed, drain in fine sieve to thoroughly

eliminate liquid. Place rice back in saucepan and add ¼ pound butter, stirring to melt. Cover pan and set aside. Melt remaining butter in frying pan and saute onions until transparent. Add mushrooms, salt, pepper, thyme, sage and parsley flakes. Saute over low heat, uncovered, for 3 minutes. Add to wild rice and stir to blend. Re-cover saucepan and reserve. Remove giblets from hen and reserve for another use (e.g., making stocks and soups). Rinse birds, inside and out, with cool water and pat dry. Place in roasting pan, breast side up. Spoon equal amounts of rice into cavity of hens. It is not necessary to skewer or tie. Brush with melt-

ed butter and sprinkle with seasonings. Roast, uncovered, for 1 hour in preheated 350-degree oven. Add water to pan and continue roasting, basting occasionally, for another ¼ hour or until tender.

To serve, cut each hen in half with sharp poultry shears, cutting down middle from top part of breast to cavity. While hen is sitting opened, neatly cut through back part. You now have equal halves and each should have equal amounts of wild rice dressing. Serve halves with some of the natural gravy from pan drizzled over hens. Put remaining gravy in decorative container and pass around.

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