

Food and wine books for holiday giving

DINING DINING AND drinking are facts of life — everyday activities that are given greater emphasis during the holidays. This added emphasis makes gifts associated with food and drink appropriate for just about everyone, from every walk of life.

The recipients of any of the following books may find life something of interest — advice, recipes or food for thought.

"THE CHINESE BANQUET COOKBOOK," by Eileen Yin-Fei Lo, Crown Publishers, New York, \$17.98.

You'll discover a collection of culinary wisdom in this book enhanced by drawing and calligraphy. As the introduction explains, "It is a natural consequence of . . . those (Chinese) beliefs that attribute life-giving, health-giving and peace-giving foods, that a tradition of observing important events in life . . . with feasts, with banquets, should have arisen in China."

Lo describes historical, as well as contemporary, banquets. And chapters in the book cover the foods, drink and tools needed to prepare regional and special feasts.

Recipes are authentic, with some adapted slightly for Western palates. Each of the 100-plus recipes is tantalizing. They may cajole you

into the kitchen, even if you are not adept at Chinese cookery. However, these recipes do call for a practiced hand.

"PAUL KOVI'S TRANSYLVANIAN HISTORY, GASTRONOMY, LEGEND AND LORE FROM MIDDLE EUROPE'S MOST REMARKABLE REGION," by Paul Kovi, Crown Publishers, New York, \$15.98.

The book is a tribute to Kovi's native land. Kovi, co-owner with Tom Margittai of the Four Seasons Restaurant in New York, is considered by many to be the gastronomic experts' expert.

Thus, Kovi's "Transylvania Cuisine" is no ordinary cookbook but a feast for the senses, a work that will give pleasure to noncooks as well as the cooking-oriented. The culinary story — history, actually — of Transylvania, unfolds in three stages.

• "From Heart to Heart," essays written by Kovi and three kinsmen about the extraordinary cookery of five ethnic groups who peopled the country — Hungarians, Romanians, German Saxons, Armenians and Jews.

• "The True Flavors of Transylvania," a compilation of 300 recipes, acquired on location.

• "In Reverence of Food," another set of delectable essays by vari-

ous native sons on topics such as the mysteries of strudel making, folk poetry of the wedding feast and momentos of the restaurant of Kolosvar, where Kovi attended a university.

"WINDOWS OF THE WORLD COMPLETE WINE COURSE," by Kevin Zraly, Sterling Publishing Company, New York, \$18.95.

Readers will find it a pleasure to absorb the cornucopia of information imparted by Zraly. The narrative information is patterned after tape recordings of Zraly's classroom presentations, so the reader has a feeling of participating in his classes.

This book is touted as the complete wine course, and is wonderful. But, since no textbook can ever be complete, I'd suggest the recipient implement the Zraly wine course with Burton Anderson's "Vino" to understand the importance of Italian wines and the modern role of Italian wine makers.

In any event, Zraly's book is lively beginning for a new wine aficionado.

"THE 1986 GREAT AMERICAN DATEBOOK," photography by Gale Gleason, introduction by Richard Lavin, Prince Street Edi-

tions, New York, \$11.95.

This book that takes you on a yearlong armchair tour — in color — to 52 of the country's best vineyards. Descriptive material and fullcolor label reproductions highlight each page. And that's not all. Lavin's introduction and supplementary information provide a great introduction to American wines.

"CONDIMENTS: THE ART OF BUYING, MAKING AND USING MUSTARDS, OILS VINEGARS, CHUTNEYS, RELISHES, SAUCES, SAVORY JELLIES AND MORE," by Kathy Gunst, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, \$17.95.

Gunst, a graduate of the prestigious London Cordon Bleu School of Cooking, went on to become culinary editor for Food & Wine magazine.

"Condiments" is a book no kitchen library should be without. It's a book for each one of us who enjoys good-tasting food and is downright indispensable for checking recommended brands. Gunst's ideas for using condiments, cooking with them and creating one's own jazzy-tasting condiments are made-to-order for men and women who like to do their own thing, cookingwise.

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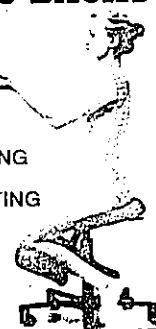
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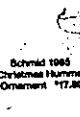
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