

Dinner party ideas top food writer's book

Betty Rosbottom's *Cooking School Cookbook*; Workman Publishing, N.Y., 1987, paperback \$10.95.

You know that old saying, "Don't judge a book by its cover?" Well, in the cookbook reviewing business it's taken literally.

For instance, "Betty Rosbottom's *Cooking School Cookbook*" is not quite what I expected, based on the title. Traditionally, a cooking school cookbook is a definitive work filled with lots of food photos, illustrations, often organized into a series of lessons.

Although Rosbottom's book contains more than 250 recipes, only a few of them deal with the basics, such as stock, mayonnaise, pasta and pastry dough.

Illustrations throughout the book are very nicely done but accent recipes, rather than demonstrate a technique. Chapters in the book are

organized according to the order in which the foods would be served, such as Great Beginnings, Main Events, Aides and Grand Finales.

IT WAS in the dessert section where I found one of the most creative recipes in the book: spiced chocolate torte wrapped in chocolate ribbons.

Unlike other recipes in the book, this one is four pages long and takes several hours to complete. You may recall that a few years ago it was featured on the cover of *Bon Appetit* magazine.

Some of the other dishes in the book are based on a classic idea, such as Paella Salad or Suzanne's English Farmhouse Tart, and presented in unusual and innovative ways. Many of the recipes may be made ahead, and they frequently include accompaniments, variations or marketing tips in the sidebars.

Rosbottom is director of La Belle

Pomme Cooking School in Columbus, Ohio, and contributing writer to *Bon Appetit* magazine, as well as columnist for the *Columbus Dispatch* and the *Los Angeles Times* syndicate.

If you're looking for new ideas for your next dinner party, the book has lots to offer. If you're dreading, I'd recommend waiting, since few of the recipes appear to be low cal.

A novice cook shouldn't have too much trouble preparing most of the dishes. Recipes and techniques are explained well. For explanation of glossary terms such as whisk and fold, the beginner-cook will have to look elsewhere.

STIR-FRY OF ZUCCHINI, ONION AND SWEET RED PEPPERS
A favorite dish of many of my students, this is a beautiful and interesting accompaniment to serve with beef, chicken or lamb.

1 large onion
2 red bell peppers

4 small zucchini (about 2 pounds), ends trimmed
½ cup olive oil
1 teaspoon dried thyme
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
¾ cup grated imported Parmesan cheese

1. Cut the onion in half lengthwise. Then cut each half into ¼ inch slices.

2. Core the peppers, cut them in half lengthwise, and remove the seeds and membranes. Then cut into strips 3 inches long and ¼ inch wide.

3. Cut the zucchini in half lengthwise, then into strips 2 inches long and ¼ inch wide. Blanch the zucchini in boiling salted water to cover, only 1 to 2 minutes. Drain the zucchini in a colander and rinse under cold running water. Pat dry. (All the vegetables can be prepared several hours in advance; cover separately and refrigerate.)



cook's books

Geri Rinschler

4. To saute the vegetables, heat the oil in a wok or a large heavy skillet over medium high heat. When it is hot, add the onions and cook, stirring, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the red peppers and saute until softened, 3 to 4 minutes. Then add the zucchini and

loss just until heated through, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the thyme and stir well. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Place in a serving dish and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Serves 6

Try this spring salad

The following recipe is from an article "A Spring Dinner" in the May issue of *Gourmet* magazine.

STUFFED ARTICHOKE LEAVES

1 large artichoke
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 ½ tablespoons plain yogurt
1 tablespoon mayonnaise
2 teaspoons minced fresh basil leaves plus 28 additional small basil leaves for garnish
¾ ounce thinly sliced prosciutto, chopped fine (about 2 tablespoons)
2 hard-boiled large eggs, halved lengthwise and sliced thin crosswise
assorted olives as an accompaniment

In a saucepan just large enough to hold the artichoke bring 3 inches salted water with 1 tablespoon of the lemon juice to a boil, add the artichoke, stem discarded, and simmer it, covered, for 25-35 minutes, or until it is tender (test a leaf for doneness).

Refresh the artichoke in a bowl of ice and cold water and let it drain upside down for 10 minutes. Remove all the outer leaves, reserving them, and pull out the center leaves in one piece, discarding them. Remove the choke with a small spoon and chop fine the artichoke bottom.

In a bowl whisk together well the yogurt, the mayonnaise, and the remaining 1 tablespoon lemon juice; add the chopped artichoke bottom, the minced basil, the prosciutto, and salt and pepper to taste, and stir the mixture until it is combined well.

Put a slice of hard-boiled egg on each of the 28 largest leaves, mound about ¼ teaspoon of the filling on each slice, and garnish each mound with a basil leaf. Mound about ½ teaspoon of the remaining filling on each of the remaining leaves. Divide the stuffed garnished leaves among 4 small plates and mound some of the olives in the middle of each plate. Serve the remaining stuffed leaves on a small platter. Serves 4.

Use woodruff for May wine

Here are two easy recipes for making your own May wine. Both are excellent, but the second one is quicker to make, and far more potent.

MAY WINE

(an old German recipe)

Place a small bunch of dried, Sweet Woodruff, five or six sugar cubes, and two slices each of lemon and orange in the bottom of a quart jar.

Fill the jar with Rhine wine. Allow it to steep for three to five days, tasting it daily.

Strain off the lemon, orange, and woodruff when the desired flavor is obtained.

MAY WINE RECIPE NO. 2

(my own favorite)

¼ cup dried Sweet Woodruff
¼ cup brandied sugar
¼ cup brandy
1 bottle of dry, white wine
Fresh strawberries, if desired
Mix the woodruff, brandy and sugar together. Cover, and let stand overnight.
Then strain and squeeze out the liquid. Don't waste a drop. Add this liquid to the white wine. Serve chilled, and garnish with fresh strawberries.

NEVER-FAIL HONEY CAKE
(this is a richly flavored cake that assures success)

1 cup honey
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon
¼ cool, strong black coffee



mixture, alternating with the coffee. Stir in the nuts.

Beat the egg whites until stiff and fold into the batter. Butter and flour empty soup cans, using them as baking pans, and spoon in batter until each can is ¾ full.

Bake in a 350-degree oven, about 45 minutes, or until done, when tested.

Remove the cakes from the pans by opening the bottoms of the cans and pushing them out. These keep well in the refrigerator.

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