

Their food baskets are different

By Arlene Funk
A lot of people sell gourmet food baskets, but Karen Rosender and Ruth Weingarten's are a bit more unusual than most.

Their Farmington Hills-based firm, Parties in Paper, includes coordinated paper plates and napkins along with the munchies. And their baskets go far beyond the standard variety.

"There are an awful lot of basket people," Rosender said. "We're always looking for different containers. We use wicker and collapsible wire baskets, acrylic bowls and wire-coated silverware dispensers. Everything is reusable. If we use wicker, we try to find something a little unusual."

Rosender of Farmington Hills and Weingarten of West Bloomfield shared much in common when they teamed up three years ago. Both had gone to college to become teachers but had spent the last several years as full-time homemakers.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Karen Rosender of Parties in Paper shows off one of the special baskets that may be ordered. Collapsible wire basket contains mugs, candies, papergoods, chocolates and more.

a punch ladle and specialty food items. It sells for around \$30 plus tax.

The Supreme Salad Bowl, at \$40, includes four individual salad bowls, salad tongs, two unusual salad dressings (honey mustard and poppy seed), and a selection of paperware. It is shrink-wrapped in an 11-quart salad bowl.

The Coffee and Tea Party Basket, at around \$38, includes a choice of specialty coffees, herbal teas, hot chocolate or cider, along

"We started out with paper products — matching plates and napkins. Most people want food included, so that's how we got drawn into it."

— Karen Rosender

are delicious," Rosender said. These items may be ordered by calling 661-2934. Delivery, packaging and shipping are available at an extra charge.

Baskets can be tailor-made to the personality of the recipient and the budget of the sender. Rosender and Weingarten get many of their ideas from food-industry exhibitions.

"You try and personalize it," Rosender said. "We can do almost anything. If someone has an idea, we're willing to work with them."

The most popular selections, so far, have been the coffee and tea basket and the salad bowl, Rosender said.

While the firm has done a lot with individual gifts and bridal showers and weddings, they are finding growth in corporate gift-giving business. The partners now are looking into an "office party" gimmick that would include a variety of food items to be shared by a whole staff, rather than targeted to one person.

Grill 'sandwiches' include mozzarella

Following is a recipe on "Long-Life Mediterranean Cooking" from "Cooking Healthy" in the August issue of "Bon Appetit."

GRILLED EGGPLANT, RED BELL PEPPER AND MOZZARELLA "SANDWICHES"

Makes 8
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 garlic clove, minced
2 large red bell peppers
1 1-1/4-pound eggplant, trimmed, cut into 1/4 to 1/2-inch-thick slices
salt and freshly ground pepper
8 fresh basil leaves
8 thin slices part-skim mozzarella cheese

Grill or broil bell peppers until blistered and blackened on all sides, turning occasionally. Wrap in paper bag and let stand 10 minutes to steam. Peel and seed. Rinse if necessary; pat dry. Quarter peppers lengthwise. Set aside.

Lightly brush eggplant slices with garlic oil. Grill or broil until lightly browned, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer to platter, sprinkle with salt and freshly ground pepper.

Place 1 bell pepper quarter on each of 8 eggplant slices, trimming pepper to fit. Top each with basil leaf and cheese slice. Top with remaining eggplant slices. Grill or broil sandwiches until cheese begins to soften. Carefully turn and grill until cheese begins to melt. Sprinkle with pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Prepare barbecue grill or preheat broiler. Combine olive oil and garlic in small bowl; set aside.

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Absopure a leader in waters

The following supplements in information on bottled water published in the Aug. 22 edition of Taste.

By Mary Roderique
special writer

Bottled water is the fastest-growing segment of the beverage industry.

It has grown 15 percent for each of the last five years, and sales topped \$1.5 billion in 1987 alone.

The trend follows the American demand for less sugar, less salt and less alcohol in drinks.

Absopure, a leader in the industry, was founded in 1908 as an ice delivery company with an office and residential clientele in Detroit and environs. It shifted to bottled water and the company continued to expand.

"Today, it has manufacturing plants in Plymouth, Grand Rapids, Champagne, Ill., Chicago, St. Louis and Wisconsin. It sells its products to markets from Minneapolis to Washington, D.C., and has plans for expansion."

It produces natural spring water, which is used for cooking, as a mixer, and for making coffee or juice. Its steamed distilled water is often at the base of baby formulas. Industrial processing and contact lens cleaning.

Absopure's sparkling spring water comes in lemon/lime, peach, raspberry or natural flavors. Cap 10-1 flavored mineral water, comes in several flavors.

A new addition to the product line is crystallized water, a blend of spring and distilled water.

Currently, consumers drink 1.8 gallons of bottled water a year. By 1992, with the continued consumer concern for good health, consumption is expected to increase to 2.7 billion gallons.

Mushroom highlights this salad

Here's a recipe from an article called "Luncheon on the Veranda" in the August issue of Gourmet magazine.

MUSHROOM SALAD WITH RADISHES AND CHIVES
1/2 pound firm white mushrooms, stems trimmed (1/2 with the caps)
1/4 cup thinly sliced radish
1/4 cup plain yogurt
1 1/2 tsp. fresh lemon juice, or to taste
3 Tbsp. snipped fresh chives
freshly ground pepper to taste
12 Bibb lettuce or other small soft-leaved lettuce leaves, rinsed and spun dry

Place the mushrooms in this with a sharp knife and in a bowl toss them with the radish, the yogurt, the lemon juice, the chives, the pepper, and salt to taste. Arrange 3 lettuce leaves on each of 4 small plates and divide the mushroom salad among the plates. Serve 4 as a first course.

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