

taste buds

chef Larry Janes

Family shares recipes

How could I resist? When an advanced copy of "Mom and Pop Udo's Favorite Old Country Recipes From Eastern Europe" (Copyright 1990 by Rita Udo, \$11.95) crossed my desk, I couldn't wait to get a review from a lady who still wears babushkas and housecoats, my momma.

Granted, momma doesn't herald right from the old country as do Mom and Pop Udo, but there's little doubt that she knows her Holubkis from her Haggmas. (For the uninitiated, that's stuffed cabbage from onions.)

But before I get to momma's comments, a little background on the Udo's and how this book came to fruition.

The book was written by Rita Udo, oldest daughter and one of three Udo's who were post-war immigrants from Ukraine and Hungary. Mom and Pop Udo came to America like other immigrants with hopes of building their dreams and lives in the land of opportunity and freedom. They now live in Canton Township.

The book began as a labor of love for family members when Rita Udo, the author decided to compile the elder Udo's favorite recipes as a family legacy. Mom's recipes, coupled with Pop's stories, originated from a time when people fought and struggled for their lives and freedom. At a time when folks like the Udo's did not have much to share, sharing a meal prepared with love and care was indeed a joyous occasion.

One thing led to another and before long, orders were coming in from neighbors and family friends. Now in its second printing, it's very evident the recipes are nothing short of "cooking from the heart."

Not knowing the difference between palacintas and paprikash, I knew that there is only one person who would offer constructive criticism while enjoying the opportunity to "cook from the heart." So armed with three grocery bags stuffed with picnic hams, kielbasas, pork butts and potatoes, I spent an enjoyable afternoon and evening with the other woman in my life, my momma, and a few Budweisers.

By the way, dad was there too, but like momma says: "Your father will eat anything I put in front of him — and like it," so I didn't expect much in criticism from my family patriarch.

First off, momma commented on the style of the book, ring bound in heavy paper stock with the picture of mom and pop on the front holding a casserole.

"Looks like it was made with the homemaker in mind," was her first comment. She definitely liked the fact that this cookbook could be opened flat and not held down with a can of peas like most others.

The table of contents had momma commenting on the "hominess" of the recipes. It was evident these recipes were "basic fare" that used everyday items in nothing but their simplest ways. Momma questioned the need for a recipe for "picnic ham" that utilized just one ingredient, a picnic ham.

The cooking directions were less than three lines yet the recipe took all of page nine. Momma said it would have been nice to see a recipe for pierogi on the rest of the page.

When it came time to cook, we prepared the chicken paprikash, pork roast and potatoes, mashed potato soup, scalloped potatoes and the angel wings.

All of the recipes met with the approval of the cook and her main taste tester, especially with the mashed potato soup that momma said would be included in her shoe box file. For momma to request a recipe is the ultimate accolade.

The book is readily available in its second printing at Kitchen Glamour, Borders, Waldenbooks and the Little Professor book stores.

See recipes inside.

Flavorful fiesta



JIM JAGOFF/LD staff photographer

Patricia Villarruel of Livonia prepared this platter of hearty South American food centered around rice, a fried egg, pork and kidney beans.

CULTURES BLEND

IN MELTING POT

By Ariane Funke
special writer



Patricia Villarruel of Livonia has a busy, fulfilling life as a wife, mother and volunteer.

But she is determined to keep her ties to her native Colombia, where she spent her first six years before her family moved to the United States.

Villarruel recalls the warm, sunny climate of Bogota, Colombia's capital, and hearty meals centered around rice and beans, tasty meat turnovers called tamales, and cheese filled cornmeal dumplings. Her favorite beverage was rich, cinnamon-laced hot chocolate.

"IT'S a source of my own identity," said 32-year-old Villarruel, who has a 7-year-old son and a daughter, 5.

"I'm proud to pass that along to my children," she said. Maria Castro, a Livonia pharmacist, was born in Peru, near the Pacific Ocean, where fresh seafood is plentiful.

Castro is especially fond of the popular South American dish called ceviche. It consists of chunks of raw seafood marinated in lime juice and spices.

"It has to be fresh fish," said Castro, 54. "I tried to do it once with frozen, and it was awful."

South American cuisine reflects the cultural melting pot of the region, according to Peruvian-born Felipe Rojas-Lombardi. He is a restaurateur in New York and author of "The Art of South American Cooking." HarperCollins Publishers (\$25 hardcover; \$12.95 paperback).

THE NATIVE Indian peoples of South America cultivated the potato, tomato, chili pepper and corn, so important to local diet. Later arrivals from Spain, Portugal, Africa and Italy also left their culinary marks.

"Many countries use the same staples, but they are prepared differently - with different spices."

— Patricia Villarruel



"The food preferences are according to the region," Castro said.

Last fall, Jim and Mary Lark, proprietors of the Lark restaurant in West Bloomfield, showcased the Brazilian barbecue cooking style.

"They are a lot of fun," said Jim Lark, who visited Brazil several years ago. "Different barbecued meats are served on a sword."

The special meal, served on two nights, included two kinds of sausage, shrimp, beef tenderloin, spareribs and boneless pork loin. The meats were prepared on a barbecue grill.

Rounding out the meal were rice, black beans and coconut ice cream.

South American wines also are gaining notice. Darlene Levinson, a culinary arts instructor at Oakland Community College, sampled Chilean wines at a recent wine-tasting.

In Colombia, vegetables and fruit were purchased daily at a local farmers' market, said Villarruel.

"EVERYTHING was prepared fresh," she said.

Dietary staples include yuca — a root vegetable similar to potato — rice and beans.

Several varieties of potato are featured in soups and side dishes. Plantain, a fruit which resembles banana, is sliced and fried or baked.

Arepas are a dumpling made of corn flour, filled with mozzarella cheese and fried on a griddle.

Villarruel, a former substance abuse counselor, notes that Latino foods aren't identical. For example, her husband Art, an engineer, was born in Mexico. Many of the foods he was accustomed to were different.

"Many countries use the same staples, but they are prepared differently — with different spices," Villarruel said.

Villarruel's recipe for papas chorreadas consists of small red potatoes, steamed, then covered with a cheese sauce, enriched with sautéed chopped green onions and tomatoes.

She makes her special hot chocolate by cooking milk until it is foamy, then adding chunks of cinnamon-infused chocolate and whisking until blended.

Maria Castro and her husband, Pedro, came to the United States in the 1960s. Pedro is employed by Sears Roebuck in Livonia. The couple, who have three grown children, visit Peru every two years to see relatives.

According to Castro, almost any kind of fresh, high-quality seafood can be used for ceviche. The fish is marinated in fresh lime juice, enlivened with onion, hot pepper and spices.

Both Castro and Villarruel belong to a social and philanthropic group called Latinas de Livonia. The group has members originally from Mexico, Colombia, Spain, Bolivia, Argentina and Peru. Dues are \$25 per year per family. For more information, write: Latino de Livonia, P.O. Box 530292, Livonia, Mich. 48153.

See recipes inside.

Flavorful Chilean wines a good value

1991 Santa Rita 120 Chardonnay (left) and 1988 Santa Rita 120 Cabernet Sauvignon are two of the Chilean wine selections of the week. Wine courtesy of Cloverleaf Market in Southfield.

JERRY ZOLYNSKY
staff photographer



By Eleanor and Ray Heald
special writer

Wine consumers benefit from competition among world wine producers. This is true especially for the medium-to-low-priced segment of the American wine market.

New to the fray are the wines of South America, principally Chile. Quality Chilean wines that have been breaking sales records in other parts of the country are barely recognized in Michigan.

Chile, the long narrow country on the Pacific coast of South America, is sandwiched between the ocean on the west and the Andes Mountains on the east. Chile has 270,000 acres of vineyards, 90,000 of which grow grapes for premium wines.

THE BEST regions for winegrowing are 150 miles south of Chile's capital Santiago. Regions to look for on a wine label are Aconcagua River, Malpo River Valley, Lontue, Maule and Curico. Recent improvements in the vines of

Chile can be explained, in part, by a surge of foreign viticultural investment. The owners of Bordeaux's Chateau Lafite Rothschild, California's Franciscan Vineyards and Spain's Bodega Torres have each made sizeable efforts to move Chile's wines beyond value-priced, easy drinking varietals. With this interest and investment, there's a lot more right than wrong in wines from Chile.

Chile's soil is good; the water from the Andes is pure; the heat is never excessive; and due to the exceptional climate, vine disease is almost non-existent. However, low production cost is the principal reason for foreign investment.

PREMIUM VINEYARDS, which may reach \$60,000 per acre in California and up to one million dollars per acre in France, cost \$4,000 per acre in Chile. The labor force is experienced and less expensive. Phylloxera, a vine louse that devastated the vineyards of Europe in the late nineteenth century is absent. This

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WINE SELECTIONS of the week

CHILEAN SAUVIGNON BLANCS

- 91 Santa Rita 120 Sauvignon Blanc \$6
- 90 Undurraga Sauvignon Blanc \$6
- 91 Catena Sauvignon Blanc \$7

CHARDONNAY

- 91 Santa Rita 120 Chardonnay \$6
- 90 Santa Rita Medalla Real Chardonnay \$11.75

CHILEAN RED WINES

- 89 Miguel Torres Cabernet Sauvignon \$6.75
- 85 Concha y Toro Cabernet Sauvignon \$6.50

FLAVORFUL REDS

- 88 Covino Macul Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon \$10
- 89 Santa Monica Cabernet Sauvignon \$7.40
- 82 Santa Carolina Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon \$10
- 88 Santa Rita 120 Cabernet Sauvignon \$6
- 89 Santa Rita 120 Merlot \$6
- 88 Santa Rita Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon \$9.50
- 88 Santa Rita Medalla Real Cabernet Sauvignon \$11.75
- 86 Concha y Toro Cabernet Merlot \$4.75
- 88 Undurraga Cabernet Sauvignon \$6