TASTE

TASTE BUDS



Make desserts tipsy with splash of liqueur

henever I stand before the dazzling dis-play of liqueurs at some ambitious wine shop I visualize what Holly Golightly was feeling while eying the windows at Tiffany's. While visions of rubies and emeralds dance in Holly's band my daries are semowhat more Holly's head, my desires are somewhat more

While visions of rubies and emeralds dance in Holly's head, my desires are somewhat more down to earth.

I own a bottle of Grand Marnier, cheap ersatz Amaretto, and a miniature bottle of ginger brandy passed along as a sample at a food show. But, the thought of a tawny port, a fruity Framboise or an obsecnedy aromatic anisette are as unique as diamonds. For me, the incredible variety of jewel-like liqueurs, with their range of flavors from fruit to nuts, seeds, herbs, barks and flowers, is a constant temptation. Just a few silky drops of one of these elixirs can perfect an already fine dessert and vastly improve one with less impressive credentials.

Take pies, for example. Our thoughts of them are generally wrapped in clouds of nostalgia for the heart-warming pies of memory that sat cooling on the window sill. Well, those same sound and sturdy pies can be made quite different, even exotic, by a simple touch of flqueur.

Trust me, Momma might be shocked by the suggestion of sullying the purity of her famed peach pie with a shot of Southern Comfort—even she might enjoy the result!

Flavor boosters

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The complex composition of most liqueurs gives them flavor that is both unique and clusive. When liqueurs are anded to food, interesting chemical reactions take place. Gently heat a sugar or an achool and it's flavors intensify dramatically. Add a few drops to a slowly baked pie or custard and they can mystify even those with most discerning palates.

History tells us that the first liqueurs can be traced back to the Middle Ages when concoctions were developed by althemists to cure baldness, madness, measles and lure potential customers with the eternally seductive promise of 'new youth and vigor.' By the early 19th century cordials had been considerably refined. Some of the creators of new liqueurs seemed to have soared a little recklessly on the wings of fancy when naming their handiwarks.

After dinner sippers during the Belle Epoche could choose liqueurs called Illicit Love, Liqueur Des Belles, Maiden's Cream or even Cream Yvette. It was an era of excesses.

As mentioned before, Momma was never one to "spike" her pies or pastries. The closest thing we had to alcohol in the house was an occasional six pack. On the other hand, Aunt Mathildo would never be caught without her trademark flask brimming with brandy.

Occasionally, a homemade apple pie spiked with some applejack would appear at a family gathering, but it was rare to see a spiked watermelon.

Little splashes

Bananas Foster got me thinking about what a shot of Irish Mist could do to a grasshopper pie. Better yet, wouldn't a splash of Grand Marnier elevate a meringue to new heights over a coconut cream pie? Two tablespoons of Kahlua pressed into a graham cracker crust underneath New York Style Cheesecake and a shot of Cream de Cocoa in the batter would be just dandy on a sultry summer's weekend.

For a lighter touch, a few drops of a fruit liqueur into some whipped cream or non dairy whipped topping adds taste and improves the aroma.

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When using liqueurs for cooking, remember that you need only a small amount to infuse the dish with its essence. Use just enough to enhance, not overwhelm the balance of flavors. Also, should you worry about serving one of these desserts to children or an elderly auntie, remember that when liqueurs are heated they leave only flavor behind. It would be most considerate to inform anyone whom you might suspect might not be able to tolerate alcohol. Bo when it comes to making dessert, whether for a special occasion or not, consider a dessert that's a little raye, a little like planorous, a little like Aunt Till – consider a tipsy plo.

See Larry Janes' family-tested recipes inside, Chef Larry is a free-lance writer for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave a voice mail message for him dial (319) 95-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then mailbox number 1888.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week.

E The Apolio Wine Bar and Trattoria is Michigan wine industry's newest innovation.

Turkey on the grill.

ulinary lassics

Muer library to catalog success

BY KEELY WYGONIK • STAFF WHITER



Memory lives on: "The Simply Great Cookbook," features some of the best-loved recipes from the Chuck Muer restaurants.

1995 OCC CULINARY CLASSIC SEMINAR PRESENTERS

Robert Plantenberg - Robert Mondayi Winery & Viction Winery, Hapa Valley, California Sensory wine tasting, concepts of balance, so and origin of wines.

Jimmy Schmidt - The Rattlesnake Club

Master Chaf Miles Cihelka - The Golden Mushroom Will Game Cooking & Handling

Lieda Chosney Briffith & Frod Griffith
Asthers of the James Board 1995 meanst visusing coalbook
Onion: Onion: Onion: A Good Onion is Worth the Team
Here to handle onions and tips from the great and mear great.

Cheries Davis - Robert Denton & Company, Ltd., El Tesoro de Den Felipe Tequils - Hess fan, but there something. A sampling of the mest obgant & smooth Tequils.

Madeline Triffon - Master Sommeller, Unique Restaurant Corporation certh templing of treasures of the vine.

Robert Cassobell - Robert Mondayl Winery & Viction Wisory, Napa Valloy, California to by the numbers. A simple way to food of wine harmony

Lorraine Platman - Sweet Lorraine's Hold the tofu, pass the chatney: "New World Cuisine," or if it tastes good - how could it be good for you?

Pater Lorse - Fermariy of Opus One Opening a new restaurant "Alternative Directions." Anyone can buy a couldnot. Tale the next step to the unsupped creative world between your ears: The art of original thinking

Sam Awáish - Remy Martin Cognac History & technique of Cognac production with a compensative testing.

Maggle Oster

Author Hat Vincers: Buring mating and flavoring easy-to-make vineger.

Viscont Secutore & Luciano Detaignore Tyriotá taportore, lec. Your Super Boul Party will never be the same Throwing a party with Italian Food & Wine.



Making dessert: Susan Muer (left) works in the OCC kitchen with culinary arts student Terri Elwell to test a recipe for one of the Culinary Classic desserts.

ith his dazzling bow tics, bright auspenders, big smile, and warm personality, Chuck Muer made comfortable at his restaurants. The relationship to your guests not walking away with anything tangible. It's not like buying a car or a piece of clothing. You take nothing home but the sense of satisfaction." Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills hopes to study and learn from Muer's successes and challenges by establishing a culinary resource library in his name on its Orchard Ridge campus.

cesses and challenges by establishing a culinary resource library in his name on its Orchard Ridge campus.

Two very special events will kick-off OCC's commitment to the library "Prelude to a Classic, a benefit strolling dinner on Tuesday, June 20; and Culinary Classic, a daylong event Saturday, June 20; and Culinary Classic, a daylong event Saturday, June 20; seminars by 12 expects including Master Sommelier Madeline Trifion, newly appointed director of beverages for the Unique Restaurant Corp. Triffon, formerly of the Rattlesnake Club, is one of 26 Certified Master Sommeliers worldwide.

"This is a one-of-a-kind event," said OCC Chef Instructor Susan Baier. "We are enhancing our guest's culinary knowledge with our wine and food pairings at the Grand Tasting, as well as during the seminars."

All proceeds will benefit the OCC culinary program, Chuck Muer Resource Library.

"The vision for the Chuck Muer Culinary Resource Library is ultimately to bring every conceivable learning tool to its visitors, from books and videos to computers and cockbooks," said Baier. "It will provide research and reference materials for students and professionals."

Baler, who is co-chairing the event with OCC faculty members Darlene Levinson and Chef Kevin Enright approached Susan Muer about the project, on behalf of the cellege in January.

Not only did Susan Muer give OCC permission to name its culinary resource library after her father, she volunteered to help, "If I have my name on it, I'll do my best to see that it's a success," she said. For the past three months she's

been spending her Friday mornings at OCC helping the committee get ready for the Culinary Classic and Prelude. She's already thinking of ways to make next year's event even better.

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Like her father, Muer got to be successful by
working hard.
"The guest is number one, especially in the
restaurant business," said Muer. "My father
could read people, and always emphasized that
we were not above anyone."

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As director of marketing and secretary for the C.A. Muer Corp., which is celebrating its 30th anniversary, Muer is intimately involved with the 20 Chuck Meur restaurants in five states as well as five restaurant affiliates. She has held positions in the corporation ranging from hostess and server to bartender and pastry chcf.

"I've done alto of work to get where I am," said Muer who carned a bachelor's degree from John Carroll University in Cleveland, and attended the Culinary Institute of America in New York." I will wash dishes if I see a problem."

The vision for the library, which has yet to be built, is to bring overy conceivable learning tool to its visitors from books and videos to computers and cookbooks.

As a tribute to her father, Susan Muer called

and cookbooks.

As a tribute to her father, Susan Muer called
300 of his friends and asked them to share
recipes and memorics of her father who was lost
at ea with his wife, Betty, and two friends in the
"Storm of the Century" that swept Florida, the
Eastern scaboard, and the Caribbean in March of

1993.

The Simply Great II Cookbook," like the "Simply Great Cookbook," published in 1992, will contain many of Muer's signature dish recipes, and some new ones too. The book will sell for \$19.95 and be available for sale at the Culinary Classic and Muer restaurants.

and Muer restaurants.

"It will be a spiral book so can open it on the kitchen counter," said Susan who tested all of the recipes in her kitchen to make sure they work. The project took nearly two years.

"Writing this book helped me heal," said Susan. "My parents taught me to be strong and not give in. From my mother I learned good taste. She put a lot of effort into designing the interior of Big Fish in Dearborn."

OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE CULINARY CLASSIC/PRELUDE TO THE CLASSIC

"A Piedos to the Future"

Strolling dinner 6-11 p.m. Tuesday, June 20

Culinary Classic

9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturder, June 24.
Tichite: \$50 Perhade, \$15 Classis. Private and Classis comb \$150; Classis Grand Tasting 1-3 p.m. June 24, \$45.
Call Tichmuster (RNV 45-6566 or RNV 41-4540.
Both revens will be st Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus. Orchard Late Road at 1-696. Formington Hills.

- Grand Tasting Participants

Schulin's Grill - Chef Jim Bernet & Chef Jishad Assist fl. Gerne Ritterans - Chef Jasch Beste Diemond Jim Besty's - Chef Mary Bendy File Steve Restaurus - Chef Fore More Palme Grille/Maken Corp. - Chef Stevie Restaurus - Chef Fore More Palme Grille/Maken Corp. - Chef Stevie Restaurus - Chef Fore More Palme Grille/Maken Corp. - Chef Stevie Restaurus - Chef Fore More Restaurus - Chef Fore Restaurus - Chef Fore Chef Cheric Racherin Michigan Steve Collyger - Chef Cheir Dewort Too Chee - Chef Grille Grille - Chef Cheric Racherin Michigan Steve - Chef Fore Bland Peles Tressures Greier - Gory Penar - Chef Michigan Greier - Greier - Bender Chef Tressure Barberin - Group Penar - Chef Mark Rationaus - Chef Jame Balte de Restaurus - Chef Fore Larresine - Chef Larresine Palames Saxion Islams In - Chef Jame Balte de Routing Chef - Chef Palmet Balte - Chef Fore Her Bender - Chef Balte - Chef Fore Bender - Chef Balte - Chef Fore Bender - Chef Balte - Chef Robert Value Edwin Chempty - Chef Elwin Greenwald Alexander & Hurning Mass.

Rediscover great German White Wines

Paired with fresh broiled fish, crisp, rofreshing, fruity German white winsa are excellent. So it was appropriate that Chuck Muor's River Crab in St. Clair heated an all-star lineup of German wine producers recently, "German wines have a refreshing acidity for cleansing the palate," remarked Leo Biol, president of Chuck Muor Restaurants. "I think a good German Riesling pairs particularly well with king crab, which tends to be a bit briny, "Another benefit of German wines is low alcohol. Most are loses than 12 percent, with many at nins to 10 percent."

Biel recalls that 10-15 years ago the Muer

restaurats sold 27,000 cases of German wines annually. Today, it's about on-ninth that quantity. German wines are fruity with the same crisp character as well-made California sauvignon blane, but consumers fail to recognize this."

Since 1989, we've had a string of very good to excellent vintages in Germany, said Friedel Bohn, owner of Weingut (winery) Anton Balbach. "The wines of 1993 are balanced, fresh and fruity."

Gunter Thies of Schloss Schonborn suggests, "Modern American wine drinkers prefer young,

Sec WINES, 2B



Toast of Germany: Some of Germany's best Riesling wines come from steep vineyards along the Mosel River.