FOR THE LOVE OF FOOD



Pure and honest is the way food ought to be

It was 1971, and I just arrived in Tueson, Ariz. I didn't have much money and knew I better get a job and quick. I'd been traveling around the country for a couple of years, searching for myself and what to do with my life. I took odd jobs here and there, and the work that best suited me seemed to be cooking.

Tueson in the early 1970s was known as "the conter of the universe, known as "the conter of the universe,

These in the early 1870s was These in the early 1870s was it seemed as if everybody who ever had a radical thought or was practi-ing some new kind of spirituality was living there. The job market was living there. The job market was tight. Wandering around downtown, I found myself lunching on beans and rice at a vegetarian "health food place called The Aquerian Farmany Before I knew it, I had secured the job of dishwasher, and was earning 30 cents an hour. It didn't take too long until I was running the kitchen. That job was the start of a journey that would take me careening head first and eyes wide open into the profes-sion I am in today.

Revelation

sion I am in today.

Revelation

This was an amazing time in my life, all of a sudden I found myself being exposed to so many new types of cooking. Vegetarianism was the thing. Southwestern cooking had not even been discovered yet, and we were experimenting with chilles, tamales and true Mexican cuisine. There was a large macrobials community, and the exposure to the Japanese with of life by means of cuisine in its very simple form, was a revealation to me. I learned about bok choy, miso and searched. But more important, I was developing my philosophy as a chef. I learned that for me, food had to be pure and honest, whether it was a simple dish of rice or an olaborate feast of many courses. The food must speak for itself.

Health Frood' was a new lad, and I seemed to be at the opie-center of proposed to the control of t

getting easier all the time. However, in our pursuit of health, it is wise to know what we are eating, and to be sure that we as tauth the labels on these so called 'healthy foods' to learn what is going into our bodies.

Eating healthy has a totally different meaning to me today than it did 25 years ago. Then I was a strict vegetarian and ate almost no fat, no protein or dairy. Quite an extreme. Now, I'm eating most everything, but I eat in moderation, and I am enjoying food so much more. What could be better than a soothing batch of rustic polenta with fresh spring vegetables? Sure, the polenta has butter and cheese, but that is the way it is supposed to be prepared. I don't eat it everyday, and make sure those fats are balanced with plenty of fresh fruit and raw vegetables.

World of choices

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world or choices
The food world has certainly changed a lot since the 1970s. What we found unique, unusual or exotic 20 years ago is common today. Who ever heard of Italian Balsamie vinegar 20 years ago? Or Jerusalom artichokes, or even tofa? Just look at the variety of mushrooms, from the common button to shittake, oyster, remini and portabella, not to mention morels and chanterilles.

chanterelles. Today, our markets are filled with

Please see HONEST, B2

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Tasto next week: E Recipe to Share

on the web; http://observer.ccontric.com Senitay, April 19, 1998 1995

STICK TO BASICS FOR SWEET SUCCESS

Fresh from the oven cookies and the aroma of baking bread make a house a home. Still, as much as we like the idea of baking, we're often frustrated into giving it up altogeth-

er.

In a recent survey commissioned
by Land O'Lakes, one out of three
Americans who bake said they
strugglo with an least some basic elements of the process.

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Thirty-six percent and their biggest challenge is "knowing when the baked goods are humbed." Imruy-two percent said "finding theingredients and equipment needed," was a struggle. Other baking challenges included "getting the final product to meet their expectations," "measuring ingredients," and "understanding recipe instructions." General Mills took some of the mystery and aggravation out of home baking with the Betty Crocker "Ginger Cake Mix" introduced in 1947 after four years of laboratory research. Instend of gathering and measuring a lot of ingredients, and following detailed directions, all you had to do is add one cup of water and mix. "Ginger Cake" was an instant hit followed by "Party Cake and Devil's Food mixes in 1949. Cake mixes are a delicious option for those of us who want home baked goods in a "jiff," but knowing the basics, such as to preheat your oven 10 to 16 minutes before baking, helps guarantee success.

oven 10 to 15 minutes before baking, helps guarantee successingham, an Lois Thieleke of Birmingham, an Extension Homo Economist for the Michligan State University Exten-sion — Oakland County, fields ques-tions from anxious home bakers

sion — Oakland County, fields questions from anxious home bakers every day.

"If they have doubled a recipe they want to know if they should double the baking time too," asid Thieleke. That's not how it works. Say you're baking a cake in an Ginch pan. You want to double the recipe, and bake it in a 9-b-13-inch pan. I cannot automatically say you need 10 to 16 minutes more. It depends on how thick the batter is. Test the cake at the normal time and see where you are. If it's not done, continue baking, but test it overy five minutes or so. Then write down the time so the next time you double the recipe you'll know how long to bake it."

The same is true if you half or quarter a recipe. You have to continually test it, "said Thieleke.

Besides not being sure when a baked product is done, people are afraid to experiment with ingredicturs.
"People will call and say. The

arraid to experiment of the cents.

"People will call and sny, 'The recipe calls for buttermilk, but I don't want to go out and buy a quart of buttermilk.' You can substitute the country of sour cream, but sour milk, yogurt or sour cream, but they're afraid to try it on their own. Buttermilk has a little more butter



Sweet options: Buttery Sour Cream Snack Cake is a rich easy cake that can be made with many different flavors. In the spring, top it with a bevy of colorful berries.

flavor, but in a cake or quick bread it won't make a difference.

We have had calls from people who say, 'I have pecans, but the recipe calls for walnuts. Can I use pecans? Of course you can, in fact, you can leave them out altogether.'

Weather can affect how a baked product turns out too. 'You can leave them out altogether.'

Weather can affect how a baked product turns out too. 'You can never make divinity on a cloudy day. It has to be sunny and clear, my mother and grandmother used to say. Clouds usually bring rain, and humidity. That changes the product. It's not as fluify."

That's true for meringue and anngel food cake, which are also made with egg whites. If you're making a lemon meringue pie, don't have corn on the stove boiling. The steam will change the make-up of the meringue.

"Sometimes the biggest problem is a recipe doean't go into detnil. If you've never made an angel food cake you don't know that you have

Baker's Dozen Keep on hand these 13 Ingredients found in most baking recipes

- Baking Powder A leavener con taining a combination of baking soda
- unu ocid.

 Bahting Soda A leavener. When combined with an acid, such as butternilk or sour cream, it causes baked goods to rise.
- Brown Buger Available in light or dark, the taste and color comes
- Butter Adds flavor, color and tex-ture. Use saited or unsalted sticks; avoid using reduced fat products, which have a higher moisture content then butter.
- than butter.

 Choco-Faco Adds rich, sweet flovor. A cilibble in a vortety of forms and
 flavors such as: semi-sweet, white or
 milk chocolate, baking chocolate,
 unsweetened, etc.

- unswested, some Ericculati, unswested, etc. III Eggs. Desides adding color and flovor, eggs hold lagredients together. Use tage eggs in ecipes.

 Flour Glives baked goods structure. The most common used is all-purpose bleached or unbleached).

 MIIIN Activates learning agents and provides moisture, color and flovor. Use regular (whole). 2 percent, 12 percent, or skim.

 Outmost Gives baked goods texture and flovor. Use cid-sablened rolled eats or quick-cooking outs for baking.
- baking.

 Powdered Sugar Also called
- romewrus Sugar Also called confectioners sugar, powdered sugar is finely crushed white sugar used in frostings and icing.

 Sugar Known as granulated or white sugar. It is the most common sweetness used in booking.

 Soilt Use regular table salt or kosher salt.

■ Vanilla Extract - Adds flavor. Opt for pure, not imitation.

counter, "It's over 20 years old," he said. "My daughters use it."

Lots of us want to get hack to hasics, especially in the kitchen. "Each year, we receive countless calls from consumers expressing a desire to bake, but they often struggle with many of the primary skills," said Lydia Botham, director of the Land O'Lakes Test kitchen & Consumer Affairs. "After all, the true rewards of baking are the satisfaction of creating something with your own two hands and the gratitude you receive from sharing your creations with others."

To order the "Baking Basics" brochure, call (800) 782-9602; or send your name and address to LAND O LAKES Butter "Baking Basics," P.O. Box 26341, Shoreview, MN 55126-0341.

Check out the Land O'Lakes web site at http://www.landolakes.com

See recipes inside.

Italian wines score smashing volleys

Wine Picks

■ Pict of the pack: 1995 Atlas Peak Sangioveso Reserve \$25 is the most stylish 1995 sangioveso from California

from Cailfornia.

If the can be called the c lowing represent terrif-values: 1996 Fox

Family tradition: Brolio Castle in Tuscany is home to the oldest family-controlled winery in the world.

le values: 1996 Fox in the world
Mountain Sawignon
Blanc \$10: 1997 Geyser
Peak Sawignon Blanc \$8.50; 1996 Estancia Pl
Fume Blanc \$12: 1999 Qulvira Sawignon Blanc
1996 Lambert Bridge Sawignon Blanc \$13.

auno Lamoert Bridge Savvignon Biane \$13.

Man assatzment of Ravorbia sei: 1995 Foppleno Pelitte Sirah \$14; 1995 Inon Herre Pinot Noir \$76; and 1995 Geyser Peak Livrandol \$15.

MAI Brees Cabe. 1995 Estancia Cobornet Servignon \$15; 1996 Geyser Peak Cebernet Savvignon \$15; 1996 Hers Collection Cobornet Savvignon, Napa Yelley \$35; and 1994 Attas Peak Cobernet Savvignon, Consenso Vineyerds \$24.

For more than 850 years, the name Brolic (the oldest family-controlled winery in the world) has been associated with Tuscan wines. In 1141, the Ricasoli family settled in the region of Gaiole in Chianti, near Siena, Italy, on a bill known as "brolio." They planted vineyards and built their fortified residence, now called Brolio Cantle, parts of which still stand oday.

AT FLEANOR HILL Brolio Cantle, parts of which still stand today.

Without going into detail about unfortunate circumstances some family-owned companies get themselves into, suffice it to say that through the late 1970s and all of the 1980s Brolio wines suffered a quality decline. That ended in 1993 when Francesco Riessoli assumed the presidency of the Brolio Estate Vineyards. Francesco, born in Brolio Castle in 1985, developed innovative viticultural techniques for the Brolio vineyards and became the high-tech cutodian of the estate's vineyards in the Chianti Classics zone.

Todays Regile wines showcase the caring hand

Chunut Classics zone.
Today's Brello wines showcase the caring hand and wine passion of Francesco Ricasoli and his winemaker Carlo Ferrini. Brollo wines are back, regaining the reputation they once had!
The 1995 Torricella \$28 is a 100 percent barrel-

fermented Chardonnay that spent nearly seven months in new French oak. "New barrels are a

necessity for good Italian chardennay.

Francesco Ricasoli insisted. This wind with its ripe melon, honey and sound dollop of balanced oak proves his point.

Brolio 1995 Chianti Classice \$13 is.

Brolio 1095 Chianti Classico \$13 is an amazingly good value. Chock full of black cherry, dark plum, black raspherry and violet-aromas, it packs a fruit punch in the finish along with peppery anise and assorted spice notes. For more intensity of all clements and lots of vanilla-oakiness, try the 1994 Chinnti Classice Riserva \$18. Super Tuscan is the name given to powerful wines innovative departures from traditional chiantistyles. Brolio's super Super Tuscan is 100 percent sargiovese and named Casalterro. The 1995 is \$32 and worth every penny.

'In bigger, more complex wines, finesse is most important to me, Ricasoli said. 'I find it lacking in many wines.' It's not lacking in this benchmark!

Librandi family

Calabria is in Italy's peninsular "toe." There the Librandi family and Ciro wine are synonymous. Brothers Antonio and Nicodemo respect their ancestry while following the philosophy that good wines