



Dining Scene

Brentwood getting big hit of garlic

Garlicky guy: The restaurant empire owned by Santa Rosa chef **Guy Fieri**, of “Diners, Drive-ins and Dives” fame, is expanding. Fieri just opened a new **Johnny Garlic’s in Brentwood**. If you’ve been to the Johnnys in Dublin or San Jose, then you already know about Fieri’s penchant for eclectic flavor collisions — Sashimi Won Tacos, for example, and Cajun Chicken Fettuccine Alfredo — and the rotating menu of exotic game entrees, including alligator, wild boar and rattlesnake (which may or may not taste like chicken). They offer burgers, salads and other family-pleasing fare, too, of course. The new place is open from 4:30 p.m. to midnight Mondays through Thursdays, and 11:30 a.m. to midnight Fridays through Sundays at 2505 Sand Creek Road in the Streets of Brentwood shopping center. Details: www.johnnygarlics.com.

Creme de la creme: There’s a new personal shopper at Valley Fair in **Santa Clara**. But instead of scouring the mall for gifts, Michael Freeman travels the world to find the highest-quality chocolate creations. His **CocoaBella Chocolates**, which first opened on San Francisco’s Union Street in 2004, finally has expanded outside the city. This chic shop features lines of chocolates from 18 of the world’s finest chocolatiers, including the top names in Belgium, France, Italy and Switzerland. These artisans release spring and fall collections, just as fashion designers do, and their sophisticated sweets wing their way to the Bay Area on temperature-controlled flights. Look for such sublime bites as Thomas Haas’ Jamaican Rum Truffle, Michel Cluizel’s Champignon Bolet (a “mushroom” with a crunchy almond praline cap), Christopher Elbow’s Bananas Foster, and Maglio’s Date, Italian-grown dates stuffed with pistachio paste and almond cream. Details: Open daily on Level One, Valley Fair. 408-246-1633; www.cocobella.com.

Expansion mode: The owners of Half Moon Bay’s popular **Sam’s Chowder House** and ChowderMables have opened a second bricks-and-mortar version in **Palo Alto**, at the University Avenue and Emerson Street site that formerly housed Campo 185, Lavanda and, for many years, the Good Earth. Look for the signature chowder, along with lobster rolls, fresh fish entrees, and house-cured sardines and salmon carpaccio. 185 University Ave. 650-614-1177; www.samschowderhousepa.com.

Ike’s Sandwiches is now slicing Dutch crunch rolls in **downtown San Jose** for its sauce-enhanced combos with the wild names. Look for the best-selling Menage a Trois (chicken, BBQ sauce, honey mustard, honey, and three cheeses — cheddar, Swiss and pepper Jack), along with the Patrick Marleau, the Jaymee Sire(wich), the Steve Jobs and dozens more. Details: 75 E. Santa Clara St., near Second Street.

Tapas in Livermore: Longtime catering chef Eduardo Posada has just opened a new bricks-and-mortar restaurant in **Livermore**. Don’t be put off by the strip mall exterior — although if you need a tattoo, we hear there’s an ink parlor nearby. The cozy new **Posada** gives the Spanish small plates theme a Southwestern twist with tapas and small entrees such as tilapia ceviche (\$9) with a red chile jicama salad, barbecued duck and blue corn cakes (\$9), and short ribs with blackberry mole poblano (\$16), all paired with Livermore Valley wines. Open for lunch and dinner Tuesdays through Saturdays, and for brunch on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Details: 988 Murrieta Blvd., Livermore; www.posadacatering.com/restaurant.

Berkeley bistro: A while back, we mentioned that Jason Kwon, of Joshu-Ya fame, was working on a new project on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley. The fast-casual **Bleecker Street Bistro** just opened with a counter-service menu of classic American comfort food — buttermilk fried chicken, meatloaf sandwiches and fish tacos, as well as breakfast fare. Open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily at 2498 Telegraph Ave., just up the street from Joshu-Ya; www.bleeckerbistro.com.

Send Bay Area restaurant tips to food editor Jackie Burrell, jburrell@bayareanewsgroup.com, and South Bay details to Linda Zavoral, lzavoral@mercurynews.com.



MARK DUFRENE/STAFF

Homemade gifts are always special. When they include banana-chocolate chip bread or a jar of lemon curd, they’re delicious, too.

Santa’s bakery

With easy recipes, extra gifts are in the bag

By Gina Gotsill » Correspondent

I’ve made my list and checked it umpteen times. I think I’m finished shopping, but ... nope!

The holidays are known for unexpected invites, bonus guests and moments that call for an extra gift (or

two or four). The good news is I can shop for these last-minute gifts in one place — the grocery store — and whip up something at home that will warm both heart and belly.

When December rolls around each year, I start stocking my kitchen for those eleventh-hour gifts. That means picking up staples, such as flour, white and brown sugar, unsalted butter, walnuts and, of course, chocolate chips. Apricot jam is a must, too. As an avid jam-maker, I always have a dozen or more jars put up from the summer harvest, but the jam and jelly aisle at the grocery store offers some promising possibilities, too.

Eleventh-hour gifts need to be easy — recipes with a multitude of steps and exotic ingredients just add stress, and who needs that? And they all fall into three recipe groups: crowd pleasers, big batch and extra special.

Apricot Walnut Bars are my crowd pleaser; the buttery crust complements a cup of coffee or tea — or cold milk — and the apricot’s juicy sweetness reminds everyone of warmer days. I skip the walnuts when I’m cooking for nut-intolerant folks or small children, and the bars fly off the plate.

A batch of banana bread is perfect for those times when you need multiple gifts. Add chocolate chips and toasted, chopped walnuts to the bread for richness and texture. A mini-loaf pan does all the work. In a little more than an hour, one batch of banana batter yields four loaves of aromatic, delicious bread. (Keep a close eye on the breads when you use mini-loaf pans. They cook much

faster in these than in single pans.) Let the loaves cool, wrap them in foil, add a bow, and you’re done.

And when you want to give something extra special, stir a pot of lemon juice, eggs, sugar and unsalted butter over low heat until it thickens into luscious lemon curd. Pour the curd into small canning jars and keep them in the refrigerator until you’re ready to share. Then pack a jar in a basket with a store-bought scone mix and tea — and a tag that reminds the recipient to keep the curd refrigerated.

What’s not to love? This may be the eleventh hour, but that’s not a problem. With these recipes, that’s all the time you need.

For recipes, turn to Page 8

HOME PLATES

Coleslaw a favorite any time of year

Readers share their tips on how to best achieve crumble-free brownies



KIM BOATMAN

Most of us probably aren’t thinking about coleslaw this time of year. But requests know no season here at Home Plates.

Jerry Lasky wanted a recipe for coleslaw with oil and vinegar dressing from a Mama’s restaurant once located in the San Francisco Macy’s basement. And I know a few people, mostly Southerners, who serve coleslaw as a side dish on the big Thanksgiving and Christmas spreads. (Some of my relatives also consider macaroni and cheese an essential holiday dish, and this is a tradition I think we all should embrace.)

Sometime over the holidays, I’m going to

make the pulled pork barbecue one son has been craving, and pulled pork demands coleslaw. This time, I’ll serve oil-and-vinegar coleslaw alongside or atop the pork.

Plates regular Dona Dickie thinks her favorite coleslaw recipe might make Lasky happy. “When I lived in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, in the ’80s, the best place to go for a shrimp boil or seafood platters was Hudson’s,” Dickie says. “All the dishes were accompanied by their seven-day slaw. After many beggings, they finally gave me the recipe, and it has been a keeper for us.”

Dickie’s favorite uses a boiled dressing, but it’s a bit different from the boiled dressing Debbie Westhafer Schoonmaker shared

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The cabbage-y crunch and tangy flavors of coleslaw ingredients cut through the richness of a holiday feast or barbecue spread. Coleslaw includes cabbage and a variety of veggies, such as bell peppers and onions.

BOB FILA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Build a Better ... Pie crust

Some keys to pie crust perfection

Making pies for the holidays? Back away from the supermarket freezer case. The Martha Stewart test kitchen team wants you to reach for the butter and flour instead, and they're sharing a few tips to help you make your own tender, flaky masterpiece.

■ Cut the butter for your pie crust into small cubes, then freeze about three-quarters of the buttery bits for half an hour, before you start measuring the flour.

■ Pie crust gets tough when it's overhandled. Turn off the food processor when you add the ice water, then pulse the moisture in. Don't knead the dough or massage it. Gently pat it into disks.

■ Before you bake your pie, slide it back in the freezer — for 30 minutes to an hour for double-crust pies, an hour for a single-crust pie, before blind-baking or filling it. Freezing helps set the crust so it doesn't shrink or collapse in the oven.

You'll find more tips, including a Pie Crust 101, at www.marthastewart.com.



MARK DUFRENE/STAFF

Perfect Pie Crust

For 1 double-crust pie

2 sticks (½ pound) unsalted butter, chilled and cut into small pieces, divided

2½ cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon sugar

½ cup ice water

1. Place three-quarters of the butter pieces on a parchment-lined baking sheet; freeze until hard, at least 30 minutes. Refrigerate remaining butter pieces.

2. Combine flour, salt and sugar in a food processor. Add refrigerated butter, and pulse about 10 times to combine. Add frozen butter, and pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal, with some blueberry-size clumps.

3. Add ice water, and immediately pulse until water is just incorporated, about 10 times. Squeeze a small amount of dough to make sure it holds together. Pulse a few more times if needed.

4. Lay out 2 pieces of plastic wrap. Empty half the dough onto each piece. Bring edges of wrap together to gather dough. Press into disks. Roll out disks, still wrapped in plastic, into ½-inch-thick rounds (8 inches in diameter).

Refrigerate at least 45 minutes and up to 2 days. Dough can be frozen up to 1 month.

— *MarthaStewart.com* Test Kitchen

Taste

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Berkeley Farms Light Egg Nog

The overpowering flavor of artificial rum, way too much sugar and not enough spice make this a poor pick. A ½-cup serving has 130 calories, 3 grams fat, 20 grams sugar. A quart is \$1.69 at Walmart. ★ ½

Clover Stornetta Light Egg Nog

Odd banana flavor and overwhelming sugar make it impossible to taste the milk or egg. A ½-cup serving has 160 calories, 4.5 grams fat, 22 grams sugar. A quart is \$3.99 at Whole Foods. ★

Horizon Organic Lowfat Eggnog

Gritty consistency and flavor overload kill this eggnog. A ½-cup serving has

140 calories, 3 grams fat, 22 grams sugar. A quart is \$4.99 at Raley's. ½ a star

Lucerne Light Eggnog

This minty, candy flavored eggnog is all wrong. A ½-cup serving has 120 calories, 2 grams fat, 20 grams sugar. A quart is \$2.99 at Safeway. No stars.

Sunnyside Low Fat Egg Nog Premium

Do not even put this in your shopping cart. It's

overly sweet with a slimy consistency and a medicinal flavor thanks to artificial flavorings and pineapple juice concentrate. A ½-cup serving has 130 calories, 2 grams fat, 21 grams sugar. A quart is \$1.69 at Food Maxx. No stars.

Reviews are based on product samples purchased by this newspaper or provided by manufacturers. Contact Jolene Thym at timespicky eater@gmail.com.

Homeplates

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last week. Shredded cabbage, red onion and green bell pepper are sprinkled with sugar, then tossed with the hot dressing, which includes oil, vinegar and dry mustard. It's really not difficult to assemble, and the coleslaw keeps a week in the refrigerator.

When Nancy Richardson and her husband went to the local courthouse in Indiana to get their marriage license in 1960, the clerk presented them with a gift box including "The Bride's First Cook Book" from the National Furniture Company in Indianapolis. "This little paperback has 53 pages of recipes and 'tips' on how to keep your man!" says Richardson. She thinks the "delicious" coleslaw recipe in the cookbook will work for Lasky.

The ingredients are somewhat similar to Dickie's coleslaw, but you needn't boil the dressing.

No more crumbles

A number of you offered helpful tips for Barbara, who wants to avoid crumbly brownies. Nancy Mar, Bonnie Barnes and Mary Stewart use a plastic knife for clean brownie servings. "I always keep one in my utility drawer for this purpose," Barnes says.

Ginny Grimsich find a dough scraper a necessity for cutting brownies, shortbread or other bar cookies. "It makes nice, clean cuts

Hudson's Seven-Day Slaw

Serves 8

1 head cabbage
1 red onion
1 medium green bell pepper
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar, divided

1 cup vegetable oil
1 cup vinegar
½ tablespoon dry mustard
¼ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

1. Thinly slice or shred cabbage, onion and green pepper and place in a large bowl. Toss with ½ cup sugar.

2. In a medium saucepan, mix the remaining 2 tablespoons sugar with the oil, vinegar, dry mustard, salt and pepper; bring to a boil. Pour boiling mixture over cabbage mix. Let sit 5 minutes, then mix. Cover and refrigerate. Keeps for 7 days.

— *Hudson's, submitted by Dona Dickie*

if you cut them when they are warm and wait until they cool a little to remove (them) from the pan," Grimsich says. "Another thing I do when making any type of bar cookies is place a sheet of parchment paper with the ends extending over the ends of the pan. You can actually lift the entire contents of the cookie after cutting them."

Linda Shipes, of San Jose, does the same thing with heavy-duty aluminum foil, extending the foil over the sides. She sprays the foil-lined pan with cooking spray. After the brownies

Courthouse Coleslaw

Serves 4

1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon celery seed
½ teaspoon dry mustard
2 tablespoons sugar
¾ cup vinegar
3 tablespoons salad oil
¼ cup chopped green pepper
½ teaspoon grated onion
3 cups chopped cabbage

In a large bowl, mix all ingredients thoroughly. Cover and chill.

— *"The Bride's First Cook Book," submitted by Nancy Richardson*

bake, she uses the foil to lift the brownies out of the pan, then removes the foil.

"Use a long-bladed knife to cut down through the brownie," Shipes says. "Do not saw or drag the blade."

Try placing a piece of wax paper on top of the cooled brownies, then inverting the pan, says Phil Ogiela. "If you cut the brownies upside down, they will slice cleanly, assuming you also have a relatively sharp knife."

Sandie Gonsalves cools brownies completely, then uses a pizza wheel cutter.

Second helpings

Maureen Kawaoka's granola recipe deserves a big thumbs-up, if you ask reader Donne Davis. "Big, big thank you to Maureen Kawaoka and her kind aunt for sharing their prize-winning granola recipe," says Davis. "I started making

granola for gifts a few years ago and thought I'd come up with a winner. But 'auntie's' is better."

Request line

■ All Shipes wants in her Christmas stocking is her aunt's Italian Christmas cookie recipe. Even if she doesn't receive the recipe in time for this Christmas, she'll have the family treasure for years to come. "Years ago, my aunt used to make what she called Italian Christmas cookies," Shipes says. "She is now in her late 80s and can't remember the details. She lost everything, including her recipes, in a house fire 20 years ago."

The anise-flavored sugar cookie-type dough was rolled into a long, narrow rectangle, and a cooked filling of dried fruit and nuts was spread down the center. The dough was folded over into a tube, then sliced on the bias into 1-inch pieces before baking. "When they were cooled, they were decorated with icing flowers," Shipes says. "Do these cookies sound familiar to any of you readers?"

■ Roberta Baker wants to recreate the pumpkin patch pie from Zanotto's Family Markets in San Jose. The pie has a wonderful walnut streusel topping.

Send recipes and requests to *Kim Boatman at HomePlates@bayareanews.com. Find recent Home Plates recipes online at www.mercurynews.com/homeplates.*

Cork

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stunner, with aromas and flavors of mint and blackberry jam and powerful tannins that will do wonders to shape the wine in years to come.

The project is truly a family affair. Daughter Remi, 27, handles trade accounts (and sales and marketing for La Sirena), and there are hopes that Chelsea, the Barretts' younger daughter, will eventually join the team. She currently makes wine for Joel Gott Wines.

"Remi nudges her every now and then to come join

STILL THIRSTY?

Five more wines to try from Heidi Peterson Barrett or Bo Barrett at www.mercurynews.com/libations.

us," Bo said. "Her job is a lot different from mine. She makes in three weeks what I do in a year."

Now in its third vintage, Barrett & Barrett is indeed a small production. Its 300 cases of cabernet sauvignon are made from grapes grown on a vineyard planted on the couple's Calistoga property in 1989. Situated at the base of Mount St. Helena, the steep volcanic slopes yield tiny, concentrated berries.

The second cabernet

blocks are found in a gravelly vineyard across the road from a longtime Chateau Montelena-farmed property. Bo had his eye on the property at the confluence of Garnett Creek and Jericho Creek for years and developed it specifically for this project.

"It is one of the very few areas in Napa Valley that are quite similar to the lands and weather patterns of Montelena, with which I had such a great experience," he says. "I just knew there was good dirt and great light, so we are stoked to have it in production now."

The project is a natural next step for a powerhouse couple, who has raised three children (their

son, Seamus, attends law school in New York), developed four vineyards (two for La Sirena and now two for Barrett & Barrett) and learned to fly helicopters together. There are no plans to grow the label or add other varieties. They're happy keeping it small and in the family.

"In our business it takes a vineyard five years to mature, another two years of winemaking and then more time for bottle age," Bo says. "We don't do anything in a hurry."

Contact *Jessica Yadegaran at jjadegaran@bayareanews.com. Follow her at [Twitter](https://twitter.com/swirlygirl_jy). com/swirlygirl_jy.*

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Lemon Curd

Note: Keeps 1 week, covered and chilled.

1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest
1 cup fresh lemon juice
1½ cups sugar
Pinch salt

4 large eggs
1¾ sticks (14 tablespoons) unsalted butter, cut into tablespoon-size pieces

In a heavy 2-quart saucepan, whisk together zest, lemon juice, sugar, eggs and a pinch of salt. Add butter all at once and cook over moderately low heat, whisking constantly, until curd is thick enough to hold whisk marks and the first bubbles appear on surface, about 10 minutes. Immediately pour curd through a fine sieve into a bowl, then chill, covered.

— *Gourmet magazine, April 2001, Epicurious.com*

Banana Bread with Chocolate Chips and Walnuts

Makes one 9-inch loaf

1½ cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
¾ cup semisweet chocolate chips
¾ cup walnuts, toasted, chopped
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted

butter, room temperature
1 cup sugar
2 large eggs
1 cup mashed ripe bananas
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour a 9-by-5-inch metal loaf pan.

2. In a medium bowl, whisk flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt to blend.

3. In a small bowl, combine the chocolate chips and walnuts; add 1 tablespoon flour mixture and toss to coat.

4. Using an electric mixer, beat butter until fluffy. Gradually add sugar, beating until well blended. Beat in eggs one at a time. Beat in mashed bananas, lemon juice and vanilla. Beat in flour mixture.

5. Spoon a third of the batter into the prepared pan. Sprinkle with half the nut mixture. Spoon half the remaining batter on top. Sprinkle with remaining nut mixture. Cover with remaining batter. Run knife through batter in a zigzag pattern.

6. Bake bread until tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 1 hour and 5 minutes. Turn out onto rack and let cool.

— *Bon Appétit, February 2000, Epicurious.com*

Apricot Walnut Bars

Makes 32

1½ cups all-purpose flour
¾ cup sugar
½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon salt
1½ sticks (¾ cup) cold unsalted butter, cut into tablespoon-size

pieces
2 large egg yolks
1 teaspoon vanilla
½ cup apricot preserves
¾ cup chopped walnuts (3 ounces)

1. Put oven rack in middle position; preheat oven to 425 degrees. Butter a 9-inch square baking pan and line it with foil, leaving a 2-inch overhang on two opposite sides; butter the foil.

2. Pulse flour, sugar, cinnamon and salt in a food processor until combined. Add butter and pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal with some roughly pea-size butter lumps. Add yolks and vanilla; pulse just until clumps of dough form, about 30 seconds.

3. Press three-fourths of the dough evenly into the bottom of the pan; spread with apricot preserves. Crumble remaining dough over preserves. Sprinkle with walnuts.

4. Bake until top is golden brown and preserves are bubbling, 20 to 25 minutes. Cool in pan on a rack.

5. Lift the bars from the pan by grasping the foil ends. Cut into 32 bars and lift bars off foil with a spatula.

— *Gourmet magazine, April 2006, Epicurious.com*

Sriracha

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Scotch bonnet peppers (the backbone of spicy Jamaican cuisine) or a sauce that contains Scotch bonnets. Or high-tail it to the nearest Jamaican restaurant, mon, and douse that

heat with a Red Stripe. 5. **Go cold turkey.** Sure, hot peppers have lots of health benefits, but that spicy stuff can also tear up your tummy and redden your complexion. So take a break until the Sriracha shortage is over and you may avoid a new future addiction — to stomach-soothing Maalox.

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