

Healthy recipe contest in honor of National Nutrition Month

Destination Hotels & Resorts, parent company of Resort at Squaw Creek, is creating a Kids Healthy Recipe Contest in support of this being National Nutrition Month.

The contest encourages consumers to submit their favorite healthy recipe children enjoy eating. The winning recipe will be featured on the company's Kids Café healthy menu selections for a year, and the chef who submits the top entry also wins a trip for a family of four to any full-service Destination Hotels & Resorts property.

Kids Café healthy menu selections started last summer. The menu selections were created in an "Iron Chef" event by executive chefs from the company's more than 30 restaurants. These menu items were judged by six children who rated the selections from 1 (Gross) to 4 (Delicious). Menu favorites that are offered through Kids Café include Melon Fries with Strawberry Ketchup, Build Your Own Fruit Taco, Fruit Shots, Watermelon Fizz and Squidword Breaded Fish Sticks.

Kids also will be a part of the judging process for the Destination Kids Healthy Recipe Contest.

To enter, go online . The top three recipes with the most "likes" will be prepared and tasted by a group of Destination Hotels & Resorts food and beverage professionals along with a children's panel of judges.

Ski-food tour in Tahoe City

Tahoe Cross Country hosts its 10th annual Gourmet Ski Tour March 13.

Bring skis or snowshoes or rent gear for the 1-3pm trek along a one-mile trail filled with food and wine kiosks.

Cost is \$30 adults, \$25 ages 13 to 17, free for 12 and younger. Price includes an afternoon trail pass. Dessert in the Yurt will go until 5pm.

The ski center is at 925 Country Club Drive, Tahoe City.

For more information, go online.

K's Kitchen: Mandarins make the difference in salad

By Kathryn Reed

Sometimes it's the simplest of suggestions – like a different green salad – that can change a whole meal.

My friend Sheri knew I was having some friends over and lasagna was on the menu. She suggested the salad below. It's good to try new things. Seldom am I adventuresome with salads – I do the same old, same old.



Considering all that was being served was the lasagna, salad and bread (and wine of course) – changing the salad from my usual really did seem to change the whole meal.

With mandarins and tangerines such a good price because it's their season, now is the time to make this salad.

Sheri uses roasted almonds in her salad. I had walnuts on hand, so I chopped those up. Obviously, this is a different flavor, but the point is a nut in a green salad can be yummy. It's similar to the sunflower seed concept so many salad bars offer – a little salt and crunch.

The night friends were coming I used a spring mix of greens. Later I used fresh spinach. Both are tasty.

One thing to remember when using a dressing, pour it on at the last minute. And start off with less than you think you'll need. A little goes a long ways. You don't want soggy greens to be left on the plate.

The quantity for each ingredient will depend on how many people you are serving. I think of a handful of lettuce as a serving. And don't use iceberg – there is no nutritional value in it and it has no flavor.

Sheri's Green Salad

Lettuce

Almond slices, roasted

Mandarins, peeled and pulled into individual pieces

Red onion, thinly sliced

Vinaigrette dressing

Put bite-size pieces of lettuce into large bowl. Add roasted almonds, onions and mandarins. Toss with dressing.

Girl Scout cookie sales are serious business

By Mary Widdifield

Yes, sir. There is a gap in my resume. That's right, 12 years out of the workforce. And no, it isn't a misprint that I garnered experience in sales, marketing, public relations, management and inventory control. That would be the Girl Scout cookie sales.

Try managing inventory of 660 boxes of Thin Mints, 588 boxes of Samoas, 420 Trefoils and 300-plus boxes of other flavors. Yes, there are other flavors. They apparently fill a niche or void that stubbornly resists the marketplace. There's filling each order for each Scout – you'd call them sales reps – and serving as liaison to the cookie czar running the warehouse out of her garage. Don't even think of arriving at her house before the appointed time. Didn't place your troop's cookie order in time? Too bad. You seriously don't want to cross her or you'll never get those 86 boxes of Thin Mints you promised to Alexis – she's the kid whose mother split and Girl Scouts is all she has, a fact she will remind you of when you're alone with her, waiting again for her father, who is always late picking her up.

Public relations? Counseling services? No irate cable TV customer can come close to matching the velocity of pre-pubescent girls' expectations. They absolutely must have the Walkabout Kangaroo incentive gift (for selling 250 boxes). And

what about the Eco-Girl T-shirt (300)? The mini laptop (2,000 boxes)? It takes a strong leader to quash the entrepreneurial spark in those young, still-bright eyes when you inform them they would have to sell an average of 100 boxes a day (or 600 a week) to get the ultimate incentive reward – the iPad (3,000 boxes).

And it's not just the girls you have to think about. It's their addicted customers, both clamoring for their fix and whining about the price inflation: \$4? I remember when it was \$3!

Mary Widdifield is the cookie manager for her 9-year-old daughter's Girl Scout troop in San Rafael.

Read the whole story

IHOP warming the syrup for National Pancake Day

In celebration of National Pancake Day, IHOP restaurants nationwide – including the one in South Lake Tahoe – will offer each guest a free short stack of buttermilk pancakes in an effort to raise awareness and funds for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals.

This year, IHOP is hoping to stack up more donations than before, with a goal to raise \$2.3 million, for a total of more than \$7.65 million in six years.

Diners will be asked to leave a little something behind. Tahoe donations will benefit the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals' programs at UC Davis Children's Hospital.

Pancake Day is March 1 from 7am-10pm.

Pancake Day is a tradition that dates back several centuries to when the English prepped for fasting during Lent. Strict rules prohibited the eating of all dairy products during Lent, so pancakes were made to use up the supply of eggs, milk, butter and other dairy products.

This year, IHOP's National Pancake Day will come one week early, as the popular annual campaign has evolved into a monthlong celebration that takes place during the month of February. It will culminate with the free flapjack giveaway on March 1.

Changes expected in definition of wine products

By Jerome E. Horton

The California Board of Equalization this week approved the Alcoholic Beverage Tax Regulation 2558.1 and authorized its publication, beginning the formal rule making process. The next step is a 45-day comment period which will lead to a public hearing in front of the board in May.

This new regulation clarifies the definition of wine products and the application of tax on wine-based products that contain distilled alcohol. To allow the industry a transition period, the regulation will be effective Jan. 1, 2012, upon approval by the Office of Administrative Law.

The proposed regulation will provide clear direction to the wine industry regarding the circumstances under which a wine-

based product will be classified as a distilled spirit for state tax purposes. This proposed regulation follows the same approach as the Distilled Spirits Regulations that went into effect on Oct. 1, 2008, which the board adopted primarily to address the proper taxation of Flavored Malt Beverages (FMBs). This proposed regulation clarifies the definition of wine, specifying that any wine-based product that contains substantial amounts of distilled alcohol, from sources other than the agricultural product from which the wine is produced, will be taxed as a distilled spirit, not as a wine.

E.&J. Gallo Winery representative Richard Grey spoke before the Board in support of the proposed regulation change. "This clarification of existing regulations will be helpful for the wine industry," he said.

The BOE will distribute notices to all alcoholic beverage tax program registrants prior to the regulation's effective date.

At the Nov. 17, 2010, meeting the board authorized an internal rule-making process that allowed staff to begin talking to interested parties about the proposed regulations. Initially the industry was split on how to define wine and which products should be taxed at the higher rate.

The resulting language of the regulation focuses on the type and amount of distilled alcohol added to the wine and follows the same approach taken in drafting the Distilled Spirits Regulations to properly classify alcoholic beverages like FMBs.

The excise tax on beer and wine is generally paid by manufacturers, wine growers, and importers. Sellers of beer and wine must pay the excise tax if the tax was not paid by the manufacturers, winegrowers, or importers. In general, the excise tax on distilled spirits is collected from retailers, by distilled spirits wholesalers, at the time of sale to the retailer. Between fiscal years 2007-08 through 2009-10, excise

tax collections from beer and wine averaged \$157.9 million, and collections from distilled spirits averaged \$165.5 million.

Jerome E. Horton is the Fourth District member of the California State Board of Equalization, representing more than 8.5 million residents in Los Angeles County.

Slow food movement dinner in Truckee

Dragonfly Restaurant and Sushi Bar is partnering with Slow Food Lake Tahoe to host a twist on the community supported agriculture box. It's slated for March 2 at 6pm in downtown Truckee.

Attendees will get to solve the mysteries contained in CSA veggie boxes by visiting food demo stations, trying their hand at rolling rice paper spring rolls and sampling food and wine pairings.

Representatives from Mountain Bounty Farms in Nevada City and Sobon Winery in Plymouth will be on hand to talk about what it's like to be a local producer. Meats provided by Thompson Valley Ranch in Quincy will round out the evening's menu options.

Slow Food is a global grassroots movement that links the pleasures of food with a commitment to community and the environment.

Dinner for the Slow Food CSA Box event will cost \$42 for Slow Food members and \$47 for non-members. Call (530) 587.0557 to

make reservations.

Dragonfly Restaurant and Sushi Bar is located upstairs at 10118 Donner Pass Road. Dinner is served from 5-9:30pm.

Friends turn emails into food blog for the masses

By Kathryn Reed

Puttanesca probably wasn't on a vocabulary or spelling test when Klaire Pirtle was principal of Kingsbury Middle or Minden Elementary schools.

That's because the Italian dish is better known as "whore's style spaghetti."

The retired Douglas County School District educator helped her daughter, Amber Asbjornsen, whip up a bowl of puttanesca worthy of being posted on the Beauties and the Feast blog.



Puttanesca
from Beauties
and the Feast.
Photo/Amber
Asbjornsen

The blog's subheading is: Six beauties. One feast. One blog where we gather to dish our reviews.

Asbjornsen is one of the beauties who started the blog a couple months ago with five friends from college. The 1998 Douglas High School graduate took a home ec class there, but is not attributing her culinary expertise to that experience.

Five of the friends live in Washington state (they all went to Western Washington University) and one is single and traveling.

The blog emerged from casual emails sent among the friends.

"If we tried something good, we would email it out. Then someone would say can I have this, someone would say something quirky, others would say what they did differently (with the recipe)," Asbjornsen explained.

She admits with a full time job, husband and two kids to not having much time for extra things like a book club, but thought something virtual would allow her the flexibility and fun she was looking for.

From there, Beauties and the Feast was born.

Each month one of the six posts a recipe. The others all try it and post comments on the blog. In between there might be "extra" recipes like a special cocktail for the Super Bowl.

February is Asbjornsen's month to post a recipe.

"I knew I wanted to try puttanesca. I looked at a million recipes. Then I made up my own recipe from those and I posted a little history lesson about what it means," Asbjornsen said.

On the blog she also gives her mom a ton of credit for the dish.

"My mom is my biggest supporter. They didn't laugh at me when

I was taking pictures of my food,” Asbjornsen said. “When we get together we do a lot of cooking.”

She considers cooking a creative outlet, and now the blog is an extension of that.

“I’ve never considered myself a chef, but I love cooking and I love cooking for my family,” Asbjornsen said. “Both of my parents stressed sitting down with our family and eating. We still do that now.”

The women don’t know where this will take them.

Megan Crosby is the single friend who is exploring the world.

Missy Cudworth is a mom of an 11-month-old and writer for the Delilah show.

Jolie Lucero is a stay at home mom of two.

Emily Adamson is married and does social networking for her job, so is the blogging expert. “She is the real foodie of the group,” Asbjornsen said.

Rachel Strachan is married, living on several acres as sustainably as they can.

Making money off the site would be the dessert, so to speak, to the whole project. For now, though, it’s all about sharing their love of food with the rest of the world.

Dogs and Valentine’s

chocolate don't mix

By Jack Sommars, AAHA

The folks at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' (ASPCA) Poison Control Center don't need a calendar to know when it's Christmas or Valentine's Day. Their phones ring off the hook. Yet another pet – most likely a dog – has gotten into some chocolate.

“We actually have what we call a chocolate season,” explains Dr. Tina Wismer, a veterinary toxicologist for the ASPCA. “It runs from Halloween until Valentine's Day. That's when we get most of our chocolate-related calls.”

Last year, their center received 6,900 of these calls – 98 percent of them involving dogs.

“Dogs don't have an off-switch,” she explains. “Most have a sweet tooth and will eat as much as they can. Cats, on the other hand, may nibble a bit but don't gorge themselves like dogs will.”

Why is chocolate so dangerous?

Read the whole story

Rotary of Truckee crab feed tickets on sale

Each year the Rotary Club of Truckee selects a local nonprofit group to run the silent auction at the annual Crab and Pasta Feed which is slated for March 19. The High Fives Foundation

is this year's group.

In addition to the traditional live auction, this year's event will include a performance by comedian Rick D'elia.

High Fives will be the recipient of all proceeds raised from the live auction at the crab feed. Previously, nonprofits that have participated in this event have earned from \$4,000 to \$16,000 for their cause.

The event is at the Truckee Community Recreation Center.

The bar will open at 5pm, followed by a dinner buffet from 6-7pm, comedian Rick D'elia at pm and the auction will follow at 8pm.

Tickets are available for \$40 for adults and \$20 for children 16 and under. Tickets may be purchased through any Rotarian or by calling Steve Randall at (530) 582.7720.