

Posted Mar. 07, 2005

100 Men Who Cook event pushes talents beyond grilling

By Thomas Rozwadowski

trozwado@greenbaypressgazette.com

DE PERE — Those who take a whiff inside the busy kitchens at De Pere's Foxview Intermediate School on Saturday can prepare to be enticed by an appetizing array of aromas.

In the mood for a little "Italian Intrigue," courtesy of lasagna, antipasto and garlic bread?

Or maybe a hint of Bayou steak and BBQ shrimp? Or perhaps a Tahitian chicken breast with bananas?

How about a mix of all of the above, with a healthy undercurrent of "massive testosterone" just for good measure?

"It's quite the manly atmosphere," joked Corday Goddard, one of the chefs for Saturday's 100 Men Who Cook event, a fund-raiser for T.R.I.P.S, St. Norbert College's alternative break service program.

"It's pretty well known that guys love to grill out, but this is a little bit different. We're all into the fun of the presentation and going that extra mile," Goddard said.

That guys are willing to do a little more than push the grocery cart or reach for their favorite box of Froot Loops in the cereal aisle isn't necessarily new. But for cooking buffs like Goddard, the chance to showcase a well-developed talent outside the family dinner table is an exciting prospect.

"I cook all the time. I sort of alarmingly look like Drew Carey at his worst, so the extra heft is partly what I get out of this whole deal," said Goddard, director of residential life at St. Norbert College. "But really, I just love the creative end of it. I'm not great at inventing new recipes, but I like new things and new techniques."

For Saturday's event, Goddard is whipping up "A Night in Andalusia," a series of 10 different tapas from the Mediterranean,

including olive salad, herbed goat cheese, prosciutto shrimp and meatballs in almond sauce.

A big-time fan of the Food Network, Goddard isn't the lone male in the house who covets the spatula. He's even bestowed amateur chef status on his 12-year-old son.

"He already has the chef's hat and smock," Goddard said. "He promised to help me out Saturday as long as he could wear both."

Having previously served as the college's chef for 27 years, James "J.R." Ryczkowski plans to get a little fancier than most. In fact, the Turducken meal he'll be serving at his table — best described as a Wisconsin variation of boneless turkey, boneless duck, and boneless chicken with polish sausage stuffing and a lingonberry sauce — is already sold out after requests by repeat patrons.

"This area has gotten more sophisticated. There's a demand for greater ingredients," said Ryczkowski, who attended culinary school at the prestigious Washburne Institute in Chicago. "When I'm in the grocery store, I see more men doing the shopping and contributing. Plus, I think young couples are taking more of an interest in cooking at home together."

Now on a self-imposed "sabbatical" from professional cooking, Ryczkowski is enjoying every minute of what really was always a hobby to begin with.

Though his career interest was developed at an early age, Ryczkowski said he's noticed more grown men gravitating toward the artful end of food preparation.

"I think people are no longer apprehensive about trying to cook for themselves," he said. "The availability of ingredients has made things much easier. When I used to go to stores in winter, you might have had only a few vegetables on the produce shelf. Now, things are available year round, and people can continue to experiment."

John Frohlinger, associate dean of the natural sciences division at St. Norbert College, is still feeling out that process. With his wife as a guide, Frohlinger has come to master at least one favorite dish.

“My wife’s a good cook. I’m sort of a one-trick pony,” said Frohlinger, the man behind “Italian Intrigue.” “It’s pretty much lasagna for me, but I have a lot of fun adding to it and seeing how people react when they try it. So far, people have enjoyed it, and that’s encouraging to me.”

Lauren Weis’ father Pete had so much fun at last year’s 100 Men event, he’s making the trip from Iowa for a second straight year. On his table’s menu: homemade Caesar salad, grilled Creole marinated beef tenderloin fillets and jumbo shrimp tossed in garlic butter and bayou seasonings, bamboo skewered and grilled.

“I was raised in a house where the dad did all the cooking. So I know what he can do,” said Lauren, a St. Norbert College junior and service events intern for 100 Men.

For Goddard, the bottom line is giving the chef role that initial stab. The meal might not always turn out perfect, but there’s a lot of fun in trying.

“At some point, I’d love to get formal training. Not to earn money, but just to really know what I’m doing,” he said. “Otherwise, I’m just happy looking at a recipe, thinking about how good it would be and making it.”