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APRIL 1994

FOOD ARTS

THE MAGAZINE FOR PROFESSIONALS



SPRING FOR IT!

TOP CHEFS' MENU PREVIEWS • MEXICAN BREAKFAST BONANZA
QUICK-CHANGE TABLE LOOKS • CONFESSIONS OF A RESTAURATEUR

MORE DISH

franco Vissani to come to the Louise's test kitchen in Los Feliz for six weeks, to put his creative stamp on the menu.

NORTH-EASTERN CALIFORNIA

—Jeremiah Tower will open a Stars restaurant in Palo Alto. Construction will start mid-year with an expected opening late in 1994. •

Hawaiian regional cuisine wiz Mark Ellman, chef/owner of Avalon in Lahaina, is opening another Avalon this month in Mill Valley. • Eric Lenard, formerly of The Heritage House in Mendocino County, is the new chef at Brasserie Savoy.

NEW ORLEANS—Aussie chef Jason McDonald has left Cafe Sbisa, the landmark French Quarter restaurant opened in 1899, for Maximo's Italian Grill, and took chef David Whitten with him. McDonald reopened Cafe Sbisa to rave reviews in 1993.

BOSTON—This summer, Stan Frankenthaler, for-

Concierge Bell-Ringer

San Francisco—Europeans might scoff at the idea of a how-to book for the concierge, but in America, where hotels only began to employ concierges as recently as the 1970s, it makes perfect sense.

Holly Stiel, the first concierge at the **Grand Hyatt on Union Square** in San Francisco, was also the first American woman to become a concierge in 1976. After 16 years behind the desk, she quit to establish her own consulting firm, Holly Speaks, and to write *Ultimate Service: The Complete Handbook to the World of the Concierge* (Prentice Hall/Career and Technology, Englewood Cliffs, NJ).

"There are so many hotels that have no concierge at all or that have one in name only," Stiel says. She predicts that their services will be counted increasingly important as hotels compete for business. "The biggest potential is in casino hotels because they never paid any attention to anyone but the VIP," she says. "Now that Vegas is becoming more of a family resort, there's tremendous potential...to appeal to families and other tourists by offering them more services."

It's common practice for concierges to make restaurant reservations, obtain theatre tickets, make travel arrangements, provide information about local sights and shopping, arrange for babysitting, and handle 1,001 offbeat requests. This is a job about service, with a capital "S." Stiel's book contains practical information on how to set up a concierge desk, forms and procedures, services to offer, how to work with restaurants, tour operators, airlines, etc., and how to best serve guests.

Amusing anecdotes about unusual problems provide inspiration for anyone in this highly public job. Stiel recalls a time, for instance, when it seemed everybody who came to San Francisco wanted to go to a Chinatown restaurant. The repetitious request was overwhelming her desk. Finally, she hired a specialty fortune cookie company to place the names of restaurants inside their product. Then, whenever guests asked for the name of a Chinese restaurant, she simply had them pick their dining destiny.

The chapter on working with restaurants should be particularly interesting to *Food Arts* readers. For example, Stiel recommends that the concierge keep a file of up-to-date menus; it would therefore behoove local restaurants to keep concierges well supplied with info. She encourages concierges to develop relationships with appropriate restaurants

so that maître d's honor their reservation requests and provide good tables and service. She also explains that complimentary dinners are the most common way for the concierge to learn about restaurants, as most hotels don't provide their concierges with expense accounts for dining.

"Remember, complimentary meals are not personal gifts," Stiel explains. "Concierges are invited because they represent...potential business to a restaurant. If the experience proves inadequate, the concierge should not feel obligated to recommend the restaurant."

The \$32 hardcover book is available in bookstores, or direct from the publisher: (800)947-7700, fax (515)284-2607.

—BEVERLY STEPHEN

Chefs Collaborate for Wholesome Food

CHEFS COLLABORATIVE 2000
An Educational Initiative of Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust

Advancing Sustainable Food Choices for the Next Century

Hundreds of America's leading chefs have been gathering in key cities across the country during the past few months to sign the charter of the Chefs Collaborative 2000, a new organization dedicated to preserving healthful, environmentally sustainable food for the next century.

The Collaborative, under the aegis of Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust, was launched at a retreat for chefs in Hawaii last July. **Jimmy Schmidt**, chef/owner of Detroit's **Rattlesnake Club** (and four other restaurants), who modestly claims he was elected chairman because he has the most fax machines, and 50 colleagues hammered out a statement of principles and action programs that embrace schools, foodservice kitchens, and environmental advocacy both here and abroad.

In Florida, **Allen Susser** (**Chef Allen's**) and **Oliver Saucy** (**Darrel and Oliver's Cafe Maxx**) brought together 75 chefs from all parts of the state for a lunch of organically grown foods at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale. "We held the signing there," said Susser, "so the Institute's culinary students would see that there's something to the profession besides just cooking." Although there were some heated discussions between the French chefs and health food advocates about the use of fats, oils, and butter, Susser says the meeting "proved that the charter is a viable, living document."

Meanwhile, "It's time chefs became political," proclaimed **Michael Romano**, of **Union Square Cafe**, at the New York City restaurant's breakfast meeting and charter signing. "But on a profound subject: the husbandry of the environment." **Zarela Martínez** of **Zarela** spoke about the importance of including ethnic as well as American chefs; Joan Dye Gussow, professor emeritus of health and



nutrition at Teachers College, Columbia University, praised the group for "deciding they want to be guardians of the food supply," and **Patrick Terrail** of Hiram Walker presented a \$5,000 seed money check to Jimmy Schmidt.

Sixty Chicago-area chefs came to **Rick Bayless's** new regional American restaurant, **Zinfandel**, to hear Bayless, **Charlie Trotter** and **Tony Mantuano** of **Tuttaposto** talk about the Center of the Plate, a Collaborative program that urges increased prominence of fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes on the dinner plate—the traditional diet of many cultures. Bayless, eager to progress from principles to action, is already working with school administrators to bring chefs to the classroom as well as suggesting changes in lunchroom menus.

In Santa Fe, at **Inn of the Anasazi**, **Peter Zimmer** and **Deborah Madison** discovered that their colleagues had never had the opportunity to meet and address mutual concerns such as bovine growth hormones (BGH) and the high cost of using local produce. They're now looking at ways to identify BGH-laced milk and reduce expenses by consolidating deliveries from farmers.

A Chefs Collaborative 2000 newsletter, still in the planning stage, will include an ongoing dialogue between growers, chefs, and consumer and environmental leaders, and reports on upcoming projects such as the Environmental Education Campaign in conjunction with the 1995 Farm Bill. Also on the agenda is an annual retreat and conference, which will be held this year at Fetzer Vineyards, June 26-28.

All chefs and those interested in the goals of the Collaborative are welcome to participate. For more info, contact Oldways: 45 Milk Street, Boston, MA 02109 (617)695-2300, fax (617)426-7696.

—MERYLE EVANS

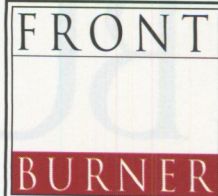
I've Been Framed!

New York City—The pity of the chef's artistry is that it's so damn transitory. Don't you deserve to be immortalized? New York artist Carol Gillot wants to do just that. A professional scientific illustrator, Gillot has turned her palette to more tasty subjects—chefs in action.

Gillot, who is also a photographer for the James Beard Foundation's newsletter, will come to your kitchen, shoot a few rolls of you in your natural environment, then return to the studio to produce an "Old Master" study. Prices, starting at approximately \$1,750, will vary according to size and complexity. Then you can hang yourself in your restaurant or home, or take a tax deduction and put your portrait on your menu cover or business card.

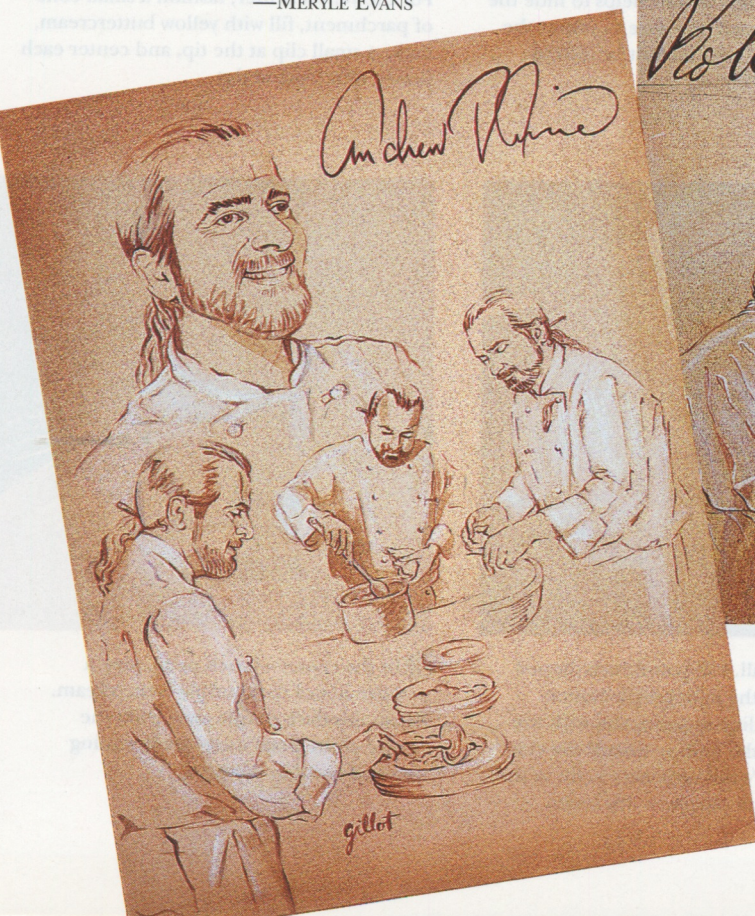
If you're coming to New York City for the James Beard Awards, you can see Gillot's collection hanging in the gallery at the Beard House (167 W. 12 Street, April 18 to May 30). This series of mixed-media paintings on canvas depicts 16 chefs on the move. "I wanted to capture the essence of each chef's energy, gesture, and personality much in the way Degas portrayed his dancers," she says. These paintings are also available for purchase, starting at \$1,500. For information on commissioning a portrait, call Gillot at (212)353-1174 or write to her at: 67 East 11th Street, Suite 708, New York, NY 10003.

—MARCELLE LANGAN DiFALCO



MORE DISH

merly of The Blue Room, is taking over Michela's and changing the name to Salamander. Meanwhile, Michela Larson, exec chef Jody Adams, and gm Chris Myers are taking over Rarities at the Charles Hotel in Harvard Square, where they plan to open an entirely new concept, as yet unnamed, in September. ■



PHOTOS BY JERRY RUOTOLO.