

COOK’S NOTEBOOK

ON THE WEB // For area food-related events, visit baltimoresun.com/foodevents

WINE FIND

2007 HAGAFEN SAUVIGNON BLANC

From: Napa Valley, Calif.
Price: \$18
Serve with: Fish, chicken, matzo

This is a well-made, fresh, dry sauvignon blanc that is well worth tasting whether you need a kosher wine or not. It offers intense flavors of gooseberry, fig, lime, apples and spice. It finishes with a lively acidity and doesn't appear to have been hurt at all by the pasteurization process that makes it mevushal (capable of being handled by gentiles without losing its kosher status).

[Michael Dresser]



EVENTS

EASTER BRUNCH // Learn to make an Easter brunch at 6:30 p.m. March 18 at Donna's of Columbia, 5850 Waterloo Road. \$45. There is a 48-hour cancellation policy. Call 410-659-5248, ext. 112.

SAUCE CLASS // Learn to make pan sauces and sample them within the context of a meal at 7 p.m. March 25 at the Elkridge Furnace Inn, 5745 Furnace Ave., Elkridge. \$80 includes materials and tax. Reservations required. Call 410-379-9336 or visit elkridgefurnaceinn.com.

SITE DU JOUR

»» HEATEATREVIEW.COM

If you're a regular consumer of frozen or ready-to-eat meals, you'll want to check out this blog, which offers ratings by several reviewers of products from Freschetta frozen pizza to Starkist tuna lunch packs. You can search quickly by brand.

[KATE SHATZKIN]

BOOKMARK

Casseroles, stews and other tasty comforts

BY LAURA MCCANDLISH
[SUN REPORTER]

»» **BAKE UNTIL BUBBLY**
By Clifford A. Wright
Wiley / 2008 / \$22.95

Casseroles and crisps, savory pies and stews. Those last batches of warm comfort foods you make to shake off those lingering winter blues. Take advantage: Soon these hearty dishes will feel too heavy.

Clifford A. Wright's "ultimate casserole cookbook" came out just in time. The Mediterranean-food expert thoroughly probes the historical and modern origins of his subject, collecting recipes that span the globe, from Moussaka and Cassoulet to Brazilian Fish Casserole and the Iraqi stuffed eggplant casserole known as "Tongue of the Judge."

I kept it simple and made Corn-and-Oyster Casserole, a buttery custard with creamed

corn and a cup of fresh shucked oysters. There's a reason this classic dish is renowned all along the East Coast. It reminds you of Thanksgiving, as did the dessert I made: Wright's Cranberry-Apple-Walnut Crisp. But treat yourself all year.

With freshly grated nutmeg and orange zest, the sweet concoction scented the kitchen like potpourri. I substituted dried cranberries for fresh ones, cut back on the sugar and also used cherry brandy in place of the dark rum Wright called for. It's a winning end to any meal. Don't forget that dollop of vanilla ice cream!

»» **THE SKI HOUSE COOKBOOK**
By Tina Anderson and Sarah Pinneo
Clarkson Potter / 2007 / \$30

If you spend weekends on the slopes and crave something quick yet home-cooked at the end of the day, these 125 recipes are for you. Many involve slow-cookers or minimal prep work, so you can spend the day on your skis instead of behind the stove.

Though I hardly ever cook red meat, the photo for Chunky Beef Stew caught my attention. The braised meat heats in the oven

CHUNKY BEEF STEW
SERVES 6

3 tablespoons vegetable oil
salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 to 5 pounds beef chuck, trimmed of excess fat and cut into 1½-inch cubes
2 medium yellow onions, cut into 1-inch dice
4 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
one 6-ounce can tomato paste
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons soy sauce
one 16-ounce can low-sodium chicken broth
2 bay leaves
6 large red potatoes (about 2 pounds)
3 to 4 large carrots (about 1½ pounds)
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon dried thyme
½ teaspoon dried rosemary
1 cup frozen peas, thawed

Adjust the oven racks to accommodate a Dutch oven or large covered pot. Preheat the oven to 250 degrees.

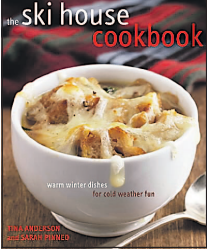
Heat the vegetable oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Generously



FROM "THE SKI HOUSE COOKBOOK"

salt and pepper the beef. Brown the meat, in stages, so as not to crowd the pan. Each batch should take about 10 minutes.

Remove the browned beef to a plate and add the onions to the pot. Cook for 5 minutes, or until the onions begin to brown. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, 1 to 2



for six hours as the vegetables roast in a separate pan, to be combined at the end so they don't get mushy. A brilliant technique I will reuse! Make sure to use a large Dutch oven. The 3½-pound one I used was too small

for this purpose. When I turned up the heat, the stew's broth boiled over. But the meat was still falling-off-the-bone luscious.

The book also features carb-loaded breakfasts (French-toast casserole, homemade granolas), meal-worthy soups (classic French onion, white-chicken chili), slow-cooker entrees (cider-maple pork shoulder) and tangy side dishes (Vermont cheddar risotto, chile cheddar corn bread).

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ONLINE

You'll find recipes for Corn-and-Oyster Casserole and Cranberry-Apple-Walnut Crisp at baltimoresun.com/taste

minutes. Add the tomato paste, flour and soy sauce and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Add the broth and scrape any browned meat bits off the bottom and sides of the pan.

Return the beef to the pot, add the bay leaves and bring to a boil. Cover the pot and place in the oven. Set the oven timer for 6 hours.

Chop the potatoes and carrots into 1½-inch cubes. Pile the vegetables into the smallest covered baking dish that will accommodate them. Drizzle the olive oil over the vegetables, sprinkle the thyme and rosemary on top, and stir to coat. Cover and place in the oven.

After 6 hours, remove the meat and vegetables from the oven. Stir the peas into the stew. Divide the vegetables among 6 shallow bowls. Discard the bay leaves. Ladle the beef stew over the vegetables and serve hot.

From "The Ski House Cookbook"

Per serving: 938 calories, 65 grams protein, 50 grams fat, 17 grams saturated fat, 56 grams carbohydrate, 9 grams fiber, 187 milligrams cholesterol, 699 milligrams sodium

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