

# COOK'S NOTEBOOK

ON THE WEB // For area food-related events, visit [baltimoresun.com/foodevents](http://baltimoresun.com/foodevents)

## WINE FIND 2007 JOEL GOTT SAUVIGNON BLANC

From: California  
Price: \$12  
Serve with: Grilled seafood

This dry white wine — with a classy screw cap to preserve freshness and avoid cork taint — is a lively little pour at a very attractive price. It offers breezy, youthful flavors of mineral, pear, melon, lime and sweet pea. There's not a trace of oak, and its finish is clean and satisfying. It's perfect for outdoor occasions between now and Labor Day.

[Michael Dresser]



### EVENTS

**MEETING AND DINNER** // The Baltimore chapter of the American Institute of Wine and Food will hold its annual meeting and dinner at 6:30 p.m. next Wednesday at the Gibson Island Club, 534 Broadwater Way, Gibson Island. \$65 for members; \$75 for nonmembers. Jacket and tie required for men. Reservations required by tomorrow. Call 410-244-0044 or e-mail [aiwfbaltimore@yahoo.com](mailto:aiwfbaltimore@yahoo.com).

**ASIAN COOKING** // Learn to make Asian dishes such as Asian Braised Greens and Asian Tuna Dumplings at 7 p.m. May 22 at Whole Foods, 2504 Solomons Island Road, Annapolis. \$10. Pre-registration and pre-payment are required and can be done at the customer-service desk. Call 410-573-1800.

### SITE DU JOUR

#### »» THESTONESOUP.COM

This cooking blog features spare, elegant photography and recipes from a thirtysomething food lover and wine-maker in Australia.

[KATE SHATZKIN]

## BOOKMARK

# Feeding a love of Italian food

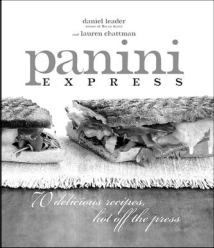
BY LAURA MCCANDLISH  
[SUN REPORTER]

»» **PANINI EXPRESS**  
70 Delicious Recipes  
Hot Off the Press  
By Daniel Leader  
and Lauren Chattman  
The Taunton Press / 2008 / \$18.95

It's fitting that I should review Italian cookbooks now, since I just married a man whose love for the cuisine might rival his feelings for me. Armed with our new cast-iron grill pan and press, we were most wowed by this catalog of recipes for panini.

Known for his artisanal bread bakery, Daniel Leader tells what fillings are worthy of his loaves. There are French classics (the Croque Monsieur), meatier sandwiches, poultry offerings (try the Smoked Chicken, St. Andre and Pear-Apple Compote) and still plenty to satisfy vegetarians.

We gravitated to the Grilled Italian Hero Sandwich. A tastier cousin of the cold-cut version, this panini had an extra kick from sliced pepperoncini and arugula. We used hot



soppressata and turkey salami instead of mortadella, because even Whole Foods didn't stock the Italian bologna. Don't forget to add roasted red peppers and extra oil and vinegar. If you're still hungry, Leader includes dessert sandwiches and other sections on making your own bread and condiments.

»» **EASY ITALIAN**  
Simple Recipes For Every Occasion  
By Maxine Clark  
Ryland Peters & Small / 2008 / \$16.95

In Sicily and Tuscany, Maxine Clark offers classes on how to prepare the sunny local cuisine. Now the relaxed fare is even easier to prepare with this new paperback version of her 2005 hardcover book.

There are full-course meal options, from antipasti and snacks straight through to the dessert course. The cheery photographs of rustic soups, sauteed spinach with anchovies and pine nuts, spring risotto with herbs and cannelloni with ricotta, bitter greens and cherry-tomato sauce stood out to me. Desserts feature simple sorbets and caramelized fruit.

The Baked Eggplant, Tomato, Mozzarella



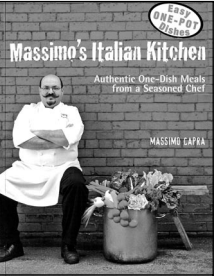
and Parmesan had a tangy fresh basil and tomato sauce and oozed cheese. Use smaller Italian eggplant if possible. I used too much of the tougher, standard kind and it overwhelmed the dish.

»» **MASSIMO'S ITALIAN KITCHEN**  
Authentic One-Dish Meals  
From a Seasoned Chef  
By Massimo Capra  
Sellers Publishing / 2007 / \$22.95

Both Maxine Clark and Food Network chef Massimo Capra highlight oodles of inventive risotto dishes in their tomes. Capra's Risotto With White Asparagus, Black Pepper and Wild Strawberries and the one with shrimp scampi and zucchini look delicious.

The Red-Beet Risotto I made was vivid in color but tasted bland. Extracting juice from the beets was a chore. And I couldn't find the *campanoli* rice it called for, so I substituted arborio. I prefer my risotto with real chunks of roasted beets; this one used only the juice and greens.

[laura.mccandlish@baltsun.com](mailto:laura.mccandlish@baltsun.com)



### BAKED EGGPLANT, TOMATO, MOZZARELLA AND PARMESAN SERVES 4

4 medium eggplant (small Italian, if possible)  
2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for the eggplant  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
two 14½-ounce cans chopped tomatoes, drained  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil leaves  
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper  
½ to ¾ cup freshly grated parmesan cheese  
8 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced, about 2 cups

Cut the eggplant lengthwise into strips ½ inch wide. Soak them for 30 minutes in a bowl of heavily salted water.

Heat the oil in a skillet, add the onion and cook for 5 minutes until it is softening, then add the tomatoes and basil and simmer gently for 30 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Drain the eggplant, then rinse and pat dry. Saute them or brush with olive oil and roast in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for about 20 minutes until deep golden brown. Set aside.

Arrange the eggplant in a single layer in the oven dish, then add a layer of parmesan, followed by a layer of mozzarella and a layer of the tomato sauce. Continue layering in

this order until all the ingredients have been used, ending with a sauce layer (this will keep the dish moist; if you want a crisp top, end with eggplant and parmesan).

Bake in the oven at 350 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes, until browned and bubbling. Remove and set aside for 10 minutes to settle before serving. Serve warm or at room temperature.

From "Easy Italian: Simple Recipes for Every Occasion"

Per serving: 419 calories, 20 grams protein, 24 grams fat, 11 grams saturated fat, 38 grams carbohydrate, 19 grams fiber, 55 milligrams cholesterol, 457 milligrams sodium



### ONLINE

Find recipes for Risotto Alle Rape Rosse (Red-Beet Risotto) and Grilled Italian Hero Sandwich at [baltimoresun.com/taste](http://baltimoresun.com/taste)

## FROM THE COVER

# Creating family-friendly dinners in little time

### MAKEOVER [From Page 1F]

Butter and Noodles with snow peas.

"What kid doesn't like peanut butter?" she said. "This is an easy recipe and you can use different kinds of noodles and vegetables — broccoli, carrots, frozen veggies — depending on what you have in the house. You can eat it cold the next day for lunch."

She whisked some peanut butter together with soy sauce, some water and some ground ginger as the pasta water was boiling. She dropped whole-wheat spaghetti in the water and once the pasta was tender, she drained it, gave it a quick dousing of water to cool it down, transferred it to a bowl and then poured in the sauce. She used scissors to snip the green part of some scallions on top.

Done. The whole effort took about 10 or 12 minutes, a full half-hour less than the time it usually takes Sawyer to get dinner on the table.

Rappaport said the recipe could serve as a side dish or a main dish because the whole wheat and the peanut butter provide fiber and protein, and the snow peas serve as the vegetable. For meat eaters, some cooked chicken pieces would go well.

Some kids won't eat 100 percent whole-wheat pasta on the first try because the texture is different, so regular pasta would also work, Rappaport said. So would a pasta blend or a shape such as a spiral or ring appealing to little ones.

But try to get everything into one bowl on weeknights, said Rappaport.

"Drop the separate side dish," she said. "It's easier and faster to just mix it all in. Hide some of the vegetables by chopping them really small."

She suggested adding chopped carrot to tomato sauce, where it kind of "melts" and disappears. Hide carrots under the tortillas in quesadillas or even in the mac 'n' cheese.

Rappaport suggested making homemade tomato sauce — something that at first made Sawyer raise her brows a bit.

But Rappaport said in the time it takes the pasta water to boil, she can chop an onion, two garlic cloves and a carrot, saute them with olive oil and add a 32-ounce can of tomatoes. Herbs are optional.

It's quick and it doesn't have the



A new dish, whole-wheat noodles with snow pea pods in peanut sauce, is an alternative to a chicken-and-rice casserole (right).

### PEANUT BUTTER AND NOODLES SERVES 4 TO 6

8 ounces whole-wheat spaghetti  
½ cup snow peas  
½ cup creamy peanut butter  
¼ teaspoon ground ginger  
½ cup warm water  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
¼ cup minced scallions

Cook spaghetti per package directions, tossing the snow peas in during the last 5 minutes of cooking time. Whisk together the peanut butter, ginger, water and

soy sauce until smooth. Set aside. Drain spaghetti and snow peas and toss with sauce. Sprinkle with scallions. Serve warm.

Courtesy of Rachel Rappaport of Coconut & Lime

Per serving (based on 6 servings): 260 calories, 11 grams protein, 11 grams fat, 2 grams saturated fat, 33 grams carbohydrate, 6 grams fiber, 0 milligrams cholesterol, 321 milligrams sodium



Dana Sawyer (left), single mother of two young girls, helps food blogger Rachel Rappaport prepare snow pea pods.

PHOTOS BY AMY DAVIS [SUN PHOTOGRAPHER]

### ON THE TABLE FAST

Here are more quick dinner ideas from food blogger Rachel Rappaport:

● Simple tomato sauce: Saute 1 diced onion, 2 cloves garlic and 1 diced carrot (great way to sneak in extra veggies) in a small amount of olive oil, then add 32 ounces canned tomatoes and heat through. Serve over hot pasta.

● Quick quesadillas: Mash up 1 can beans, spread on one half of a tortilla, top with leftover meat and vegetables, and sprinkle with cheese. Fold shut and cook briefly on each side to heat through.

● Stir-fry: Heat some oil in a large pan and saute any vegetables until crisp. Toss in leftover meat and heat through. Drizzle with soy sauce or bottled stir-fry sauce and serve on rice or noodles.

● Breakfast for dinner: Omelets or scrambles are quick to make and can include leftover meat, favorite vegetables and cheese.

● Soup: Use commercial broth, frozen vegetables, leftover chicken and rice or pasta for a quick homemade soup that is a one-pot meal.

[Meredith Cohn]

## NUTRITIONAL BREAKDOWN

Meal	Calories	Protein	Fat	Sat. Fat	Carb.	Fiber	Sodium	Cholest.
<b>BEFORE</b>								
One serving of Dana Sawyer's chicken-and-rice casserole	737	37	32	7	73	trace	1,830	88
<b>AFTER</b>								
One serving of Rachel Rappaport's Peanut Butter and Noodles	260	11	11	2	33	6	321	0
<i>Besides calories, amounts are in grams. Sodium and cholesterol are in milligrams.</i>								

After an explanation that it was both peanut butter and spaghetti, two foods she likes, she slowly closed her mouth around a small forkful.

"Good?" asked Sawyer.

The ends of Lauren's mouth turned slightly upward and she gave a small nod. No spitting out or name-calling — which made it a fairly good review for a youngster on her first try of a new meal.

Sawyer said it was already scheduled for dinner the next week.

[meredith.cohn@baltsun.com](mailto:meredith.cohn@baltsun.com)