



# Kitchen Scoop

Volume 6—Spring 2004

## Five Years and Going Strong!

It is hard to believe it has already been more than 5 years since the inaugural class of Gourmet Retreats at CasaLana. The class occurred in Feb 1999, shortly after the completion of the kitchen renovation, the first of many projects that have occurred over the five years. The projects range from simpler tasks like repainting and decorating of guest rooms, to major construction with an +800sf second-story addition. I recently looked back at photos from when I first purchased the property and was amazed by the extent of change. After completing years of planned improvements, the CasaLana property has emerged with a distinctive character and style that invites guests to relax and enjoy the peacefulness. Mission Accomplished!

## A New Look on the Web

When I created my web site more than 7 years ago, I had no idea it would be such an integral part of business development. It is without doubt the primary source for attracting customers. As the business has grown, so have my web requirements and it was time to call in some professional web designers to help me get to the next level. Thanks to the help of Sydney and Paul of Watermelon Webworks (Portland, OR), both web sites have been totally redesigned and offer some exciting new features—like on-line registration for cooking classes. Check-out the new look and email me your comments.

## Watch for CasaLana on the Food Network

I was contacted recently by a producer for Roker Productions about featuring CasaLana and a Gourmet Retreat cooking class in a new show that begins April 1st on the Food Network. The show is called "Recipe for Success" and includes stories on people that have made a career change, ultimately resulting in a successful business in the food or hospitality industry. The Gourmet Retreats at CasaLana continue to be a popular choice for all levels of cooks that want a true hands-on experience. The air-date will be posted on the website, stay tuned.

Throughout all of the projects and improvements, CasaLana's customers have been enthusiastically supportive, Thank-you! If you haven't visited CasaLana yet, I look forward to welcoming you to CasaLana in the future for a cooking class or as a B&B guest.

Best Regards,

## PERSONALIZED CLASSES & SERVICES

- ◆ Gift certificates are available for any class or amount
- ◆ Private group classes and dinners are also available at CasaLana's kitchen in Calistoga
- ◆ Corporate team-building classes
- ◆ Customized demonstration classes for groups

**CALL 877•YOU•COOK(968-2665)**

## TIPS AND TIDBITS

### Homemade Stocks and Broths

Most flavorful sauces and soups start with a really good, flavorful stock. I believe a high-quality stock is an essential element of your kitchen 'pantry'. The canned and boxed versions are usually so high in sodium, they cannot be used for a reduction sauce because they become much too salty.

Bone-based stocks - Making stock from bones is the same process, regardless of the type of bones with the exception of fish bones which do use a different method. Start with joint bones because they have a lot of connective tissue and will make a gelatinous stock. Add aromatic vegetables (usually carrot, celery, onion, leek which is called a mirepoix), herbs (parsley stem, thyme, bay leaf which is known as a bouquet garni) and liquid, usually cold water. Other ingredients I add to my stock are some dried mushroom pieces, some wine, and often peppercorns or juniper berries. Brown stock can be made from most bones and involves browning the bones and mirepoix, which is a subject for a subsequent newsletter.

There is no set amount of cooking time. It is done when it has developed a good flavor. Usually 3—4 hours for chicken and 5—6 hours for veal or beef.

Stock freezes well. Just be sure to freeze it in varying size containers so you can select what you need. I freeze in 2 cup and quart size containers.

Good stock starts with good, fresh ingredients. The finished stock should be neutral in flavor so it gives you many options for usage.

Visit the website for recipes on stocks.