



TAILORED TASTE TIDBITS

VOLUME VI, ISSUE IV FALL 2011 FOOD NEWS FROM TAILORED TASTE PERSONAL CHEF SERVICE

Halloween Tradition



It started when I was 13 years old and my sister needed a costume for a college dance she was attending. On very short notice (less than 48 hours) I created a flapper dress for her without having to play hooky from 8th grade. Unfortunately no pictures of that masterpiece with pinned-on fringe remain.

When my sister had her first child I was called on to help with his Halloween costume. A simple clown suit for the first year grew to a very elaborate satin

Dracula by his third Halloween. Then his little sister arrived and the themed duo costumes began – Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, Alice and the White Rabbit, an Ewok and a Wookiee. Those children now have their own children and I'm still at it. Some of the original costumes have been tweaked to accommodate new themes. A dragon was turned into the



Crocodile to accompany Tinkerbell and Peter Pan for instance. But typically new creations have emerged each October such as Dorothy and the Scarecrow from the Wizard of Oz.



Last year, the third generation reached a peak with their trio of characters from Tim Burton's

Alice in Wonderland. In the interest of full disclosure, I only created the queen costumes – the Mad Hatter outfit was purchased.

This year I've got a ladybug, a monarch butterfly and a favorite stuffed animal in the works. I'll share those photos next year.

Happy Halloween!



Vacation Beverages

My family gave me a true vacation from cooking during our Hurricane Irene-abbreviated beach trip so I focused on beverages!

We marked each sunset with a signature cocktail du jour such as *The Aviation*, *Corpse Reviver #2*, *Thai's The Limit*, and *Sazeracs*.

The first three feature gin which is the preferred poison of most of my family. The *Sazerac*, a classic New Orleans libation, makes rye whiskey shine. I found the recipe for *Thai's the Limit* in the Washington Post last spring. Its base is a lemon-grass-ginger-habanero infused coconut milk. Obscure liqueurs are required for some of these drinks so we came prepared for just about any possible concoction.



It's hard to choose a favorite, but *The Aviation* has been holding my attention for quite a while primarily due to its garnish – the true maraschino cherry in the bottom of a martini glass. Luxardo is the brand of cherries I've found locally – small, blood-red, stemless cherries in dark syrup. Mmm.

(See the recipe column on the back for the details.)

The Aviation Cocktail

The history of cocktails is fascinating and this drink hails from the 1910's. Originally the drink was made with gin, maraschino liqueur, lemon juice and crème de Violet. In the 1930's, the Savoy Cocktail Book omitted (some say it was a typo) the crème de Violet and the 3-ingredient recipe has been the standard ever since.

I had no lemon one day and substituted lime juice – nice change. And at the beach on day 1 we had neither citrus. The substitution that day was Limoncello and that's now the recipe I use routinely.

My quantities vary from most recipes being heavier on the maraschino liqueur and much lighter on the citrus. Give it a try and let me know what you think.

2 oz gin
¾ oz maraschino liqueur
¼ oz limoncello (or lemon or lime juice)
1 **true** maraschino cherry

Chill a martini glass.

Fill a cocktail shaker half-way with ice.

Add the first three ingredients to the shaker.

Shake vigorously and pour into chilled glass. Add cherry and enjoy!



FYI: October 2011 is the first annual American Cheese Month – hope you've been enjoying some fabulous American cheeses! Point Reyes blue has been my special indulgence this month.

For other recipes and previous Tailored Taste Tidbits, visit
www.tailoredtaste.net

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Books I've Read

Apparently from the list below, I was attracted to non-fiction this year. Here's a sampling of what I've been reading.

As Always, Julia by Joan Reardon

In 1952 Julie Child wrote a letter to Bernard DeVoto about an article he'd written in *Harpers* on stainless vs. carbon steel knives. Bernard's wife, Avis, acting as his secretary, responded to the letter and a life-long friendship developed. Avis facilitated Julia's relationship with Knopf, the publisher of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. The letters cover politics, husbands, restaurants, proofreaders, writers and of course food and recipes. A lovely read.

Blood, Butter & Bones by Gabrielle Hamilton

Wow, have I led a sheltered life. This memoir of a chef who was raised in rural Pennsylvania by a fun-loving set designer father and French mother takes a difficult turn in her teens as the family disintegrates. At 16 she was on her own and living hand to mouth. The story of her growing up and ultimately creating her restaurant *Prune* in Manhattan is fascinating. One of the best chef memoirs I've read.

Cleopatra by Stacy Schiff

We all know the stories of Cleopatra – delivering herself to Caesar wrapped in a rug; the stalemate of the Battle of Actium; her ultimate death at her own hand via an asp. Author Stacy Schiff revisits these stories with the clear eye of an historian and the talent of a novelist. This book reads like historical fiction vs. dry history while correcting a plethora of misconceptions/myths about the last Pharaoh.

One Hundred Names for Love by Diane Ackerman

Two authors married for many years whose relationship is cemented through words. He has a massive stroke and suffers from global aphasia. His road to recovery, with the help of his wife and an aide, is non-conventional as they bombard him with language and word-play to assist him with writing about his experiences. Ms. Ackerman's language borders on purple prose at times, but it's still an extraordinary story.

My next non-fiction book will be *Time to Betray: The Astonishing Double Life of a CIA Agent Inside the Revolutionary Guards of Iran* by Reza Kahlili which was recommended by a dear writer friend of mine.

My favorite quote from this summer's reading:

"Baudelaire called Brillat-Savarin... an insipid old brioche whose sole use is to furnish windbags with stupid quotations." ... Julia Child