



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2012

PICKS of
the WEEK



Cajun Rabbit
Sausage

This great find from the Jimenez Family Farm of Santa Ynez is a must-try. It is excellent when grilled, braised or sauteed, when added to sauces, stews and soups, or whatever your favorite sausage uses are. This sausage possesses excellent Cajun spices with a natural rabbit flavor that adds a unique touch to your dishes. On the Jimenez' farm, rabbits are raised without the use of hormone or antibiotic injections, and fed an all-natural diet for an extremely flavorful and clean finish. If you're looking to prepare a New Orleans-style dish in honor of the upcoming Mardi Gras celebration, try using this Cajun rabbit sausage in a homemade jambalaya as seen in today's Fix of the Week. Price is \$10.50 per pound.



Organic Treviso

This stunning vegetable, grown by Jacob Grant of Roots Farm in Los Olivos, can make for a great presentation at the dinner table. Also referred to as "this winter flower," this red radicchio is a staple in Italy's Treviso province, heavily incorporated into their local cuisine. Possessing a pleasing bitter flavor, it is excellent when enjoyed raw in a salad and accented with a sharp acidic dressing. Mr. Grant recommends mixing it with his curly endive for a nice chicory salad, or using it with other bitter greens for a nice braising mix. Certified organic, price is \$1.50 each.



Ground Pecans

This is a delicious way to add a nice unique crust to your chicken, fish or pork. I typically mix half bread crumbs and half ground pecans with finely chopped fresh thyme in a bowl. In separate bowls, add two beaten eggs in one and flour in the other. Dip your fish, chicken or pork in the flour, then in the egg, and finish by coating the outside completely with the pecan and bread crumb mixture. Place flat in a greased baking dish and drizzle the top with melted butter and chopped garlic. Place in a 400 degree oven and bake about 15 minutes per side, depending on the meat. When the outside has formed a nice crust, remove from oven and sprinkle with fresh thyme. Grown by Avila and Sons farm. Price averages \$7 per pound.

Find out when local farmers markets are held in the Culinary Calendar on page D7.

Allergy-free and tasty

'Ultimate Snack Book' focuses on kid-friendly recipes

By MARILYN MCMAHON
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

Co-authors of five bestselling cookbooks, identical twins Judi and Shari Zucker are quick to give credit where it is due. "Our mother's cooking was so bad we became vegetarians at the age of 11 and started preparing meals for the family at 12," said Judi, laughing. "We published our first cookbook when we were 17 and students at Beverly Hills High School," added Shari, which she says rhymes with Ferrari. "How to Survive Snack Attacks... Naturally" (1979) sold more than 80,000 copies and since then the sisters have written "How to Eat Without Meat... Naturally" (1981), "Double Your Energy With Half the Effort" (1991), "Double Energy Diet" (2008) and their newly released "The Ultimate Allergy-Free Snack Cookbook" (Square One Publishers, \$16.95). Now 50 and proud of it, the twins, who could pass for half their age, live in Montecito homes not far from each other. Judi, who has a real estate license, is married to Dr. Chris Mjelde, a dentist, and they have a daughter, Taryn, 17, and a son, Tanner, 16, both students at Santa Barbara High School.

An interior designer, Shari is the wife of Daniel Kilstofte, owner of a high tech company, and the mother of twin sons, Max and Miles, 22, who graduated from UC Irvine, and daughter, Mattea, 14, a freshman at Santa Barbara High. "Mattea is my Costco girl — everything I didn't know I wanted," quipped Shari. During a lively interview at Shari's home, the women said they were dubbed the Double Energy Twins, a phrase they have trademarked, by their father, Irwin Zucker, a Hollywood publicist, who is still working at the age of 84.

So is their mother, Devra Z. Hill, 76, a movie critic. Their sister Lori Z, 53, is a DJ in Northern California. "Our interest in healthy eating and nutrition began when we ran cross country and track in high school. We were winning one- and two-mile track records and realized that certain foods gave us more energy," said Shari. Their knowledge about nutrition expanded as they attended health conventions with their father and heard lectures by notables like Dr. Linus Pauling. "We realized at a young age that, as identical twins, we got a lot of attention, and we had the power to influence people to lead a healthy lifestyle," said Shari, stressing that they "don't preach. We share information."

The Zuckers continued their study of health and nutrition at UCSB, graduating in 1983 with bachelor of science degrees in ergonomics, the study of human physiology, physical education and nutrition. Afterward, they were media specialists for General Mills to publicize the company's Nature Valley Granola products, and they taught natural foods classes to adults and children.

Their newest book started out as "The Ultimate Snack Book" until their publisher, Square One, suggested they focus on allergy-free recipes, especially for children because the majority of those diagnosed with allergies are under the age of 18. "We also knew at book signings for our other books, we were frequently asked about gluten-free recipes or recipes for other allergies," said Judi. In the introduction to the book, they explain the difference between an allergy and food intolerance: "A food allergy



Known as the Double Energy Twins, Shari, left, and Judi Zucker sample a pizza recipe from their latest book, "The Ultimate Allergy-Free Snack Cookbook."

Quick 'n' Easy Pizza Sauce

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| 3 tablespoons extra virgin oil | 1 tablespoon honey |
| 1 medium yellow onion, diced | 1 tablespoon dried Italian herb seasoning |
| 1 clove garlic, minced | 1 tablespoon dried basil |
| 29-ounce can tomato puree | ½ teaspoon sea salt |
| 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes | |

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-low heat. Add the onion and garlic and saute 5 to 8 minutes or until the onions begin to soften. Add all of the remaining ingredients and stir well. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring the sauce to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer uncovered, stirring often, for at least 30 minutes or until the sauce reaches the desired thickness. (The longer it simmers, the thicker it will get and the less acidic it will taste.) Use immediately or refrigerate in an air-tight container up to a week. Freeze up to six months.
Yield: About 4 cups

occurs when the body's immune system overreacts to a food, believing it is harmful. This response can range from minor skin irritations, like an itchy rash or stuffy nose, to more serious respiratory problems, including life-threatening anaphylaxis, which usually occur within minutes after exposure to the allergen. Signs include difficulty breathing and swallowing and swelling of the lips, tongue and throat. "A food intolerance is similar to an allergy, but it does not involve the immune system, and symptoms like headaches, skin rashes and/or digestive issues are less severe and nonlife threatening." The top eight allergies are dairy, eggs, wheat, soy, peanuts, tree nuts (walnuts, pecans, etc.) fish and shellfish, according to the twins.

"The most common are dairy and wheat, and I realized after we wrote the book that my son Tanner is allergic to dairy and wheat," said Judi.

Shari pointed out that the book includes a page titled "Doggone Foods," which is a list of foods that cause allergies in dogs and cats. Included are avocados, chocolate, salt, onions/garlic and grapes, raisins and currants.

"We had to fight the publisher for this," said Shari, owner of an English pointer named Gucci.

Asked why there is a recent emphasis on gluten-free products, Shari said, "People have had symptoms of the allergy — headaches, rashes, digestive problems — for years but didn't realize the cause.

Please see **SNACK** on D8

SAFE, NUTRITIOUS, EASY-TO-PREPARE SNACKS FOR ANY OCCASION

THE ULTIMATE ALLERGY-FREE SNACK COOKBOOK

OVER 100 KID-FRIENDLY RECIPES FOR THE ALLERGIC CHILD

JUDI AND SHARI ZUCKER

FYI

Judi and Shari Zucker will sign their book "The Ultimate Allergy-Free Snack Cookbook" from 6:30 to 8 p.m. March 1 at Chaucer's Book Store, 3321 State St. in Loretto Plaza. For more information, call 682-6787.

The softcover book, which costs \$16.95, is also available at Tri-County Produce, 335 S. Milpas St.; Barnes & Noble; Amazon.com; and squareonepublishers.com.

To contact the authors, call 1-877-900-2665 or go to www.doubleenergytwins.com.

From a family tragedy springs new wine plot



Gabe Saglie

That the Murphy family's new Santa Maria property is shaped a lot like an isthmus smacks of serendipity. "We were looking for a great piece of pinot noir-growing land with a little bit of soul," said vintner Matt Murphy with a distinct Southern inflection. His family's find off of East Clark Avenue in 2007, which came after a year's worth of hunting through pinot hot spots like Carneros and Lompoc's Santa Rita Hills, fit the bill for clear viticultural reasons: The plot's pervasive, sand-like soil drains extremely well and its proximity to the Pacific Ocean (the Murphy's property is the second-most western vineyard in the Santa Maria Valley)

creates ideal maritime growing conditions. But sentiment was a factor here, too. When Hurricane Katrina slammed to the Gulf Coast on Aug. 29, 2005, it wrought widespread devastation. Most of us know the story of New Orleans' tragedy well; images of leveled levees and the decimation that followed dominated the national media for weeks, and rightfully so. But the waste on neighboring states, Mississippi especially, was no less distressing. The Murphys know that well, since their family compound — a 14-acre property on Henderson Point in the city of Pass Christian which stretched, in the shape of an isthmus, straight out to the Gulf's shores — was demolished.

"It was home to us," said Murphy of the land that's been in his family for generations, and which hosted dozens of his relatives during summer months, mainly, for years. "And it'll never be the same." That family plot was dubbed Presqu'île by Murphy's grandfather, "who loved to throw French words at everybody," Murphy quipped. The word (pronounced "press-keel") translates to "almost an island." A year later, during the wine grape harvest of 2006, Matt found himself working at Bien Nacido Vineyard in Santa Barbara wine country. He'd spent previous vintages in Napa, learning the business of growing grapes and selling wine. This was the year he'd get to know an increasingly

renowned region called Santa Maria. The 2006 harvest also brought to Bien Nacido Dieter Cronje, who'd been trying his hand at winemaking for four years in his native South Africa and developed a zeal for pinot noir. "I love to make it because it's tough to make," he said with a southern accent of a totally different kind. To stretch his wings, "it was either Burgundy or the United States for me, and since I knew my lack of French would make Burgundy tough, I came to the States," Cronje said with a laugh. The weather helped set his sights on Central California instead of Oregon.

Please see **SAGLIE** on D9

