



Culinary Arts Society of Ajijic

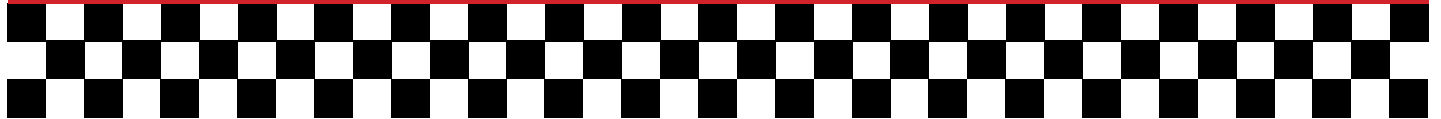
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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www.ajijiccasa.org

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CASA President - Monica Molloy



CASA MISSION STATEMENT

CASA members, associates and guests are provided a monthly forum to share foods; learn new preparation techniques; stimulate culinary ideas and meet new people who enjoy the wonderful world of food in a competitive atmosphere that encourages creativity and rewards excellence.



2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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NEXT CASA MEETING

Please let us know if you will be attending the CASA meeting next **Monday, May 16th, 2016**. Remember that it begins promptly at 4:00 pm, and will be at **"La Mision" restaurant** at Rio Bravo #7 (turn down toward the lake like going to the current Tabarka Restaurant. La Mision is the former Villa de Arte. Presenters, please be set up no later than 3:45 pm.

May 16th Categories

Category A - Pates, Terrines, Spreads

Category B - Yeast Breads, Buns, Crackers

Please register at casalakeside@yahoo.com

Your Board and Committee Chairs have decided to slow down and take a well deserved break, so this month we thought we would return to basics. And what's more basic than tomato soup, the staple to the North American home cooked meal?

Attached is a simple tomato soup recipe I found online at Food Network by Chef Ree Drummond while sitting on the beach in Cancun this week sipping a gin and tonic. It reminded me of all the pointers Chef Pedro from "Pedro's Go Bistro" gave us last meeting during his presentation on preparing home made fresh tomato soup vs. canned tomato soup.

Tips from the Chef:

Use canned tomatoes rather than fresh for a more tomato flavor, but be careful of brands, Costco brand that is diced in a large can is excellent.

Add a little sugar to boost the flavor.

Use part of a Knorr bouillon cube of either dehydrated beef, chicken or vegetable in place of homemade stock.

Use an inexpensive butter, (Daisy Brand, 79 pesos per kilo). To test if it is real

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Culinary Arts Society of Ajijic

Meet our April 2016 Judges

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CASA Judge Ed Knudson

Ed has lived in Ajijic for a little more than 3 years. He has lived most his life in Seattle Tacoma Wash.

Although he has no formal training -- food and cooking have been of great interest for him. Practice and taking some classes and workshops with Jeff Smith AKA The Frugal gourmet and using his skills for fun entertaining.

While living in the US, he and his wife RASA entertained rather lavishly and dinner at their home was a sought after experience by friends and acquaintances. History has it that Rasa is a very good cook as well and dinners at her family home were always nice functions.

Always enjoying the creative side of cooking Ed tends toward continental and in particular French cooking.

Most importantly Ed has learned in cooking and entertaining "Don't sweat it, relax and enjoy the fun"

You can usually fix anything and if you do drop the chicken on the floor, relax, they'll never know.

Ed Knudson
edrasa2@outlook.com



CASA Judge Angela Mendoza

Angela Mendoza is from Northern California. She moved to Ajijic 7 months ago and is owner of La Mesa Restaurant located here in Ajijic on the Carreterra just west of Juarez.

She became a restaurant owner and opened La Mesa Restaurant because she loves creating special plates and putting a twist to comfort food.

Her love for tasting and creating dishes began when she was 21 and exposed to great Napa Valley California wine. She then started pairing certain foods with wine and later began creating dishes to go with specific wines. She later found out the process was very simple. That champagne goes with everything;) hence her favorite wine being a bubbly!!

In order for dishes to be at their "maximum potential" she contributes fresh and good quality food to be incorporated in her cooking. She loves dining at restaurants worldwide which is where some of her creative dishes are sparked from. She believes every dish has the potential of being spectacular with the right ingredients and of course the love that goes into cooking. From a grilled cheese to a filet mignon all food is special through a chefs perspective!
BUEN PROVECHO!!

Angela Mendoza
Email: ang3mendoza@yahoo.com



CASA Judge Fernanda Chessman

Fernanda immigrated from Italy to Canada in 1968, too young to know how to cook properly.

But she remembered what food should taste like, so she tried to duplicate the dishes that her Mother and Grandmother used to cook, and after many failures, there was success. She managed to make quite a few dishes just the way they should be.

Fernanda like the k.i.s.s. dishes, you can feed lots of people in a hurry and they taste good.

Her love of cooking isto see people eat and enjoy especially if she cooked the food.

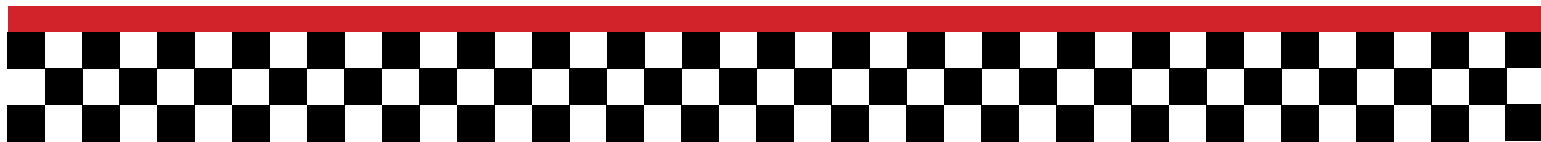
Her husband, Jon is also a good cook, but he is the meat (BBQ) and potato specialist.

Fernanda is also very interested in joining CASA. Welcome!

Fernanda Chessman



April Judges at work

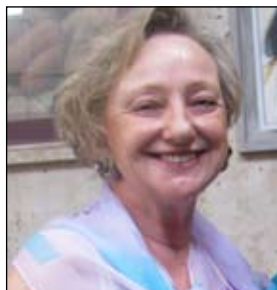


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Meet our April 2016 Winners

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Category A French Main Dish



Category A First Place Winner
Monica Molloy



First Place Category A
Monica Molloy
Beef Wellington with Demi-Glace,
Marsala Sauce - "Filet Mignon en
Croute Lutece"

Second Place Category A
& Peoples Choice
Michele Lococo
Escargot Stuffed Chicken with
a Soubise Sauce

Third Place Category A
Patrick Waite
French Cabbage Soup



Best Presentation Category A
Sally Myers
Fruits de la Mer Nicoise

Category B Cakes, Tortes, Cheesecakes



Category B First Place Winner
Paulette Coburn



First Place Category B
Paulette Coburn
Chocolate Caramel Pecan Torte

Second Place (Tie) Category B
Lydia Cortes
Guava Glory

Second Place (Tie) Category B
Keith Sofka
Apple-Caramel-Nut Cheesecake

Third Place Category B
Margaret Ancira
Lady Baltimore Cake



Best Presentation Category B
Catherine Suter
Spiced Caramel Cake with Pistachio
and Rosewater Cream

Category A Winners French Main Dish



Monica Molloy, Michele Lococo & Patrick Waite

Category B Winners Cakes, Tortes, Cheesecakes



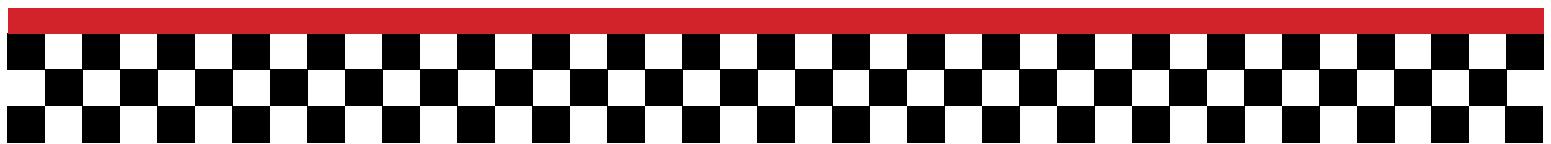
Paulette Coburn, Lydia Cortes, Keith Sofka,
and Margaret Ancira



Peoples Choice (Tie) Category B
Allison Quattrocchi
Magic Chocolate Flan Cake

Peoples Choice (Tie) Category B
Mary Ann Waite
White Chocolate Snickers Cheesecake

Peoples Choice (Tie) Category B
Catherine Suter
Spiced Caramel Cake with Pistachio
and Rosewater Cream



Culinary Arts Society of Ajijic

April 2016 Winning Recipes

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FIRST PLACE CATEGORY A

BEEF WELLINGTON WITH DEMI- GLACE, MARSALA SAUCE "Filet Mignon en Croute Lutece" With Chicken Foie Gras mousse & demi-glace marsala sauce

Monica Molloy

**By the famous French Chef, Andre Soltner from the Cookbook, "The Lutece Cookbook"

Serves 4

- Salt & pepper
- 4 filet mignons, about 5 ounces each
- 1 Tbsp. peanut oil
- 1 ounce each of chicken foie gras mousse
- 1 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 shallots, peeled, chopped
- 6 ounces button mushrooms, washed and chopped coarse
- Flour for flouring work surface
- 1 pound puff pastry
- 1 egg beaten with a little cold water

Salt & pepper the filets. In a skillet, heat the oil over high heat, sear filets 3 minutes on each side, or until meat thermometer reaches 120 degrees F.

Remove from skillet. Set aside, let cool. In the same sauté pan, over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the shallots, and sauté for 1 minute. Add the mushrooms, salt and pepper, and continue sautéing until all the liquid has cooked off and the mushrooms are dry. Set aside and cool.

Prepare Chicken Foie Gras

**From the famous French Chef Michel Richard, he was among the first Chefs inducted to the James Beard Foundation's Who's Who in American Food and wine. Chicken Foie Gras (makes 3 cups, serves 12 as an appetizer or spread)

- 16 Tbsp. unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup finely chopped onions
- 1 garlic clove
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 pound chicken livers, rinsed and any dark spots or veins removed

- 1 tsp. fine sea salt
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

In a small saucepan, melt 2 Tbsp. of the butter over medium heat. Add the onions and stir to coat with butter. Cover the pan and cook for about 5 – 7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions are translucent. Using a rasp grater, grate the garlic directly onto the onions (or mince the garlic and add to it). Add the cream and bring to a simmer. Cover, reduce the heat to low, and gently cook about 6 minutes, or until the onions are very soft.

Remove from heat and stir in the remaining 14 tablespoons butter. Return to the heat and stir until the butter has melted and the mixture combined. Remove from heat.

Place the raw livers in a blender and add the onion mixture, salt and pepper. Blend until thoroughly combined, scraping down the sides of a blender as necessary. Transfer to a measuring cup or bowl with a spout.

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Bring a pot of water to a boil. Place 4 small ovenproof bowls or crocks with about 1 cup capacity into a large deep baking dish, arranging them so the bowls do not touch each other or the sides of the pan. Using a small strainer, strain the mousse into the bowls, dividing evenly.

Cover each bowl with an aluminum foil cap and place on baking dish on an oven rack. Pour enough boiling water to reach half way up the sides of the bowls. Cook 30 minutes, or until the mousse is set. Remove from the oven and let cool to room temperature.

Refrigerate the mousse for a few hours to chill. Once the mousse is cold and set, let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving.

On a lightly floured work surface, roll out the puff pastry in a sheet 1/16 "thick. Cut out 4 rounds, each the size of the filet, plus a generous border. Cut out for more rounds, each a little larger than the first 4.

Put the first 4 pastry rounds on an ungreased pastry sheet. Put 1 cooked filet mignon at the center of the round. Place a generous tablespoon or more of the Foie Gras mousse on top of the filet. Spread ¼ of the reserved sautéed mushrooms on top of the Foie Gras mousse. Brush the exposed edges of pastry with a little of the beaten egg with cold water.

Place the other larger remaining pastry round on top of each filet. Firmly press the overhanging edges of the top pastry to the exposed edges of the bottom pastries, to seal them. Brush the top pastries with the beaten egg. Refrigerate for at least 15 minutes on a pastry sheet.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Trim off the excess pastry, leaving a ¼ inch border of sealed pastry around the filet. Place filets on a pastry sheet in the center of a preheated oven.

Bake for 12 minutes or until pastries are golden brown.

Marsala, demi-glace sauce

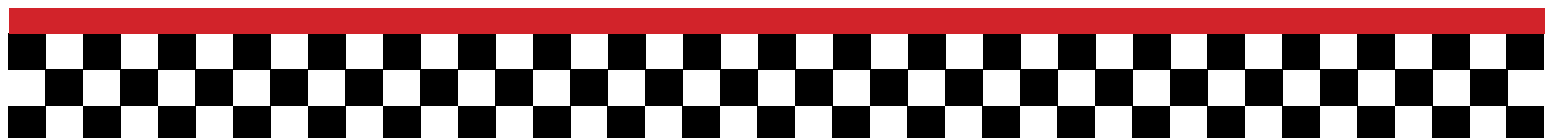
Serves 4

- 1 small shallot
- ¾ cup marsala wine
- ¾ cup demi-glace
- ½ tsp. balsamic vinegar
- ½ tsp. chopped fresh thyme
- 1 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- Salt & Pepper to taste

Return now empty skillet to medium low heat, add shallot and cook, stirring constantly, until lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Add wine, and bring to simmer, scraping bottom of pan with wooden to loosen browned bits. Add ¾ cup demi-glace, balsamic and any accumulated juices from filets, return to simmer and cook until reduced. Off heat, whisk in fresh thyme and butter, season with salt and pepper to taste. Spoon directly over the filets in puff pastry.



FIRST PLACE
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CASA April Speaker

Pedro Palmer

Pedro Palmer is owner/chef at Go Bistro. He has 36 years of culinary experience. He is an international chef, calling his cuisine "World Fusion". He has studied at the Cordon Bleu in Paris, as well as taking cooking classes in Italy, Thailand, India, Turkey, Canada, the USA and Mexico.

Pedro has a rich and mixed ancestry: Scot/Brit/Mexican/Spanish and is fluent in both Spanish and English, with a working knowledge of French and Italian. He has worked in France and Italy and owned restaurants and taught in Toronto.

He has owned three restaurants in Ajijic - Pedro's Gourmet, Go, and currently Go Bistro. Go Bistro is a charming restaurant he opened in December, converting the first floor of the home he bought with his late wife sixteen years ago.

The great French Chef La Rue said "The sauce is the thing and without it there is nothing!" We were lucky to have Pedro talk about the fundamental French sauces, and demonstrate one.

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butter remove some of the packaging and smell (preferably with no onlookers lest you be thought of as yet another crazed CASA Member). If it doesn't have that sweet smell of butter, they probably have mixed it with margarine, (which is legal in Mexico) not to declare even if it consists of up to 25% margarine.

At the very end add a generous splash of good quality olive oil for shine and flavor.

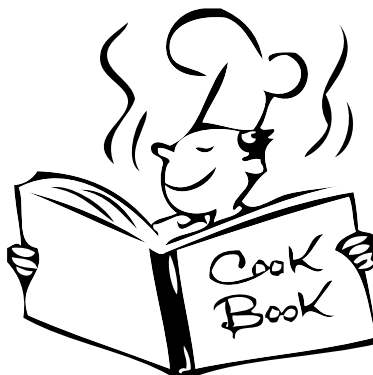
And of course, there are some tomato soup Aficionados who would not dream of eating tomato soup without a generous splash of gin!

So from beginning to end you can be sitting down to delicious home made tomato soup in just 40 minutes.

For our next meeting on May 16th, Michele Lococo (our V-Pres./Program Chairperson) has arranged another exciting Demonstration/Speaker: Marie-Lyse Jacobsmuhlen (who had her own televised cooking program in Sri Lanka for several years and will be launching CASA's first cooking class in June.) P.S. You will have to attend to find out what she will be speaking on and demonstrating.

With the warm summer months ahead of us you may want to grab an empty highball glass, add a jigger of gin, add lots of ice and tonic and a wedge of lime. Then simply sit back and toast to another great month at CASA.

Warmest regards,
Monica Molloy
CASA President 2016



The Best Tomato Soup Ever

Sherry and heavy cream really do make this dish The Best Tomato Soup Ever.

Ingredients

- 1 medium white or yellow onion
- 6 tablespoons ($\frac{3}{4}$ stick) butter
- Two 14.5-ounce cans diced tomatoes
- One 46-ounce bottle or can tomato juice
- 3 to 6 tablespoons sugar
- 1 or 2 tablespoons chicken base, or 3 chicken bouillon cubes
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup sherry, optional
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh basil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley

Directions

To begin, dice the onion. Melt the butter in a large pot or Dutch oven. Throw in the onion and cook until translucent.

Now dump in the diced tomatoes and stir to combine. Add the tomato juice.

Next - and this is important - in order to combat the acidity of the tomatoes add 3 to 6 tablespoons of sugar. Now, you'll want to start on the low side, then taste and add more as needed. Some tomatoes and juice have more of an acidic bite than others. (For what it's worth, and I realize it's not worth much, I use 6 tablespoons of sugar.)

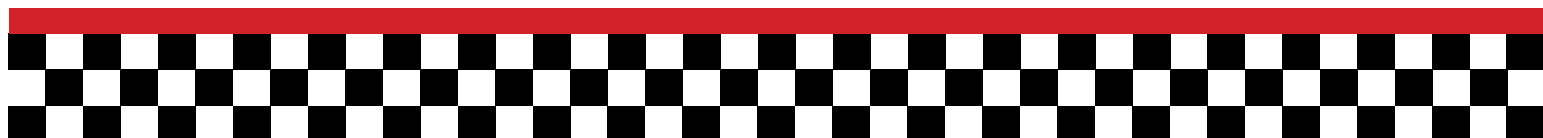
Next, add 1 or 2 tablespoons chicken base to the pot. I added 3, and it wound up being a little too much.

Now you can add lots of freshly ground black pepper. Stir to combine, then heat almost to a boil. Then turn off the heat.

Add in the sherry if desired. Stir in the cream. Add the basil and parsley and stir.

Serve the soup warm!

Recipe courtesy of Ree Drummond



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FIRST PLACE CATEGORY B

CHOCOLATE CARAMEL PECAN TORTE

Paulette Colburn

Ingredients:

- 4 oz. unsweetened chocolate coarsely chopped
- 2 ¼ c. all-purpose flour
- 2 ¼ c. brown sugar
- 1 t. baking soda
- ¼ t. salt
- 1 c. sour cream
- ½ c. butter, softened
- 3 eggs
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 c. water
- 2 c. pecan pieces

Caramel:

- 1 ½ c. granulated sugar
- 2/3 c. whipping cream
- ¼ c. butter

Topping:

- 2 ½ c. whipping cream
- 1/3 c. pecan halves, toasted

Cake:

- Grease 3 9" round metal cake pans. Line bottoms with parchment paper. Set aside.
- In bowl over saucepan of hot (not boiling) water, melt chocolate. Let cool slightly.
- In large bowl, whisk flour, brown sugar, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Beat in sour cream and butter; beat in eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each. Beat in Chocolate and vanilla. Beat for 2 minutes. Gradually stir in 1 cup water.
- Divide among prepared pans; sprinkle pecans over tops. Bake in center of 350 f. oven (180 c.) until cake tester inserted in center comes out clean - 30-35 minutes. Turn out onto racks and peel off paper. Let cool completely. (Make ahead- Wrap in plastic wrap and store for up to 24 hours)

Caramel:

- In heavy saucepan, stir sugar with 1/3

cup water over medium heat till dissolved, brushing down side of pan with pastry brush dipped in cold water. Bring to a boil; boil vigorously without stirring but brushing down side of pan until dark amber, about 10 minutes.

2. Standing back and averting face, add cream; whisk until smooth. Whisk in butter; let cool. (Make ahead: Refrigerate in airtight container for up to 3 days. Reheat to use.)

Topping:

- Whip cream.
- Place 1 cake layer pecan side up on cake plate. Drizzle with 2 T. caramel. Spread with 1 cup whipped cream. Drizzle with 2 T. caramel, being careful not to let any drip down side. Repeat layers once. Top with remaining cake layer. Spread remaining whipped cream over top and side.
- Drizzle 2 T. caramel over top. Garnish with chocolate shards and toasted pecans. Serve with remaining caramel.



See You There...



May 16th

Category A - Pates, Terrines, Spreads

Category B - Yeast Breads, Buns, Crackers

June 20th

Category A - Fusion Main Dish (2)

Category B - Fusion Desserts (2)

July 18th

Category A - Mediteranian Main Dish (3)

Category B - 3 Ingredient Desserts (4)

August 15th

Category A - Seafood

Category B - Filled Pastries

September 19th

Category A - Mexican Main Dish

Category B - Mexican Desserts

October 17th

Category A - Chopped Individual Main Dish (5)

Category B - Chopped Main Dish Dessert (5)

November 21st

Category A - Outing - No Meeting

Category B - Outing - No Meeting

December 19th

Category A - Botanas/Appetizers

Category B - Holiday Desserts

