



TAILORED TASTE TIDBITS

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Back at It!

After an odd 6 weeks of doing little or nothing while my broken shoulder healed, I jumped back into my work with two feet just as Easter arrived. It's been a whirlwind of catching up since. Now summer is here and things are settling back into a semi-manageable pattern. That's a long explanation of why there was no Spring newsletter.

In early July I attended the Fancy Food Show in New York. Wow! Three huge convention center halls filled with booth after booth of well, fancy food! Olives, chocolate, peppers, yogurt, wine, limoncello, cachaca, bitters, beer, quinoa, cheese, more cheese, more chocolate, water, macarons, macaroni, truffled this and truffled that, vinegars and olive oils – and that list barely scratches the surface of the foods on display and available for sampling!

Much of the product packaging was eye-catching and one was dazzling! Check out this Italian balsamic vinegar whose creators are looking for a U.S. distributor. Yes, those are Swarovski crystals.



Here are two photos (miniature fruits and veggies on the left; sweet drop peppers on the right) snapped while wandering and sampling for 15 hours (seriously!) over two days. I know, I know – it's a tough job.



Limoncello Cocktail

While ambling through the Italia Pavilion at the Fancy Food Show, I sampled a Limoncello cocktail. Hmm. I'd never considered Limoncello as the main ingredient in a cocktail before as I generally use it as an accent. This has opened up a whole new category of summer drinks for me. Maybe you'll move your bottle toward the front of the freezer after trying this.

Limoncello Spritz

2 oz limoncello
1 oz vodka
3 oz tonic water (*use a good brand like Fever Tree or Q – it really does make a difference*)
1 lemon peel for garnish

Place limoncello and vodka in a cocktail shaker. Add ice. Shake. Strain into a chilled glass with a few ice cubes. Top with tonic and garnish with a strip of lemon peel. Salút.



One-Skillet Bison Quinoa

My challenge in February and March was creating/eating dinner without using my dominant arm. This resulted in quite a few skillet meals using ground proteins along with canned/ jarred/ frozen items, and grains – dinner all in one dish with no knife needed! Here is an easy and tasty one that I made with ingredients I had on “hand.”

½ tablespoon canola or olive oil
1 lb ground bison
1 jar Green Mountain salsa
½ cup quinoa, pre-rinsed
½ cup shredded Mexican blend cheese

Heat oil over high heat in deep skillet that has a lid. Add bison, breaking it up with a wooden spoon. Brown the meat.

Add entire jar of salsa and stir. Turn heat to low and simmer for about 10 minutes.

Sprinkle quinoa over the meat mixture and stir. The quinoa will cook in the liquid from the salsa. If the dish appears dry, add some water. Cover the skillet and let simmer for 15 minutes.

The quinoa should be cooked in this length of time and you will see it has ‘bloomed’ and the grains now have thin rings around them like Saturn.

Serve with shredded cheese on top.

Note: If I’d had my able assistant/great nephew Dominic around to help, I might have added onion!



Oil & Vinegar & Salts, Oh My!

In early March, I enjoyed a field trip (broken arm and all) to an amazing shop, the aptly-named Cleo’s Fine Oils & Vinegars in Annapolis. Wow! The sister owners have assembled a fabulous selection of high end, unusual extra virgin olive oils, balsamic vinegars and sea salts. One sister is a physician and the other an olive oil expert. The combo of their passions and talents led to the creation of Cleo’s.

Stainless steel casks with spigots line the walls of the sleek store and tiny paper cups at each cask allow for sampling. Narrowing down what to buy is difficult. After shop manager Dee’s demo where we tasted oils and vinegars straight up, on raw spinach and arugula leaves, and on bread and cheese, I was still perplexed. Then Dee combined the aged white peach balsamic with the basil oil – oh yes! And the jalapeno oil with tangerine aged balsamic – again, yes. The chocolate balsamic drizzled over fresh pineapple strewn with mint sent us running for that vinegar.

Cleo’s website www.cleosfineoils.com is as pretty and sleek as the shop. Take a look when you have a chance.

Some of My Favorite Tastes at the Show

Ezra Feta Cheese – amazingly creamy and made in Ohio. Fingers crossed it makes it to stores in this area.

Sabatino Truffle Mac & Cheese – oh my! Order directly from Sabatino Tartufi. They also have a wonderful truffled honey.

Kentucky Woods Bourbon Barrel Cake – moist with bourbon with a crunch on the top from nuts; freezes well, and ships in a round wooden box.

Noosa Yogurts – Aussie cultures + Colorado cows = delicious yogurt; available at Whole Foods and Target!

Squirrel Brand Black Truffle Almonds – lightly salted and tasting of that heavenly earthy truffle.

Rogue Creamery Blue Heaven Cheese Powder – subtle flavors of several Rogue Creamery blue cheese in powder form. Shake into dressings or onto popcorn.

Shanley Farms Citriburst Finger Limes – gherkin-shaped citrus filled with little spheres that burst with lime flavor. Fun in cocktails. Still trying to come up with other uses.

For other recipes and previous Tailored Taste Tidbits, visit

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