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# Food & Fodder

**Vino victory**  
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WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2016 THE DOMINION POST **5-A**



**MARY GABRIELE**

Don't disrespect the homemade sauce, meatballs

**GROWING UP** in a large, Italian family had many advantages.

For example, I was always surrounded by an extended network of aunts, uncles, cousins and godparents who looked after me. There was always plenty of love and food to go around. Even though my immediate family would have been considered poor by today's standards, I never wanted for anything, especially food. Food was always plentiful.

Some of my most cherished memories revolve around Sunday dinner in the back of my Aunt Rosie's little grocery store in Clarksburg. Every Sunday after Mass, we would hit the local bakery, get some hot pepperoni rolls and Italian bread and head over to Aunt Rosie's to eat dinner. Sunday "dinner" was actually lunch. At about 1 p.m., without fail, we would sit down to a feast that included salad, fresh bread and homemade spaghetti sauce and meatballs. If we were lucky, we would also be treated to oven-fried chicken or chicken gizzards in sauce.

After we finished this extensive meal, we would visit my mother's extended family in Shinnston. With each step (there were at least six), my aunts would offer us even more food. If you politely said, "No thank you, I am full," their response would be, "What, you do not like my food?"

It was really tough to say no to your little Italian aunt who just wanted you to "at least take a small bite." Behind my mother's back, they would each ask me if their sauce and meatballs were the best. I was too scared to say "no" for fear they would never offer me food again, or worse yet, be mad at me. Of course I said yes theirs was the best, hoping that it would never get back to my mother. That would be treason. To this day, it would be a huge sign of disrespect if I ever implied that my mother's cooking wasn't the best ... at least in her presence.

When it comes to sauce and meatballs, and cooking in general, it is my experience that Italian women (at least my relatives) are very territorial and competitive. It can be extremely stressful to host a family celebration and be responsible for preparing the sauce and meatballs, as the standard has been set so high by those before me. If for some reason my sauce and meatballs fall short, I would never, ever live it down. Whispers, rumors and behind-the-back discussions would result for years to come. My sisters and mother would recall the one time that my sauce wasn't up to snuff, and remind me from that moment on.

This pressure will not stop me, however, from trying to perfect the food that was such a big part of my heritage and childhood. I will, just as my aunts did before me, continue to ask my children and my nephews and nieces (when my mom and sisters are not around) the question: "Are my sauce and meatballs the best?"

They too will tell me that it is — and they too will make sure that their mothers and grandmother are not around, because they know that Italian woman hold grudges.

Especially when it comes to someone disrespecting their homemade meatballs and sauce.

**MARY GABRIELE** is a member of The Dominion Post Food Panel. Email her at food@dominionpost.com.

# Worth their salt

## Bakery duo pens book about Appalachian bread

**ON AUG. 20**, authors of "Salt Rising Bread: Recipes and Heartfelt Stories of a Nearly Lost Appalachian Tradition" Genevieve Bardwell and Susan Brown, will be at Barnes & Noble at University Town Centre for a book signing.

**BY MADISON FLECK**  
The Dominion Post

Rising Creek Bakery in Mount Morris, Pa., has kept Appalachian tradition alive since it opened its doors seven years ago. Customers come for the baked goods, savory treats and most notably, the salt-rising bread that is unique to Appalachian and American history.

Bakery owner Genevieve Bardwell has studied the art of salt-rising bread with long-time friend and colleague Susan Brown for the last two decades. The women were faced with a hard, cold fact: The art of salt-rising bread was dying, and no one was saving it.

The women decided to get cracking on research. They wanted to know the science behind the fermentation, the history of the bread and most importantly, the stories of those who grew up eating the dense, savory bread.

"My connection to salt-rising bread is from my childhood," Brown said. "My grandmother made it in Greenbrier County, and I knew it was something special, so when I was old enough to make it, I wanted to make it and pass it on to my family and my children."

But just passing the recipe down to children and grandchildren was not enough for Brown and Bardwell to keep the tradition alive.

So they wrote a book, "Salt Rising Bread: Recipes and Heartfelt Stories of a Nearly Lost Appalachian Tradition." The book, which is available at Rising Creek Bakery, Barnes & Noble at University Town Centre and on Amazon.com, contains recipes for salt-rising bread while telling its story, which is rich in Appalachian heritage.

"I think literally every person who eats this bread has a story to tell about it," Brown said. "There are just endless stories that we receive every day in the mail of people telling us why salt rising bread is so special to them."

The bread itself is a delicacy, and making it involves a long, tedious process which takes about 24 hours. Since the bread does not require yeast, the ingredients are fairly limited. From Bardwell and Brown's findings, when pioneer women first came to America, they did not have access to commercial yeast and were forced to invent a new form of baking bread. Salt-rising bread was the result.

The bread can be made at home, and Bardwell said it's all a

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**Rising Creek Bakery** owner Genevieve Bardwell (above), along with her colleague, Susan Brown, recently debuted "Salt Rising Bread: Recipes and Heartfelt Stories of a Nearly Lost Appalachian Tradition," a book delving into the art and tradition of making salt-rising bread. Authors Brown (left, at left) and Bardwell stand in front of Rising Creek Bakery in Mount Morris, Pa. Matt Henderson (below) takes a batch of salt-rising loaves out of the oven at the bakery.

Ron Rittenhouse/The Dominion Post photos



## Zucchini flowers are perfect for stuffing

**BY SARA MOULTON**  
Associated Press

In the following recipe, bright, fresh zucchini flowers are filled with cheese before frying. The result is a creamy, flavorful filling and a super-crisp crust.

For years, my go-to deep-frying batter has been made of roughly equal parts beer and

flour. But I wanted the batter for this dish to be crisper, more like tempura, so I added seltzer and baking soda and swapped out half of the flour for cornstarch. Unlike flour, cornstarch

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### MEATLESS ON THE MENU

#### Short Tip

Sweeten your pan coating

Campbellskitchen.com

Try coating greased baking pans with sugar instead of flour. The sugar creates an even layer and won't leave a greasy, floury residue on cakes. Actually, it adds a lightly sweet, crunchy coating on the cake.



### RECIPE BOX

#### TUNA AND MANGO SALSA

Yield 2 servings.

- 1 cup mango cubes**
- 1 tablespoon lime juice**
- 2 tablespoons honey**
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, chopped**
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped**
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 teaspoon canola oil**
- 3/4 pound fresh tuna steaks**

Cut mango in half around the pit. Hold the mango with cut side up. Scoop out pulp with a large spoon. Cut into 1/4-inch pieces. Mix lime juice, honey, cilantro and jalapeno pepper together. Toss with mango. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Heat oil in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Sear tuna for 2 minutes. Turn

and sprinkle salt and pepper to taste on the cooked side. Sear second side 2 minutes for a 1/2-inch thick tuna steak. For a 1-inch tuna steak, lower heat and cook 2 more minutes. Remove to two dinner plates, spoon salsa on top and serve.

#### BROWN RICE SALAD

Yield 2 servings.

- 1 package microwave brown rice**
- 2 teaspoons canola oil**
- 1 cup frozen peas, defrosted**
- 2 tablespoons reduced-fat vinaigrette dressing**
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper**

Microwave rice according to package instructions. Measure 1 1/2 cups rice and reserve remaining rice for another time. Add peas, dressing and salt and pepper to taste.

— Recipes by Linda Gassenheimer



AP photo

Stuffed zucchini blossoms.

**FLOWERS**

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has no gluten, which ensures a thinner, more delicate coating that nonetheless holds its shape.

You'll want to mix the batter just before using it to prevent the bubbles from evaporating. Combine the dry ingredients and park them on the counter while you prep the blossoms and begin to heat the oil. When the oil is almost up to temperature, add the liquid ingredients to the dry ingredients and mix the batter quickly. Take care not to rip the petals while stuffing the flower with cheese, then close the open end of the flower by twisting the petals like a New Year's Eve party popper. The cheese should stay put and not leak into the oil.

Choose a pan with deep sides and fill it with no more than 1 1/2 or 2 inches of oil. Make sure the oil has a high smoke point. Use a deep-fat thermometer to keep track of the temperature and try to maintain it at a constant 365 degrees. Depending on the size of your pan, fry no more than three or four stuffed blossoms at a time. This will ensure that the temperature of the oil neither drops nor bubbles over the top. If the temperature begins to creep up, pull the pan off the flame and/or add a little cool oil. Transfer each batch of fried blossoms to a paper towel-lined sheet pan, sprinkle lightly with salt and keep warm in the oven while you fry the rest.

**CHEESE STUFFED ZUCCHINI BLOSSOMS**

*Start to finish: 30 minutes*

*Servings: 4*

- 12 squash blossoms**
- 1/2 ounce coarsely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano**
- 1 ounce mozzarella, cut into 12 cubes**
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour (2 3/8 ounces)**
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons cornstarch**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- 1/4 teaspoon salt**

- 1/2 cup ice-cold beer**
- 1/2 cup ice-cold seltzer**
- Vegetable oil for deep frying**
- 1 cup marinara sauce (homemade or your favorite store brand), heated**
- Basil sprigs for garnish**

Preheat oven to 200 degrees. Line a rimmed sheet pan with a double layer of paper towels.

Working with one blossom at a time, carefully separate the petals to expose the inside of the flower and the central stamen (on a male plant) or pistil (on a female plant). Using small sharp scissors cut out as much of the stamen or pistil as possible to make room for the cheese. Put about 1 teaspoon of the Parmigiano-Reggiano in the cavity; top with a chunk of mozzarella. Twist the petals gently to enclose the filling; set aside the stuffed blossoms.

In a medium bowl combine the flour, cornstarch, soda and salt. In a large, deep saucepan heat 1 1/2 to 2 inches of oil over medium high heat to 365 degrees. When the oil is at around 325 degrees, combine the dry ingredients in the bowl with the beer and the seltzer; stir the mixture until it is combined well, but with a few lumps remaining.

Working with three or four blossoms at a time, dip them in the batter, coating them well and letting the excess drip off. Add them gently to the 365-degree oil; let cook for 30 seconds. Using tongs, gently turn them over. Cook until they are golden, about 1 to 1 1/2 minutes, turning them once again. Transfer the blossoms to the rimmed sheet pan using a slotted spoon, sprinkle with kosher salt and keep warm in the oven while you batter and fry the remaining zucchini blossoms.

To serve: Spoon one-fourth of the marinara sauce into the bottom of each of four soup bowls, arrange three fried blossoms on top and garnish with a basil sprig.

**Sargasso earns Wine Spectator Restaurant Award**

Submitted to the Dominion Post

Sargasso, at 215 Don Knotts Blvd., has been honored for its outstanding wine program in *Wine Spectator's* 2016 Restaurant Wine List Awards. The restaurant is recognized among other winners from around the globe as a top destination for wine lovers. Sargasso is the only restaurant in Morgantown to receive this honor.

"On behalf of *Wine Spectator*, I'm thrilled to congratulate each and every award-winning restaurant. They should be very proud," said Marvin R. Shanken, editor and publisher of *Wine Spectator*. "I'm honored to join past

wine directors and continue to shape the wine program at Sargasso. The vision has always been to encourage curiosity and expand wine-drinking culture in the region," said Athena Freedlander, beverage director at Sargasso. Freedlander is featured in the current issue of *Wine Spectator* with Sargasso's Restaurant Award listing.

*Wine Spectator* began its program to recognize the world's best wine lists in 1981. There are three levels: The Award of Excellence, the Best of Award of Excellence and the Grand Award — with 2,414; 1,093; and 88 winners this year in each respective category. Seven of the grand award

winners are first timers.

Sargasso has won the Award of Excellence.

The Award of Excellence recognizes restaurants whose wine lists feature a well-chosen assortment of quality producers along with a thematic match to the menu in both price and style.

The complete list of award winners is available in print in *Wine Spectator's* August issue and online at Restaurants.WineSpectator.com, where visitors can search and access exclusive content on the more than 3,500 restaurants. The full list is also available for free on iOS via the new Restaurant Awards app, which allows users to look

for dining spots in any location with maps, choosing by wine strengths, cuisine type, pricing and more.

**About Sargasso**

Sargasso has been locally owned and operated since 2007. The vision is to provide a fine dining experience in the region by using local and international ingredients. The culinary team is led by European-trained Austrian native Chef Thomas Metzler and West Virginia's Chef Dave Halterman. Sargasso offers lunch and dinner menus, as well as catering and private events. Menus can be found at sargassomorgantown.com.

**Mario's Fishbowl hosts anniversary party today in Suncrest**

Submitted to The Dominion Post

Morgantown landmark Mario's Fishbowl's second location on University Avenue is set to celebrate its 4th anniversary today, commemorating many years of food and beverage service to current and former WVU students and city residents.

To commemorate the occasion, co-owners Mark

and Karen Furfari have lined up a day full of festivities starting at 11 a.m., including food and beer specials, prize giveaways, and contests.

Prize giveaways will occur all day long. For every purchase customers make all day, they will receive a ticket, which will be entered into drawings for the various prizes. Among the many prizes are Black Bear

tickets, beer memorabilia, gift cards to local businesses, and some signature "fishbowl" goblets. The highlight of the celebration will take place at 10 p.m. when the "Big Fish" and "Little Fish" will be chosen. Customers must be present to win.

As a special addition, Mario's Fishbowl will be holding a canned food drive to benefit Christian Help.

Customers are asked to bring in nonperishable food items to donate. The pantry is in special need of tuna, spaghetti sauce and peanut butter. Mario's Fishbowl will also be taking donations of pet food and supplies to donate to Animal Friends, a local nonprofit animal shelter. Anyone who brings in items to donate to either organization will receive a special prize.

**Watch 'Zootopia' Thursday at the library**

**DON'T MISS THEATER**

Thursday at the Morgantown Public Library at 1 p.m. This month's featured movie will be Disney's latest DVD release, "Zootopia." The city of "Zootopia" is a mammal metropolis where a rookie bunny cop and a cynical con artist fox must work together to uncover a conspiracy in their city. This new Disney animation release is sure to be a cartoon classic.

Children and adults of all ages are invited to attend the library's free Theater Thursday, which occur once a month throughout the summer. All movies are shown in meeting room A on the ground floor of the library.

Movies are shown on a large screen with sur-



round sound.

All children in attendance will receive a free drink, popcorn and gummy snacks at Theater Thursday events. All children attending the movie will receive a free book. There will be another Theater Thursday in August. Stay tuned for more information.

Also, we are looking forward to hosting free movie events for children and families coming this fall during the Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks and a few Cinema Saturdays, too.

**Other library news**

■ Looking for a bargain book or two or more? Check out the Friends of the Library's weekly used book sales from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. every Tuesday and from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. the first and third Saturdays of the month. Great selection of books at bargain prices.

■ Mark your calendar for this month's Read To Rover event at 6:30 p.m. July 28.

■ Spaces still remain for the Introduction to Python Curiosity Quest class on Aug. 3 and Aug. 4. This class is for students entering sixth through eighth grades. Stop by the circulation desk to register and pay for the class.

**THIS COLUMN** is provided by staff at the Morgantown Public Library.

**Best Chef returns Aug. 4 at Lakeview**

Submitted to The Dominion Post

Morgantown residents will once again have an opportunity to name the area's best chef.

Lakeview Resort in Cheat Lake will host Best Chef Cook-Off IV from 6-9 p.m. Aug. 4.

Tickets are \$25 per person and include food tastings and judging of dishes by 10 professional Morgantown chefs.

There will also be a cash bar, an auction, and music by the Jenny Wilson Trio.

Tickets may be purchased at the Morgantown History Museum, 175 High St., Morgantown, or by calling 304-319-1800.

**Couscous with tomatoes and fresh tuna tastes like summer**

**BY LEAH ESKIN**

Chicago Tribune (TNS)

If you don't like quinoa, couscous may be a good substitute. This dish offers an easy, healthy meal that's perfect for summer. If you don't want to fire up the grill, canned tuna also works.

**SUMMER COUSCOUS**

*Prep: 30 minutes*  
*Cook: 8 minutes*  
*Makes: 4 servings*  
*Yes, you can skip grilling the tuna and simply crumble into the finished dish two 5-ounce cans of tuna packed in oil and the thyme leaves. It's a different dish — also delicious.*  
*This has been my fa-*

*vorite couscous recipe, possibly my favorite summer recipe, since Pierre Franey cooked up his version in 1988.*

- For tomatoes:**
- 1 1/2 cups diced fresh tomatoes**
- 1/2 cup finely chopped fresh basil**
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice**
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce**
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped garlic**
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes**
- For couscous:**

- 1 teaspoon olive oil**
  - 1/4 cup finely chopped onion**
  - 1 clove garlic, finely chopped**
  - 1 teaspoon ground cumin**
  - Salt and pepper**
  - 1 cup water**
  - 1 cup couscous**
  - For tuna:**
  - 1 boneless skinless tuna steak (1 1/4 pounds), about 1-inch thick, see note**
  - 1 tablespoon olive oil**
  - 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves**
  - Salt and pepper**
- Toss: Heap all tomato ingredients in a large bowl. Toss. Cover. Let rest.
- Steam: To make couscous, heat oil in a small

saucepan. Add onion, garlic, cumin, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, until onion wilts, about 4 minutes. Add water; bring to a boil. Pour in couscous. Stir once, cover, pull pan off heat. Let stand, 5 minutes. Uncover and fluff with a fork.

Season: Brush tuna with oil. Season with thyme, salt and pepper. Grill: Spark a hot fire, or heat the oven broiler. Grill tuna directly over medium-hot flames or broil 6 inches under the boiler until just done, about 4 minutes per side. Pull tuna off heat and cut into bite-size pieces.

Serve: Tumble couscous and tuna over tomatoes. Toss. Enjoy.

**SALT**

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matter of getting a feel for the fermentation process.

"You have to perfect it," she said. "It's an art to make salt-rising bread."

The authors have collected more than 100 recipes for the bread but

say the process typically remains the same.

"It's one of those cultural heritage traditions that hasn't been extensively written about," Bardwell said. "[It] hasn't been recorded and spread across the world."

Writing this book has allowed Bardwell and

Brown to supply something to the community that wasn't available before: A written record of salt-rising bread.

"[The tradition] was nearly lost, and we feel like we have achieved that goal through this bakery, through websites and through our book," Brown

said. "Maybe this tradition is not dying, and we hope that's what we've done."

Rising Creek Bakery offers classes on how to make salt-rising bread, with the next class set for July 25.

For more information on Rising Creek Bakery, and to see menus, visit risingcreekbakery.com.

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