

appetizing class

Tasty menu ideas at free cooking demos

BY SYLVIA E. KING-COHEN
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Even the most accomplished cooks eventually come up blank on what to fix for dinner, so it's no wonder that the rest of us need a little inspiration now and then.

Free cooking demonstrations and classes are offered fairly often at culinary stores, nurseries and East End wineries. Besides new recipes and techniques, you probably will get to taste a sample.

Don Lucia, who does the cooking in his family's Lake Grove home, attended a recent soup-making class at Williams-Sonoma in the Smith Haven Mall.

"I like that they show you quicker ways to do things," says Lucia, 57. "I have a fantastic spaghetti sauce recipe from my grandmother. I just don't have the five hours it takes to cook it."

Williams-Sonoma

WHERE Retail stores at Smith Haven Mall in Lake Grove (631-863-2161), Walt Whitman

Mall in Huntington Station (631-549-4699), Roosevelt Field in Garden City (516-742-0340) and Bridgehampton Commons (631-537-3040)

INFO williams-sonoma.com
CLASSES Technique classes held at 10 or 11 a.m. most Sundays — reservations recommended. Upcoming topics include preparing steakhouse side dishes (March 20) and cooking with grains and legumes (March 27).

Staff members aim to share quick tips for elevating everyday recipes. "We try to teach to all levels of cooks," says Aaron Bokros, who runs workshops at the store in Smith Haven Mall. During a recent class, Bokros had three pots, the oven, a Vitamix blender and a panini press going at once. He made a mushroom-barley soup from scratch,



Aaron Bokros leads a cooking class on making soups for supper at Williams-Sonoma in Lake Grove.

doctored up a jarred Tuscan white bean soup starter and whipped together a ginger and carrot soup in the blender.

"We want people to know that you don't have to be a chef to make good food at home," he says. "It is all about mastering techniques and not being afraid to try new things."

Sign the attendance sheet and you'll get 10 percent off purchases made that day.

Hicks Nurseries

WHERE 100 Jericho Tpke., Westbury

INFO 516-334-0066, hicksnurseries.com

CLASSES 11 a.m. today through Friday

The nursery is offering free cooking demonstrations as part of its 21st annual flower and garden show, which runs through Sunday. Today, chef Leisa Dent of LL Dent in Carle

Place will prepare savory roast pork with sage.

"Too many people just stick to salt and pepper," says Dent. "I want to teach them how to get a balance going with herbs and vegetables."

Tomorrow, chef Armand Vanderstichel of Brasserie 214 in New Hyde Park will demonstrate how to make Belgian mussels and Dutch butter cake. Friday, Paul Moncada and Susanne



Chef Leisa Dent, co-owner of LL Dent in Carle Place, will bring her roast pork recipe to one of the cooking classes at Hicks Nurseries.

Veseky of New York Ravioli & Pasta Co. in New Hyde Park will cover healthy menus.

The idea, says Hicks spokeswoman Lyn Dobrin, is to give attendees new ideas for meals using ingredients that can be grown in their backyard.

Diliberto Vineyard and Winery

WHERE 250 Manor Lane, Jamesport
INFO 631-722-3416, dilibertowinery.com

For more cooking classes
exploreLI.com
/recreation

CLASSES "Pasta and Puccini" 2-5 p.m. Sunday; "Saturday in Napoli" 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. Saturdays through April 30 (except Easter weekend). Reservations suggested.

The winery's "Pasta and Puccini" series teaches attendees how to make homemade pasta and pair it with an appropriate sauce. Each session starts with making dough.

"We show them how simple these pastas are to make," says co-owner Sal Diliberto. Once the sauce is put together, everyone gets to sample the dish. The events include live opera singing in the tasting room. Crowds generally range from 50 to 80 people. Saturday classes focus on making thin-crust Napoli-style pizza, with accompanying Neapolitan music.