

CHEF JUDI GALLAGHER

COOKING IN PARADISE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

by Doc Lawrence

Judi Gallagher, a tall and lovely celebrity chef, reminded Jacques Pepin of Julia Child during a television cooking show. She has that same effect on many fans and viewers. Headquartered in the resort city of Sarasota, Florida, Judi successfully launched a culinary career in television, radio, newspapers, magazines and the Internet, sharing her passion for cooking which began in New England restaurants. Her television show cooking tips and kitchen wizardry are daily mainstays on “Chef Judi’s Dish” and other highly popular programs. Chef Judi serves as Culinary Director for Sarasota’s ABC 7 and is the Contributing Food and Wine Editor for Sarasota Magazine. Her shows have featured culinary notables like Jacques Pepin, Roy Yamaguchi and Martin Yan plus legendary vintners including Leonardo Frescobaldi, Salvatore Ferragamo and Margrit Mondavi.

Chef Judi co-authored *Chef du Jour Cookbook* and has been featured in *Cottage Style Magazine*, *Coastal Living Magazine* and many other magazines. She has co-launched the critically acclaimed *Flavors and More* (www.flavorsandmore.com), an online culinary magazine and has cooked for many superstars including boxing legend, Atlanta’s Evander Holyfield.

After appearing live with Chef Judi on her Sarasota TV show, colleagues confided to Doc Lawrence that Chef Judi plans to take everything to a national audience. Stay tuned.

DOC: The recession lingers and the whole subject of food and dining out is affected. How do you see this playing out?

CHEF JUDI: Certainly casual dining restaurants are seeing more guests. There are many bargains now. In harder times, people look back to potluck dinners and staying in for movie nights. I believe this is here to stay. Where people were not as engaged in their own kitchen, they now are starting to gather at the table and prepare meals with fresh ingredients. Cooking shows and personal cooking demonstrations are on the rise, which is wonderful for the family. We started a new segment on our local ABC station called “Ten for 2.” I have \$10.00 to create a meal for at least two people. I grab boneless pork chops on sale, use orange marmalade from my fridge and Chinese five spice, and there’s dinner with coleslaw for two.

DOC: With such a rich culinary background encompassing the food and cooking of New England and Florida, how do you incorporate this into your television shows, cooking demonstrations and consulting?

CHEF JUDI: Both New England and Florida are rich in fresh seafood, and many of my recipes for cold-water fish can easily be adapted for Gulf water fish. But, I won’t settle for less than Maine clams for my clam chowder and I prefer cold-water lobster. I now grill them on a cedar plank and drizzle with mango butter.

DOC: How do you view the relationship of wine with the dishes you create?

CHEF JUDI: I believe wine is always the first guest you invite to the dinner table. Pairing food with the proper wine is a passion, especially red wine and great French Champagne. If I have a great cabernet, I would like to share with special friends, I plan the meal around the wine. If I find jumbo Key West shrimp irresistible at the market, I plan two different whites, perhaps a Pinot Gris.

DOC: The holidays are here, and my readers would love a few entertaining tips like new twists on appetizers and maybe a suggestion for entrees to liven up the feasts.

CHEF JUDI: I love having little food-related gifts as place cards. If a certain guest likes my cinnamon pecans, it’s beside the plate with a little note. People love to take home a memory from a meal, especially during the holidays.

Bring freshness to your table. Hericot Vert with goat cheese in a simple shallot vinaigrette adds sophistication. Brine turkey for two days. I coat the turkey with a family-recipe cranberry chipotle glaze add some simple spice, and the finished bird looks like a magazine cover.

DOC: What is one of your favorite memories as a chef?

CHEF JUDI: Going to New York to tape cooking shows with Jacques Pepin. I have cooked with so many chefs and wine makers, but he is my favorite chef. I was nervous that day, and when Jacques came in to shoot the shows he looked at me and said graciously, “You know, I



Chef Judi Gallagher is widely known for her knowledge of seafood preparation. Here, she shows off some of the Gulf seafood—Amberjack, Snapper, Grouper and Key West Shrimp—she is about to cook during her popular television cooking show in Sarasota, Florida. Gallagher, a frequent guest in Atlanta, is a maestro performing cook on the television kitchen set and word is that she is making big national plans. Photo by Doc Lawrence.

love cooking with tall women,” referring to Julia Child of course. If my Mom were alive she would have been right there in tears.

DOC: If you could choose one person or family to prepare an intimate meal for, who would that be and what are some items you would prepare?

CHEF JUDI: Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band. After 30 concerts, I’m a certified fan. For Bruce I would prepare a real Jewish dinner: matzo ball soup, brisket, potato latkachs and homemade applesauce finished with apricot bread pudding with a glass of port. Springsteen has a blue-collar heart and would love this after performing.

DOC: What are a few favorites you enjoy preparing at home?

CHEF JUDI: Our ritual is roasted chicken with pan gravy and a huge fresh garden salad with granny smith apples and dried cherries and spicy pecans, French green beans almandine and a rustic plum or peach tart for dessert. Or, simple spaghetti with lots of garlic and shrimp, mussels and calamari with sliced grape tomatoes and a hint of fresh Italian parsley and crushed red pepper with a great olive oil, and of course, a great bottle of Borolo.

Thanks, Chef Judi. Happy Holidays.