

DECEMBER 2003



\$5.00 (CAN. \$6.00)

SAVEUR

Savor a World of Authentic Cuisine



ROAST CHRISTMAS GOOSE WITH TRIMMINGS, AS PREPARED AT VIENNA'S ALTWIENERHOF.

CHRISTMAS *in* VIENNA

CELEBRATING THE SEASON *in Old Savannah* • *Russia's Festive* **COULIBIAC**
Land of **RED WINE & TRUFFLES** • *The Ultimate* **MEXICAN BIRTHDAY PARTY**
Where **COFFEE** *Came to Life* • *The Master Jam Makers of* **BRITTANY**

NUMBER

7

F A R E

D E C E M B E R

13-14

LA FÊTE DE LA DINDE

Licques, France

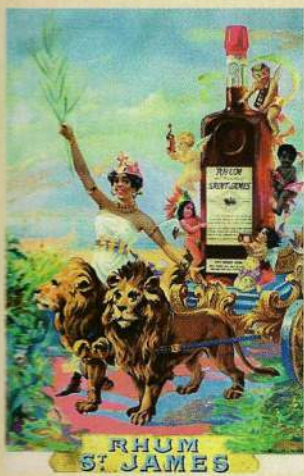
The woody village of Licques (population 1,200) in northern France is known for farm-raised, free-roaming poultry, including capons, guinea fowl, and geese. Come December, though, one bird reigns supreme: the noble turkey (*dinde*, in French). Residents (and thousands of tourists) throw a party in its honor. Turkey bacon, smoked turkey, turkey rillettes, and other dishes are served in a heated tent in the center of town, and live birds are herded through the streets. Do as the locals do and buy a fresh turkey at the market on-site, then take it home, stuff it with apples and chestnuts, and roast it. Information: 33/3/21 35 80 03.

D E C E M B E R

14

LA FÊTE DU RHUM

Sainte Marie, Martinique



Sugarcane is said to have arrived in the West Indies with Columbus, and by the mid-1600s Martinique had begun exporting sugar. Distillation of cane juice in the region began soon after that; one product was a spicy, rough-tasting variant of the rum we know today that was drunk in that era by colonists who lacked anything better. Rum has certainly become more refined; today, Martinique turns out around 2.5 million bottles of it annually. To honor this now fabled spirit, the Saint James Distillery opens its plantation grounds, providing samples of young white rums, still aging in oak barrels, and bottles of the 50-year-old variety for sale. Also available is the island's Christmas drink, shrubb (rum infused with dried orange peel), plus curried chicken, lamb, rice and beans, and coconut cake. Information: 212/838-6887.

COURTESY MARTINIQUE PROMOTIONS BUREAU

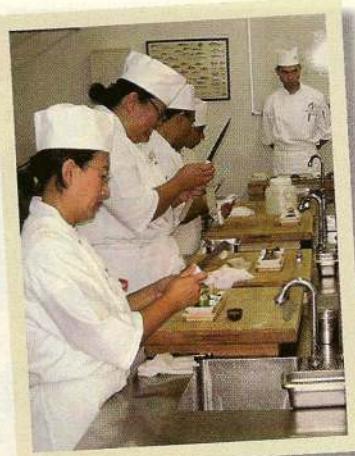
all too soon the cameras were rolling. I decided to make cocoa powder-coated liver slices in a tomato, cream, and brown sugar sauce; a broccoli, brussels sprouts, and cheese casserole; and fried potato sticks. I thought the judges would find Rebecca's liver, coated in bread crumbs and fried, repulsive, too; however, she utilized her pantry and made peanut butter sandwiches. At judgment, the tasters were hand-flying the sandwiches over my liver platter. I was imagining my own liver being strafed. —JOHN MALIK

A RAW DEAL

Where are all the female sushi chefs?

MY LOCAL sushi chef is a Korean woman, named Joanna Nix, who wears a cowboy hat. Not exactly the most authentic image, but her food is great—especially for Charlotte, North Carolina, not exactly a raw-fish mecca. Chef Nix's presence here made me wonder: Why don't I see more female chefs at sushi restaurants?

Sotohiro Kosugi, a third-generation (male) sushi chef from Shinminato, Japan, and owner of the sushi restaurant Soto in Atlanta, estimates that only about 1 percent of the sushi chefs in Japan are women. The Sanchoukai Sushi Association, a culinary organization in Tokyo, says it has no record of female sushi chefs in the country. "Many people in Japan say women's hands are warmer than men's and thus cook the fish," Kosugi explains. "They also have their 'once a month', which people think may change the flavor of



Female sushi chefs in training at the California Sushi Academy.

the sushi." John Nihoff, a food historian with a particular interest in Japanese cuisine, cites two other beliefs in the sushi community: that women lack the stamina to train for the job (which takes a minimum of two years but as many as 15, depending on the level of mastery sought); and that women's perfume and makeup may permeate the fish. Nihoff traces these attitudes to Japan's ancient samurai tradition. "In a society run by feudal lords," he says, "women didn't play a major part. Preparing the meal was a high-level process. Women weren't considered able to take large fish

and work with them properly."

Regardless, female sushi chefs have a future: at the California Sushi Academy in Venice, California, director Danielle Chase says that at least half of the school's graduating students, about 100 yearly, are female. Kosugi is open to them. Male sushi chefs aren't always employee-of-the-year material, he notes: "Men get drunk and walk out of the kitchen or leave to smoke cigarettes." Talk about flavoring the fish! (To find Nix's and Kosugi's sushi bars, see THE PANTRY, page 95.) —ANDREA COOPER

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



"If wine tells truth—and so have said the/wise—/It makes me laugh to think how brandy lies!" —Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., "Readings over the Teacups"

BLESSED ARE THE DOUGHNUTS

Oh, great. Another Jewish holiday food with which to expand my waistline... Sufganiyot are deliciously oily jelly doughnuts consumed on Hanukkah for the same reason that potato pancakes (*latkes*) fried in oil are: to honor the Jews' second-century B.C. defeat of the Greeks—accomplished, it is said, with the help of a tiny bit of olive oil for their lamps. Sufganiyot



were invented in Israel shortly after the country was founded, in 1948. Today the *Jerusalem Post* reports that more than a quarter of a million jelly doughnuts are made there during the Hanukkah days. Some Jewish bakeries in the U.S. offer them now, too. Ah, a blessing: more fried food. —KELLY ALEXANDER