



An “I Love Lucy”

HOLIDAY

by Christine Barbour

Brilliant story ideas announce themselves to me with a little frisson of excitement in my spine, an itch in my fingers. The adrenalin pumps and I can't wait to start writing.

In the future I will regard these signs with caution.

But back in August when we were tossing around holiday food ideas for the December/January issue of *Bloom*, it seemed like the perfect thing: a story about seasonal, delicious and above all simple fare.

And it was right up my alley.

In the heart, the author, Christine Barbour, and her husband, Jerry.



DINNER

photo by Kevin Montague & Michael Cavanagh

(That Not Even Martha Would Attempt)

I am an absolute fiend for good-tasting food, after all, and one of the ways I get it is by buying local products whenever I can—fresh, wonderful food produced by regional farmers and artisans, not mass-produced food bred to survive on a long-haul truck. In fact, I am the co-director of Slow Food Bloomington, the southern Indiana chapter of an international organization that is all about eating just that way—seasonally, locally, and convivially to boot (because good food is always better shared).

So what would be the most fantastic holiday dinner I could imagine? A Slow Food feast based on those fabulous local ingredients. Creating a “locavore” meal in the lush, verdant months of summer takes no effort at all, but in

the dead of winter? I’d write an article showing just how it could be done. Visions of fat, roasted Indiana geese danced in my head.

I pitched the idea to my editor Malcolm Abrams, who said yes, with a hungry look in his eye. What the heck, I was going to ask him to pay for it anyway; I might as well have a party. So I invited him and his bride-to-be Jennifer Brooks and a few others I thought would enjoy some good local eating: my fellow *Bloom* columnist Pat Baude, my co-director of Slow Food Bloomington, chef Dave Tallent, and Dave’s wife Krissy. Good food shared by good friends—just the Slow Food ticket.

The tingling in my spine told me I was on to something great.

My editor, hearing the details, agreed: “You

How to dine splendidly on foods found within 100 miles of Bloomington.

A BLOOM *Holiday* FEAST



DEVILED HEARTLAND FAMILY FARM EGGS
with Kentucky Spoonfish and Trout Caviar

WIBS STONE GROUND POLENTA CROSTINI
with Traders Point Fleur de la Terre

MARINATED CAPRIOLE FARMS CHEVRE APERITIFS
with Bakehouse Bread

KENTUCKY BOURBON MANHATTANS

ROASTED HUMPHREY FARMS GOOSE, MUSGRAVE ORCHARDS
APPLES AND SWISS CONNECTION PORK SAUSAGE STUFFING,
Bourbon Gravy with Homestead Growers Mushrooms

SUN CIRCLE FARMS POTATOES
Roasted in Goose Fat

ROASTED BRUSSELS SPROUTS
in Apple Cider Vinaigrette

ROASTED HOMESTEAD GROWERS WINTER SQUASH
with Shagbark Hickory Syrup Glaze

OLIVER WINERY BEAN BLOSSOM CIDER
WALNUT GROVE SPRING WATER

PERSIMMON CRANBERRY TRIFLE,
BLU Culinary Arts

OLIVER ICE WINE

put it all together and I'll get the photographers there. We'll shoot the whole thing."

"We'll shoot the whole thing?" The tingle in my spine turned to a cold chill.

I had already planned to do the up-close food photography myself, but shooting the "whole thing" had an ominous sound. I read food magazines and I knew exactly what that meant. Artistic shots of a

gorgeously set table bearing things I don't own, like matching wine glasses, unchipped china, napkin rings, and place cards. Happy,

sophisticated guests chatting and laughing with a relaxed and smiling hostess. Right.

I was in serious trouble. I took a deep breath, closed my eyes, and reached for my inner Martha Stewart. Unfortunately for all, I found Lucy Ricardo instead.

Don't get me wrong—discovering wonderful local foods available in winter was not hard, and the dishes I chose (see menu, left) can be prepared with ease by any good home cook who doesn't have to publish the results in a magazine.

Planning the menu and finding the food wasn't my problem. My problem was everything else: coming up with a stunning table setting, cooking the dishes in time to get the food photographs shot, and serving the whole meal, relaxed and smiling, when the professional guys with the cameras showed up. Where to begin?

ONE WEEK BEFORE DINNER: The table first. We have granite counter tops in my kitchen and granite can have a disintegrating effect on fine china and crystal. My dish and glass collection is motley at best, not fit for

photographic immortality.

I needed expert help, so I headed over to Relish, sellers of beautiful, upscale home furnishings. I looked at all the dishes in the place, tried them out with every napkin, every glass, dithered, drove the sales girls nuts. Borrowed stuff, took it home to see how it looked in the dining room, came back for more. Ran across town to Elements, another purveyor of lovely, creative things for the home. Same deal; borrowed stuff, took it home, brought it back. If this had been a movie, it would have been filmed at high speed, with jerky motions and frenzied music.

Sharon Fugate at Relish saved my life. If it's for the magazine, take what you need, she said. Just return it when the photo shoot is done. Same thing at Elements. Placemats? "Try several colors, borrow them if you like. Take what you need." No professional could have had better support. Gorgeous things. The only hitch? As I set the table with all the borrowed finery it began to look so right, so at home, so unchipped and lovely, that I couldn't bear to return it. My credit card began to smoke.

THE DAY BEFORE DINNER:

Table is set and beautiful. Caviar has arrived from Louisville by mail. Goose picked up at Traders Point Market and produce brought home from Bloomington Farmers Market. Other ingredients in hand. Lists and lists of what to do: Devil eggs, shoot eggs. Roast sprouts, shoot sprouts. Make stuffing, shoot stuffing. Roast goose, shoot goose. Etc. Etc. Shower and dress self. Shoot self. It was going to be a long day.

A long day without help, as it turned out, because my husband Jerry, the person in the household who always stuffs our holiday turkeys and trusses them for the oven, was going to be playing in a golf tournament. Twenty-seven holes worth of a golf tournament. Gone. All. Day.



photos by Christine Barbour



A HEAPING PLATE OF LOCAL GOODIES

No sweat. I can read directions.

THE DAY OF DINNER, 1:30 AM:
Thinking about all the food to prepare and starting a slow panic. May as well get up. Early rising gives me the leisurely feeling of having tons of time. Boiled eggs—way too fresh, so shells won't peel. Chunks of egg come off. Kind of raggedy but I can blur the focus on the camera—no problem. Polenta, cooked, spread in pan to set for crostini. Brussels sprouts, cleaned and trimmed, ready for roasting. Get out the goose, dig out the roaster, notice there

DEVILED EGGS AND KENTUCKY CAVIAR



is no way the goose will fit in the roasting pan, add "buy bigger roasting pan" to my list of things to do.

10 AM: Where did the morning go? Long list of errands, including a run to Goods for Cooks. I should have gone there the day before but am now glad I haven't since I can buy my roaster there. Amazing help from owner Andrew Appel. Get a bulb baster, napkin rings, serving

PERSIMMON CRANBERRY TRIFLE



plate to match my new dishes. Same generosity. Borrow what you need. Same yearning to own with same consequences. Credit card melting.

At BLU Culinary Arts, pick up dessert (at least I didn't try to make that), take it back home so it won't spoil. Last minute grocery store run, Oliver Winery for ice wine and Shag Bark Hickory syrup, Bakehouse for baguettes and day-old bread for stuffing. Back home: already past noon, nothing ready, nothing shot. Shooting self looking like more and more attractive option.

1 PM: Browned sausage and apples for stuffing, cut the bread, added herbs. House finally starting to smell great. Taste for seasoning. Add salt, add more salt; what the heck.

Time to face the goose. Instructions say set breast side up in pan. Which side is breast?

Put that question on hold. Poor goose, sent prematurely to the block, not fat enough. What do I truss goose with? No string, no skewers, throw self back in car, back to Goods for Cooks, buy turkey trusser. Back to goose.

3 PM: Take a look at new roaster, look at old oven. Wait a minute. Roaster too big for oven. Back to old roaster, goose too long. Can't stuff goose because stuffing falls through. Don't know which end is up. Can't fit it in oven anyway.

Start to cry.

Recall images of Lucy and Ethel in the chocolate factory, stuffing candy into mouths as conveyor belt moves faster and faster. My own conveyor belt is moving at lightning speed. Wah! Where's Ethel? I need moral support. I am alone in my kitchen and I don't even know which end of my goose is up. I'd say my goose was cooked, only it isn't, and oh, how I wish it was.

I need help. What price my pride? I mean, I know a chef. A kind chef. A chef who will know which end of the goose is which. I know he'll come to my rescue, but I want to do this myself. As I stand dripping tears onto the goose I realize that I can have pride, or I can have dinner, but I can't have both. I make the call.

4 PM: When Dave Tallent pulls into my driveway I am sitting forlornly on the front steps. When I catch a glimpse in the mirror later, I see that tears and mascara have given me something of a raccoon look. Very nice. Dave looks like he is hiding a grin as he gives me a bear hug and pushes me back into the house. I don't want to go, but I do.

He surveys the disaster site of my kitchen, tastes the stuffing, and gives it a thumbs up. Looks at the goose, still stifling a grin. It's already breast side up. He stuffs it deftly, chops off the wings, trusses it, wrestles it into the

ROASTED BRUSSELS SPROUTS



too-small pan, cranks up the oven heat and puts it in to brown for half an hour. “Turn on the exhaust,” he instructs, so I do, beginning to feel panic subside. Maybe dinner will be ready on time after all. I won’t get the food photographs done, but I can recreate the meal and shoot it later. All I want is for this day to be over. I’ve been up since 1:30 am, it’s 4:30 pm now and the photographers and guests will be here at 6 pm. I think longingly of bed.

Dave and I chat across the stove. I am not sure which of us notices the flames first. I have not turned on the exhaust, I have turned on the grill, and under the lid the grease has caught fire. I leap to turn on the exhaust, correctly this time, but way too late. The down draft feeds the fire and the flames shoot up.

Amazingly, Dave still looks amused as he throws salt all over my kitchen. He is an excellent person to have around in an emer-



WINTER SQUASH, BOURBON GRAVY WITH HOMESTEAD GROWERS MUSHROOMS, AND ROASTED POTATOES

KENTUCKY BOURBON MANHATTANS



photos by Christine Barbour

gency—unflappable and solid and expert. Also tall enough to reach all the smoke detectors as they start to wail, pulling out the batteries to shut them down. Much better than Ethel, on all counts.

We sit on the front stoop to escape the smoke. I can tell he is wondering if it is safe to leave me alone. I wonder too. He offers more help. He can take the potatoes home to precook them for roasting later, but though my pride has long turned to dust, I still can’t admit I am not pulling this off. I can do it, I lie. Still grinning, he leaves me to the smoke and salt and potatoes.

5:30 PM: Photographers arrive early, set up lights. I am still cooking. No time to make a mushroom topping for the little polenta crostini, so will settle for Trader Point Fleur de la Terre cheese, run under the broiler ’til bubbly. Nutty and good. Deviled eggs with Traders Point crème fraiche and Dave’s pickled ramps are plated with caviar for topping. Goat cheese is marinated and set out with bread. Sprouts and squash are roasting. Potatoes are blanched and ready to be roasted with goose fat. Pat Baude arrives and is quickly drafted into serving as bartender, making Manhattans. Dave returns—sans Krissy, who has been hit by the flu (or good judgment)—and gets to work on the gravy.

MARINATED GOAT CHEESE



6:30 PM: We haul the goose out of the oven and march tensely into the dining room to look happy and sophisticated. Mostly we look relieved to see food is in fact on the table. We will have dinner after all, and against all odds, it is delicious. When we get to the trifle, fluffy and tangy with persimmon, I finally relax, shell-shocked and babbling, thankful that the day is done.

APPLES AND PORK SAUSAGE STUFFING



MIDNIGHT: Lying in bed, I can see where I went wrong. Haunted by the beautiful photo spreads in *Gourmet* and *Food and Wine*, it didn’t occur to me until way, way too late that those magazines have teams of professionals—chefs and food stylists and experienced food photographers—to do what I proposed to do by my untrained self.

Even Martha herself wouldn’t have tried to pull it off. Lucy would, though, every time. ✨

Recipes

WHERE TO FIND THE

Ingredients:

Fresh produce (greens, sprouts, squash, eggs, meat, dairy) available all winter long at **Traders Point Creamery Winter Market**, Zionsville, IN. Saturdays, 9 am-noon, See www.tpfororganics.com/ for directions.

Also from January 27 to March 31, at the **Bloomington Winter Farmers Market**, Saturdays, 9 am-noon, 909 E. 2nd St.

Humphrey Farms for chickens, turkeys, and geese, Williamsport, IN, (farm sales or pickup at Traders Point Creamery Market), 765-762-3160.

Shuckman's Fish Co. & Smokery, a family-owned Louisville company selling caviar and hand-crafted smoked fish, www.kysmokedfish.com, 888-990-8990.

Capriole Farms, for world-class goat cheese produced by Judy Schad in Greenville IN, www.capriolegoatcheese.com. Available in area stores and at the Bloomington Winter Farmers Market.

Hickoryworks Shagbark Hickory Syrup, www.hickoryworks.com. Available at **Oliver Winery and Bloomingfoods**.

Apples at **Musgrave Orchards**, 8820 N. Old St. Rd. 37, 339-5006, www.musgraveorchard.com.

Oliver Cider and ice wine at **Oliver Winery**, 8024 N. St. Rd. 37, and area retailers, www.oliverwinery.com.

BLU Culinary Arts, dessert catering with a focus on local ingredients. 334-8460. Baked goods also available at the **Bloomington Winter Farmers Market**.

Dillman Farm for persimmon pulp at 4955 West State Road 45.

Walnut Grove Spring Water, available to the public soon, for more information see www.walnutgrovespring.com/.

Wibs Stone Ground Grain, 636-8066.

ROASTED HUMPHREY FARMS GOOSE

MUSGRAVE ORCHARDS APPLES AND SWISS CONNECTION PORK SAUSAGE STUFFING

BOURBON GRAVY WITH HOMESTEAD GROWERS MUSHROOMS

Serves 6 to 8

1 goose, 10-12 pounds

FOR THE STUFFING:

2 pounds Italian sausage

1 large onion, chopped

4 Musgrave Orchards apples (choose a variety that will hold its shape during cooking), cored and cut into bite-sized chunks

2 tablespoons butter

1 tablespoon sugar

½ teaspoon cinnamon

½ cup chicken broth

1 loaf day-old panne bello Bakehouse bread, cut into cubes

1 teaspoon sage

1 teaspoon thyme

FOR THE GRAVY:

3-4 cups goose or chicken broth

2 cups sliced Homestead Growers mushrooms

4 tablespoons flour

½ cup bourbon (or more, to taste)

Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

TO MAKE THE STUFFING

Take sausage from its casing and brown, crumbling into small pieces, until cooked through. Add onion and cook until beginning to turn transparent. Set aside.

Heat 2 tablespoons of butter over medium-high heat in large skillet. Add apple chunks and sauté until apples begin to brown. Sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon.

Toss apples with sausage mixture. Add chicken broth, bread cubes and herbs, and mix thoroughly. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

TO MAKE THE GOOSE

Season goose with salt and pepper. Stuff goose, truss, and set on rack in roasting pan in middle of oven.

Brown in oven for ½ hour. Turn heat down to 325 degrees. Continue to roast until done, approximately 2 hours more, until meat thermometer registers 175 degrees.

As goose roasts, baste occasionally with boiling water to help release fat under the skin. As fat cooks out and collects in bottom of roasting pan, siphon out with a metal baster (plastic will melt). Reserve fat. (Leftover goose fat is great for roasting potatoes. Cut them in chunks, par-boil, glaze with the fat and roast at 400 degrees for an hour or until brown.)

When goose is cooked, remove from roaster and allow to rest, covered loosely with foil.

TO MAKE THE GRAVY

Ahead of time, simmer giblets, neck, and wing tips with chopped onion and celery and strain to make goose broth; or use chicken broth.

Sauté mushrooms in a teaspoon of goose fat and set aside.

Add any remaining fat from roasting pan to reserved fat.

Deglaze pan with bourbon and broth, scraping up browned bits from roaster.

In heavy saucepan, make a roux of 4 tablespoons reserved fat and flour, whisking over medium heat until flour loses its raw taste, about 3-4 minutes. Add broth, whisking, and mushrooms and cook until thickened, stirring frequently. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Remove stuffing from goose and serve in a bowl. Carve goose and arrange on platter. Pass gravy boat.

For additional recipes, go to www.magbloom.com