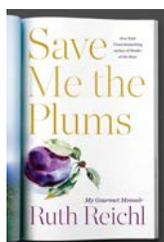




The Year in Review

Now at the close of 2019, I reflect on this year's adventures, many of which were culinary. In this month's column, I share some of my year's favorites.

Favorite Food Book: Save Me the Plums



If you devoured with gusto Ruth Reichl's trilogy — *Tender at the Bone*, *Comfort Me with Apples*, and *Garlic and Sapphires*—chronicling her life in food from a little girl growing up in Greenwich Village, this memoir is a must read. Food writer, restaurant critic, and magazine editor, Ruth Reichl describes her trials and tribulations as editor in chief of *Gourmet*. True to form, Reichl sprinkles comforting recipes among her beautiful and witty prose.

Favorite Hot Sauce: Hank Sauce

Crafted “down the shore” in Sea Isle City by former college roommates, this hot sauce is a refrigerator staple. Perfect for tacos, the Honey Habanero is described as “a little sweet and a lotta heat!” This and a variety of other flavors are available to order online at www.hanksauce.com and at many local markets.



Favorite Bread: Metropolitan Bakery's Chocolate Cherry

This rich, inky bread, full of bittersweet chocolate and sour cherries, is made for savoring. Serve lightly toasted

with a dollop of butter for breakfast or dessert or add to your dinner breadbasket. You probably want to call ahead to one of Philly's Metropolitans to reserve this decadent boule.

Favorite Wine: Gruet Brut Rosé

Celebrate a holiday, or any day, with Gruet sparkling wine. Born in Bethon, France, in 1931, founder Gilbert Gruet produced fine Champagnes since 1952. In the 80s, the family operation expanded to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to create, among other wines, this 100 percent Pinot Noir beauty. With floral and berry aromas and red berries flavors on the palate, this sparkling has accompanied a variety of meals throughout the year.



Favorite Cheese: Jasper Hill Farm's Harbison

A soft ripened cow's milk cheese with a bloomy rind, Harbison is aged six to thirteen weeks, so a youngster. Wrapped in strips of bark from spruce cambium trees of Jasper Hill, Vermont, Harbison is woody yet sweet and citrusy. Because of its spoon-ability, it makes for an ideal dessert paired with honey and crusty bread. Order online at www.jasperhillfarm.com/cheese or request it at your local cheesemonger.

Favorite Kitchen Gadget: Peak Extra Large Ice Cube Tray

Peak's sturdy silicone ice cube tray will help keep the cocktails chilled. These extra

large ice cubes sit perfectly in my lowball glasses and have improved my Negroni. Order online at www.wandpdesign.com/collections/peak where you can browse among other unique gadgets for your kitchen and home.

Favorite Coffee: No. Six Depot

This small batch coffee cannot be found in our neck of the woods. One would have to travel to the Berkshires to visit the roastery, café, and art gallery housed in a former train station. Short of taking a road trip to West Stockbridge, you can order online at www.sixdepot.com. I can vouch for every blend, from light to full bodied, except for the decafs. I prefer my coffee caffeinated!

Favorite Salami: Coro by Salumi's Molé Salami



Yes, a molé salami. Enjoy hints of chocolate, cinnamon, chipotle, and ancho peppers for a blend of sweet, savory, and spicy. Serve on a meat and cheese platter or enjoy a few slices on the go on a crusty piece of bread. Made with all-natural ingredients, this salami is available at DiBruno's or online at www.salumicuredmeats.com.

Favorite New Restaurant: Vernick Fish

In August, Philly's new Four Seasons opened atop the Comcast Center. Although it boasts a Jean Georges restaurant on the 60th floor, we stayed floor level at Greg Vernick's Vernick

Fish. The menu offers a myriad of fresh fish, interesting cocktails, and versatile wines. From razor clams to sardines to a squid “pad thai” salad, you will be sure to find something to whet your palate. Expect a full review in the months to come.

Favorite Easy Meal: Cod Tacos



Marinate 1 pound of cod in 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil, the juice of 1 lime, 1 teaspoon of paprika, 1/2 teaspoon of ground cumin, and 1/2 teaspoon of cayenne pepper. Prepare a slaw topping by combining the juice of 1 lime, 1 handful of freshly chopped cilantro, 2 tablespoons of honey, 1 cup of shredded cabbage, 1/2 jalapeño in thin slices, and sea salt to taste.

Heat several tablespoons of olive oil in a large nonstick pan over medium-high heat. Remove the cod from the marinade and season both sides of each filet with salt and pepper. Add the cod

and sauté until opaque, about 4 minutes per side. Let the cod cool for a few minutes before flaking with a fork.

Warm small flour tortillas. Place the flaked fish, tortillas, slaw and lime wedges in serving bowls for easy assembly.

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Now that I have shared my best from this year, I wish you and yours the best of the holiday season. ⚖️



Susan E. Poppiti is a mathematics teacher at Wilmington Friends Upper School and provides cooking instruction through La Cucina di Poppiti, LLC. Susan can be reached at spoppiti@hotmail.com.

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