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From Court to Kitchen

By Susie Iventosch



Mikaela Cowles Photo Tod Fierner

We are touting one of our very own this week. Mikaela Cowles, a contributing writer to the Lamorinda Weekly sports section, happens to be a very good cook! The former Gaels five-year scholarship basketball player is working toward a Masters of Fine Arts in Fiction Writing at St. Mary's College. She is writing a fiction-style cookbook for her thesis, which she hopes to have published after graduation.

"The book is a collection of fictional stories," Mikaela explained. "I have a food element in every story and include a recipe with each."

Mikaela said the recipes come from a variety of sources, but some are recipes that her mom originally taught her and then she adapted to suit her own style. Others she learned to make on her own by researching the Internet or pouring through cookbooks.

"I wanted to learn how to make risotto, so my boyfriend bought me a risotto cookbook," she said. "I also went online to learn more about the dish. I like

to explore online to learn about different food concepts."

Mikaela's favorite risotto is made with sautéed shallots, garlic, artichoke hearts and a tiny amount of Asiago cheese. Apparently she is not alone in her love of this dish, her friend and roommate, Julie McAvoy said this is one of her all-time favorite "Mikaela" dishes, too.

"Mikaela has always been a fabulous cook," Julie pointed out. "She is very inventive with recipes and invites her friends over to try them out. Her recipes are always delicious, but still, she is constantly coming up with ideas to improve them. I think my very favorite is her artichoke heart risotto."

Julie and Mikaela co-authored a book their senior year at St. Mary's to show college students how to eat and drink well – cheaply. The book is aptly named Work Hard, Party Hard and though not published, was a lot of fun for the girls to produce.

"We had tons of fun writing our book," Julie said. "It was supposed to show how to

cook good food for college students on a budget. We not only talked about recipes, but also included dinner party games, the best way to find good wine sales and the staples to always have on hand."

According to Mikaela, one of their professors, Mike Riley, has authored several cookbooks and after reading the draft, he put Mikaela in touch with different writers and cooking groups to get her more involved in the cooking world.

"He taught me a lot about how to format a cookbook, including recipe layout and introductions," she noted.

Mikaela is in her second year of grad school, and hopes to have her manuscript completed by March. She currently

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works at "across the way" in Moraga, a novelty home goods store that carries an eclectic collection of outdoor furniture, candles, dish and bath towels, barbecues and table wear, among other interesting household items.

"I'd love to write for a food magazine, but unfortun-

nately, there is not a lot of money in writing, so I'm not sure," she said. "But, writing and communicating are vital for anything I pursue. After working in sales at 'across the way' who knows? I might like to go into high-level sales some day. It's really fun and challenging!"

Born and raised in Seattle,

Mikaela plans to return to Washington after she completes her master's degree.

"I'm a Northwest girl!"

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Mikaela's Artichoke Risotto

(Serves 6 as a side dish, or 4 as a main dish)

INGREDIENTS

- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2-3 shallots, minced
- 1-2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can (15-ounce) artichoke hearts, drained and finely chopped
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- ¼ cup white wine
- 1/8-1/4 cup Asiago cheese, grated

DIRECTIONS

Heat olive oil in pot over medium-high heat and cook shallots until translucent, but not browned. Add garlic and sauté just until fragrant. Then add risotto and cook for about one minute. Add wine, and continue to cook, stirring all the while, until liquid is evaporated. Reduce heat just a little bit, and add broth, one soup ladle at a time, stirring into rice, but then leaving alone until absorbed. Then add another ladle of broth, continuing the process until all broth is used. At the very end, stir artichoke hearts and cheese into rice mixture. Serve hot as a side dish, which Mikaela does, or as a main dish, as I did!



Photo Susie Iventosch



Susie Iventosch

This recipe is available on our web site.

Go to:

www.lamorindaweekly.com

Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com

Many of our readers like Susie's recipes. Our website now features a link to our recipe page where you can read, print or download all of the recipes we have published.

If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at 925-377-0977

LAMORINDA's Restaurants

... updated July 8, 2009 ...

<p>American Bistro , 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-7108 Chow Restaurant, 53 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 962-2469 Quiznos, 3651 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-0200 Ranch House, 1012 School St, Mor, 376-5127 Terzetto Cuisine, 1419 Moraga Way, Mor, 376-3832 The Cheese Steak Shop, 3455 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-1234</p> <p>BBQ Bo's Barbecue , 3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-7133</p> <p>Burger Joint Flippers , 960 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-1567 Nation's Giant Hamburgers, 400 Park, Mor, 376-8888 Nation's Giant Hamburgers , 76 Moraga Way, Ori, 254-8888</p> <p>Café Ferrari- Lucca Delicatessens, 23 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 299-8040 Geppetto's caffe, 87 Orinda Way, Ori, 253-9894 Mamounia Express Cafe, 3732 Mt. Diablo Blvd # 179, Laf, 299-1372 Rising Loafer, 3643 Mt. Diablo Blvd Ste B, Laf, 284-8816 Susan Foord Catering & Cafe, 965 Mt. View Dr., Laf, 299-2469</p> <p>California Cuisine Artisan Bistro, 1005 Brown St., Laf, 962-0882 Metro Lafayette, 3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-4422 Shelby's, 2 Theatre Sq, Ori, 254-9687</p> <p>Chinese Asia Palace Restaurant, 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-0809 Chef Chao Restaurant, 343 Rheem Blvd, Mor, 376-1740 China Moon Restaurant, 380 Park St, Mor, 376-1828 The Great Wall Restaurant , 3500 Golden Gate Way, Laf, 284-3500 Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine, 1 Orinda Way # 1, Ori, 253-9852 Lily's House , 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #A, Laf, 284-7569 Mandarin Flower , 581 Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-7839 Panda Express, 3608 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-0288 Szechwan Chinese Restaurant, 79 Orinda Way, Ori, 254-2020 Uncle Yu's Szechuan, 999 Oak Hill Rd, Laf, 283-1688 Yan's Restaurant, 3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-2228</p> <p>Coffee Shop Millie's Kitchen, 1018 Oak Hill Rd #A, Laf, 283-2397 Squirrel's Coffee Shop, 998 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-7830 Village Inn Café, 204 Village Square, Ori, 254-6080</p>	<p>Continental Petar's Restaurant, 32 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 284-7117 Vino Restaurant, 3531 Plaza Way, Laf, 284-1330 Duck Club Restaurant, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-7108</p> <p>French Chevalier Restaurant, 960 Moraga Road, Laf, 385-0793</p> <p>Hawaiian Grill Lava Pit , 2 Theatre Square, St. 142, Ori, 253-1338</p> <p>Indian Swad Indian Cuisine, 3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-9575</p> <p>Italian Giardino, 3406 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-3869 Knoxx Restaurant, Lounge, 3576 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-5225 La Finestra Ristorante, 100 Lafayette Cir, #101, Laf, 284-5282 La Piazza, 15 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-9191 Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria, 975 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-3081 Michael's, 1375 Moraga Way, Mor, 376-4300 Mondello's, 337 Rheem Blvd, Mor, 376-2533 Pizza Antica, 3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-0500 Pizzeria Amoroma Restaurante, 65 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-7662 Postino, 3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-8700 Ristorante Amoroma, 360 Park St, Mor, 377-7662</p> <p>Japanese Asia Palace Sushi Bar, 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-0809 Blue Ginko, 3518-A Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-9020 Kane Sushi, 3474 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-9709 Kirin Sushi, 356 Park Street, Mor, 376-2872 Niwa Restaurant, 1 Camino Sobrante # 6, Ori, 254-1606 Serika Restaurant, 2 Theatre Sq # 118, Ori, 254-7088 Yu Sushi, 19 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-8399</p> <p>Mediterranean Petra Café, 2 Theatre Sq # 105, Ori, 254-5290 Oasis Café, 3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-8822 Turquoise Mediterranean Grill, 70 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-2004</p> <p>Mexican 360 Gourmet Burrito, 3655 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-1270 Casa Gourmet Burrito , 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-4415 El Charro Mexican Dining, 3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-2345 El Jaro Mexican Cafe, 3563 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-6639 La Cocina Mexicana, 23 Orinda Way, Ori, 258-9987</p>	<p>Mucho wraps, 1375-B Moraga Way, Mor, 377-1203 Baja Fresh Mexican Grill, 3596 Mt. Diabale Blvd, Laf, 283-8740 Celia's Restaurant, 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-8288 El Balazo, 3518D Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-8700 Maya Mexican Grill, 74 Moraga Way, Ori, 258-9049 Numero Uno Taqueria, 3616 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-1333</p> <p>Pizza Mountain Mike's Pizza, 3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-6363 Mountain Mike's Pizza, 504 Center St, Mor, 377-6453 Pennini's, 1375 Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-1515 Round Table Pizza , 361 Rheem Blvd, Mor, 376-1411 Round Table Pizza , 3637 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-0404 Village Pizza, 19 Orinda Way # Ab, Ori, 254-1200 Zamboni's Pizza, 1 Camino Sobrante # 4, Ori, 254-2800</p> <p>Sandwiches/Deli Bianca's Deli , 1480 Moraga Rd # A, Mor, 376-4400 Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub, 64 Moraga Way , Ori, 254-7202 Kasper's Hot Dogs, 103 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-0766 Noah's Bagels, 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-0716 Orinda Deli, 19 F Orinda Way, Ori, 254-1990 Subway, 396 Park St., Mor, 376-2959 Subway, 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf, 284-2627 Subway, Theatre Square, Ori, 258-0470</p> <p>Seafood Yankee Pier , 3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-4100</p> <p>Singaporean/Malaysian Kopitiam, 3647 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-1653</p> <p>Steak Casa Orinda, 20 Bryant Way, Ori, 254-2981</p> <p>Tea Pateriserie Lafayette, 71 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 283-2226 Tea Party by Appointment, 107 Orinda Way, Ori, 254-2206</p> <p>Thai Amarin Thai Cuisine, 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf, 283-8883 Baan Thai , 99 Orinda Way, Ori, 253-0989 Royal Siam, 512 Center Street, Mor, 377-0420 Siam Orchid, 23 Orinda Way # F, Ori, 253-1975</p> <p>Vietnamese Little Hearty Noodle, Pho & Pasta, 578 Center St., Mor, 376-7600</p>
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