

Bring on the Bacon ... Just in Time for the Super Bowl

By Susie Iventosch



Ritz-Bacon Crisps

Photo Susie Iventosch

With Super Bowl parties just around the corner, it's essential to be on top of your appetizer game! A friend brought these tasty treats to our house for a party over the holidays, and I had never had them before. So, naturally, I inquired about the recipe, and she said, "Oh, it's just that old Ritz cracker and bacon recipe!"

Apparently they were all the rage in the '70s and '80s, but this is one of the oldies I never knew about. My mom, who seemed to know every recipe floating around, never served them in all of her entertaining years either, that I can remember.

If you like bacon ... you're going to love these!

Ritz-Bacon Crisps

(Makes 24)

INGREDIENTS

24 Ritz crackers, broken in half
12 pieces thin cut (uncooked) bacon strips, cut in half
¾ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

Heat the oven to 250 F. Lay crackers on a rack on top of a baking sheet. (Stack two cracker halves on top of each other, using one full cracker for each stack.) Sprinkle ½ teaspoon (or so) of Parmesan on top of each cracker stack. Wrap the cracker and cheese with ½ slice of bacon, making sure the ends are on the bottom. Bacon should be wrapped snugly, but not too tightly. Bake on the rack with cookie sheet underneath it for about 2 hours until bacon is cooked and crispy. Can freeze and reheat!

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



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Can You Get a Job with That?

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

In his presentation "Can You Get a Job with That?" Stuart Nachbar, noted education writer and college counselor states, "A good school does good by its students." And, Stuart and I agree, if a school does a good job of what it is in the business of doing – educating and preparing students for life beyond college – you will get a job with a degree from the college. A good school is not necessarily the one that is most highly ranked or the one with the most recognizable name, but one which is honest and direct in its dealings with students and families. College representatives from these schools, whether in admissions, financial aid, enrollment management, student activities or career planning, are well-informed and can help a student and family reach sound decisions about everything from managing student debt to identifying faculty members in different academic departments who can help set a student on a secure academic path.

One of the most important questions to consider as you begin your college search is, "If you could get paid to do anything you wanted to do, what would that be?" "Good" colleges will be the ones that support that path and help you decide on an academic direction that is focused enough to support your present interests and broad enough to let you change course if needed. Those schools may be smaller liberal arts and science colleges or larger research universities. Both settings can work as long as the school provides supportive advising teams to help students move in the right academic direction, and college career centers that offer opportunities to test that direction through extracurricular activities, internships and capstone research projects. A good career development center interacts with students as early as the freshman year and collaborates with others both on and off campus to help students test a chosen career path or discover different career options (e.g. clinical assignments in health fields, student teaching for education, internships for business).

As you search for schools that fit your goals, remember that the best colleges for you are the ones that can support your learning style as well as your need for assistance with difficult subjects. For example, many students are interested in business but have difficulty in math. Instead of giving up your interest in business for fear of doing poorly in statistics or calculus, your college search should include an honest appraisal of the learning support network available to you at the various colleges on your list. If you learn best by talking to your instructors in high school, access to professors will be critical. If you experience success in difficult coursework by systematic use of peer tutors (those students who have taken the course you are struggling

with and gotten an 'A'), a similar program at the college should work well for you.

Once you identify a preliminary list of colleges that meets your goals and interests, it is important to consider costs. Some experts believe you should start your college search with cost as the primary factor. Regardless of when you take it into consideration, cost should be a consideration as you develop your college application list. Be sure to consider costs beyond the freshman year, especially indirect costs that happen once the student is further into a degree program – for example, a car, study abroad, or housing during an internship or co-op assignment. Housing costs can be significant and are more common in schools with cooperative learning environments that intermix coursework with applications in real work environments – and those employment opportunities may be located far from campus.

As you refine your college search, it is smart to go well beyond majors, campus size, location and climate to assess the factors that will ultimately make the biggest difference in the value of your undergraduate degree. I encourage students and their families to obtain 'straight' answers to their questions before entry to a college. You should expect a college to address your questions about affordability, academic advising, career center activities, housing and any other areas that deserve careful consideration. You generally have little time between when you learn about acceptance to a college and the enrollment deadline. Most of the important research should precede the college's decision on your application. In fact, I would maintain students should only apply to colleges that have demonstrated that their representatives are knowledgeable, honest and direct in their dealings with families. A "good" school does, indeed, do well by its students. And it does well by its applicants too.



Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. is an independent college advisor who draws upon 25 years of higher education experience to help guide and support the college admissions process for students and their families. Dr. LaScala is a member of NACAC, WACAC and HECA. She can be contacted at (925) 891-4491 or elizabeth@doingcollege.com. Visit www.doingcollege.com for more information about her services.

Italian Thriller and Social Drama 'Human Capital' Opens Jan. 30

By Sophie Braccini



Image provided

The International Film Showcase will present Italian director Paolo Virzi's film "Human Capital" for a one-week run beginning Jan. 30 at the Orinda Theatre. The 2013 satiric social drama was selected as the Italian entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards this year. Set in Northern Italy, the film was inspired by a novel with the same title by American writer Stephen Amidon.

Dino Ossola is a real estate dealmaker on the verge of bankruptcy. The cunning middle class businessman thinks he is going to strike it big when he manages to endear himself to the very wealthy Giovanni Bernaschi, the father of his daughter Serena's boyfriend. Ossola persuades Bernaschi to let him in on a mysterious and highly profitable hedge fund investment. As his story unfolds, we also follow the lives of other characters such as Ossola's wife Carla,

who dreams of becoming an actress and is bored and aimless until she finds her calling and decides to become a patron of the arts with her husband's money. The family's balance is threatened after a car accident sends a cyclist to the hospital in very serious condition, and an economic downturn makes the mighty Bernaschi vacillate. As their worlds face collapse, the characters react with desperation, leaving the audience wondering who will make it out alive.

Virzi approaches the story from three characters' points of view: first Ossola, then Carla and finally Serena. As the film progresses, different layers and perspectives are revealed and different sides of the truth emerge. The film's clever construction adds to the suspense.

Social realism is nothing new to Italian cinema. Virzi presents a satire comprised of pathetic characters who are victims of their greed and fear – nothing incredibly innovative, but the film's quality of acting and the overall beauty of the imagery make it all worthwhile.

A large part of the movie's success in Europe comes from Valeria Bruni Tedeschi, who portrays Carla and was recognized as Best Actress at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival for her moving performance of a poor little rich woman's quest for meaning. Fabrizio Bentivoglio as Ossola is painfully ridiculous until he turns into one of the most despicable characters of the movie. Superb newcomer Matilde Gioli plays Serena, the only angel of the movie. She has strength and emotion, but she is crushed like all the other youngsters in the film.

While a drama, the sarcastic overtone of the film provides many opportunities to laugh and smile. Hardly boring, this is a fast-paced movie. Don't leave before the last comment is displayed on the silver screen. It explains the meaning behind the movie's title.

The 'Showcase' in the Oscar Race

Efi Lubliner is proud to announce that the movie "Tangerines," presented last November at the Orinda Theatre by the International Film Showcase, and "Timbuktu," which will be showing in March, were two of the five 2015 Academy Award nominees for Best Foreign Language Film.

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