

STUDENT LIFE

LEB shows films with a twist

By Aaron J. Amendola
staff writer

The Lion Entertainment Board is at it once again this semester. LEB brings to the Behrend movie screens a new film series.

The "Twisted Film Series" made its debut on Jan. 18 in Bruno's, showcasing David Fincher's cult-classic film "Fight Club."

Though LEB is known for delivering box office hits for a fraction of the cost directly to Behrend students, this new film series has two things going for it: it is free and the films are exquisite.

Though LEB charges only a dollar for admission into their newer films, the Twisted Film Series offers its services for free. College students love anything that is free and the fact that it's a widely popular film among teenagers doesn't hurt. "That's a deal even my crazy alter ego would go for" says film buff Tom Zmijewski '04.

The series is sure to resonate with students as time goes on. "To see these movies and enjoy them is one thing, but if everyone can enjoy them and it's free, well, that's just awesome" says Shawn Zipay '04.

In the coming weeks, LEB will continue to show films with the same tone and overall "twisted" sense that springs from so few films such as "Fight Club."

On Feb. 22, Quentin Tarantino's gritty masterpiece "Pulp Fiction" is sure to grab people's attention. Bruno's will house one of America's best imports: "The Boondock Saints," on March 22. Rounding out the film series is the most recent of the four. Jake Gyllenhaal's powerhouse performance in "Donnie Darko" was only one highlight of the movie and on April 19, audiences are sure to find other things to fall in love with in the flick.

Why pay movie theater prices when LEB brings the box office to you? The Twisted Film Series is sure to entertain audiences and make people see the world from a more "twisted" viewpoint.

Some sugar but mostly spice from the East

By Jane Snow
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(KRT)

Open wide, because we're adding a whole continent to America's culinary melting pot. Just as in the past we appropriated fish sticks from England, hollandaise sauce from France and spaghetti and meatballs from Italy, America is in the process of making a slew of Asian foods our own.

Already, Japanese lemon grass and ponzu sauce can be found in Stouffer's Lean Cuisine entrees, and French's makes wasabi-flavored mayonnaise.

Asian sauces and seasonings started sneaking into American restaurant kitchens in the 1980s. By the mid-1990s, East-West fusion cuisine, the blending of ingredients and techniques from both cultures was the hot culinary trend in America's upscale restaurants.

Some of these ingredients are so handy that they've entered the mainstream of American cooking. Others are on the verge, chefs love them, but they haven't trickled down yet to home kitchens.

It's time to change that, starting with 10 of the most popular ethnic seasonings among chefs. The pros love these powders, herbs and sauces because they are convenient, readily available and offer a lot of flavor for the money. You'll like them for the same reasons.

The seasonings aren't just for stir-fries and curries. They also can be used to punch up the flavor of ordinary American dishes such as meatloaf and barbecued ribs.

Although you may not be familiar with some of the seasonings, chefs have known about them for years. The spotlight first shone on Asian ingredients in a big way in 1983, when chef Wolfgang Puck opened his groundbreaking restaurant, Chinoise on Main, in Santa Monica, Calif. The menu blended Asian and French cuisines (and still does) in such dishes as grilled Szechuan-seasoned steak with hot chili oil and a cilantro-shallot sauce and Mongolian lamb chops.

East-West or Asian fusion cuisine eventually spread from coast to coast and spawned dozens of cookbooks (Hugh Carpenter's "Pacific Flavors" remains one of the best). Ingredients such as ponzu sauce (a citrus-spiked soy sauce) and kecap manis (a thick, sweet Indonesian soy sauce) became as common in upscale restaurant kitchens as beurre blanc (butter-wine sauce).

"All of the cooks who come to work for me know what kecap manis is," said Jared Kirby, chef at Moe's in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

In Akron, Ohio, chef Roger Thomas was experimenting with Asian ingredients in the 1980s at Ken Stewart's Grille.

"The creative cooks took these flavors and tried them in their own dishes," Thomas recalled.

Even though his current restaurant, Piatto, serves classic Italian food, Thomas still uses kecap manis at home as a barbecue sauce on hamburgers and star anise to flavor creme brulee. And Middle Eastern pomegranate molasses has found a permanent place in his res-

taurant kitchen, where he uses it to enrich sauces and stocks.

"It's got a nice sweet and sour flavor," he said. Asian fusion cooking is not exclusively American, although it is a New World phenomenon. It has taken hold primarily in the United States and Australia, maybe because of our melting-pot cultures or maybe because our cooking traditions aren't as entrenched as they are in most of Europe. The popularity of sushi bars also may have played a part, Kirby said.

Whatever the reason, the result is a pantry's worth of ingredients to add to the pot. The 10 seasonings we're recommending are readily available in Akron-area stores. Chili oil can be found in the Chinese section of most supermarkets. So can a range of Chinese and Thai sauces, although the prices are often lower in Asian grocery stores. Most large supermarkets stock fresh cilantro, and some carry fresh lemon grass.

You'll probably have to visit an Asian market for wasabi paste, five-spice powder, kecap manis, star anise, the seasoning mix shichimi togarashi and ponzu sauce. Pomegranate molasses is sold primarily in Middle Eastern grocery stores.

Don't be afraid to experiment with the seasonings and sauces. To get you started, here are some suggestions:

Chili oil: It's hot, so use it sparingly. Sprinkle on foods as you would Tabasco sauce, or use for subtle heat in soups and casseroles.

Cilantro: The fresh, grassy, slightly tart flavor cuts through the richness of foods such as curry. Add a chopped tablespoon or two to green salads, steamed carrots or wrap sandwiches.

Five-spice powder: The haunting flavor hints of cinnamon and anise. Use just a pinch or it can be overpowering. Add to beef stew or chicken salad.

Kecap manis: The thick, molasses-like soy sauce makes a great glaze for grilled meats and fish. A dollop can add richness to a stew or stock.

Lemon grass: Float a few inch-long pieces in a delicate chicken-based soup for a muted lemon flavor, saute with vegetables or add to stir-fries.

Pomegranate molasses: The flavor is very tart, and must be balanced with sweetness. A splash will perk up barbecue sauce and add a tart note to just about any dish.

Ponzu sauce: Use as a dipping sauce for chicken tenders or fried shrimp, drizzle over grilled seafood, and use as a dressing for a cold noodle salad or thinly sliced cucumbers. Add grated fresh ginger if desired.

Shichimi togarashi: Use as a seasoning for meat before cooking, or sprinkle over pasta.

Star anise: Use in marinades for pork and chicken, which are complemented by the warm, anise-like flavor. Star anise also is being used by some chefs to flavor custard desserts such as bread pudding and creme brulee.

Wasabi paste or powder: Add to mayonnaise and spread on sandwiches or serve as an alternative to tartar sauce. Use in delicately flavored foods when you want a burst of heat that hits hard but fades quickly.

Here are three easy ways to use some of the ingredients.

STAR ANISE CREME BRULEE

1 quart cream or half-and-half
6 whole star anise
8 egg yolks
1 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Bring cream and star anise to a simmer in a medium saucepan. Remove from heat, cover and let steep for 30 minutes. Remove and discard the star anise.

Place cream over medium-low heat. Set about 2 quarts of water to boil in another pan. Place 6 1-cup ramekins or 8 custard cups in a larger oblong baking pan.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg yolks, two-thirds cup of the sugar and vanilla. In a thin stream, pour 1 cup of the hot cream into the egg mixture while whisking vigorously to prevent the yolks from cooking. Repeat with remaining cream.

Ladle custard mixture into the ramekins or custard cups. Pour the hot water into the oblong pan, to come halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Bake the custard in the water bath in a preheated, 350-degree oven for about 40 minutes, or until the custard is set but still wiggles slightly. Remove from water bath and chill for 4 hours or overnight.

Sprinkle remaining sugar over top of custard. Melt with a blowtorch or under a broiler. Chill again briefly to harden melted sugar.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

LACQUERED SALMON

1 salmon filet (1 pound)
1 tablespoon kecap manis (Indonesian sweet soy sauce)

Place salmon skin side down on a plate and spread the kecap manis over the side without skin. Let stand for 20 to 30 minutes.

Place salmon in a shallow baking pan, such as a pie plate or jelly-roll pan. Bake uncovered in a 400-degree oven for about 10 minutes, or just until opaque in the center.

Makes 2 servings.

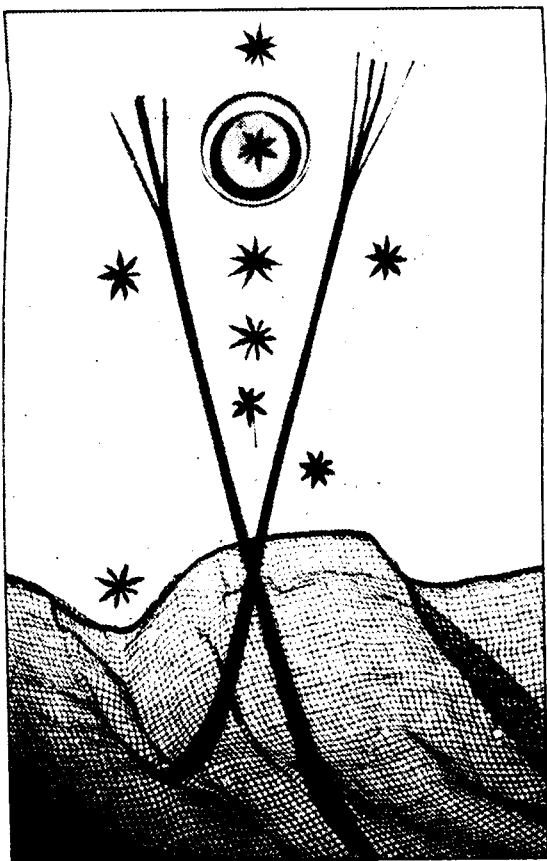
SAUTEED CHICKEN WITH POMEGRANATE MOLASSES

4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
1/4 cup pomegranate molasses
Salt, pepper
1 to 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/3 cup dry sherry
1 tablespoon butter

Coat chicken all over with the pomegranate molasses and marinate for 20 to 30 minutes. Remove from marinade and season with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Brown chicken on both sides. Cover, reduce heat to medium and continue cooking for about 5 minutes, just until chicken is cooked through. Overcooking will make the chicken tough.

Remove chicken from pan and add sherry. Increase heat to high and boil, stirring up browned bits on the bottom of the skillet, until liquid is reduced slightly. Whisk in butter a bit at a time. Pour sauce over chicken.

Makes 4 servings.



PHIL MASTURZO/KRT

Asian sauces and seasonings are the hot new thing in American cooking.

'Barbershop' opened Hollywood doors for Ice Cube

By Chris Hewitt
Knight Ridder Newspapers
(KRT)

ST. PAUL, Minn. - Will the real Ice Cube please stand up?

Early Cube fans knew him from the hip-hop collective N.W.A. and such songs as "Gangsta Gangsta." That was 16 years ago, though, and since then, he has built a more-than-one-page acting resume, with roles in "Boyz n the Hood" and "Barbershop."

His latest is "Are We There Yet?" which opens Friday and could not be less like N.W.A. Instead of singing about boosting cars, the movie has more to do with fitting car seats into them. Cube plays a small-business owner trying to impress a foxy neighbor by hauling her bratty kids from Portland to Vancouver.

Although he's still making music, he released "The Predator" two years ago, and that's him glowering at the camera behind Beyonce's hair extensions in the new Destiny's Child

video. "Soldier," he acknowledges that the guy trying to silence the kids in the back seat is much closer to who he is: a 35-year-old father of four who has been married for 12 years.

"I thought people would get a kick out of seeing me with kids," says Cube, who cheerfully spent a day in the Twin Cities chatting about "Are We There Yet?"

"I have four kids (ranging in age from 4 to 18), so I have seen every family movie made. I know the good ones like 'Home Alone' and 'Finding Nemo,' and I know the ones you let your kids watch while you sleep in the theater."

Cube's familiarity with family-film pros and cons ("I don't want to dis anybody, but I slept through 'Lemony Snicket'") came in handy when his company was putting together "Are We There Yet?"

"The last thing I wanted to do was make another sappy kids' movie," says Cube (he's born O'Shea Jackson, he's now legally Mr. Cube).

"That's why we hired the guy who made his living directing children's movies like 'Beethoven' and 'Jingle All the Way.' That's why we worked on the family message, so you feel it but you don't feel like you're being beat over the head with it."

They were determined to keep the movie on the right side of the schmaltz line, but Cube says there was also discussion about making sure it wasn't too hard-core:

"We had a lot of debate about, let's see, I want to be specific here - we talked about whether it was OK for kids to be shown driving cars and hopping on trains, since we want to make sure we're not setting a bad example for kids."

Yup, the guy who once sang "Get Off My D*** and Tell Yo B***** to Come Here" is now worrying about the effects of movies on children. And about making sure his movie gets marketed to all audiences, not just black audiences. And about what to do when you're sitting in a car with two child actors, dripping with puke.

"It wasn't real. It was this concoction of Fruit Loops and Karo syrup mixed with tomato paste. But the kids treated it like it was real vomit," says Cube of the horror involved in shooting a carsickness scene. "They didn't want no part of it. They wouldn't touch anything in the car. But the props people are taking pieces of it and throwing it at us, so the kids are screaming, 'It touched me. I got some on my head. Ewwwwww!'"

The good news is that Cube was getting hurl hurled at him on the set of his biggest movie. "Are We There Yet?" cost \$50 million, a budget that signals his transition from an actor with a following to an actor who can open a movie.

"We're breaking a lot of the Hollywood rules," he says. "This is a big-budget family movie with an almost all-black cast. That doesn't happen unless it's Eddie Murphy in it."

But Murphy has no movies coming out this year, and red-hot Ice Cube has three. In addition to "Are

We There Yet?" he stars in the action films "XXX: State of the Union" and "The Extractors."

Cube has also had his share of disappointment, he auditioned for, but did not get, a role in Oliver Stone's "Any Given Day," and he was a finalist for the Laurence Fishburne role in "The Matrix" but Hollywood isn't hating on him anymore.

"For me, personally, after 'Barbershop,' a door flew open in Hollywood. I have been in a lot of movies, but, without the success of 'Barbershop,' you wouldn't be seeing me in a family movie. Those people in Hollywood put a lot of effort into projections like, 'If he's never had a success in a PG-13 movie, can we put him in one?'" says Cube.

The answer now is yes. And maybe the answer to the Ice Cube riddle is that he's not the angry hip-hop guy or the happy-go-lucky star of the PG-rated "Are We There Yet?" He's both and neither, since they're just two of the many characters he has played.