



## Tom Rieger's Rhubarb-Strawberry Masterpiece

By Susie Iventosch

**M**y father-in-law has a longtime high school buddy named Tom Rieger, who for years lived in Lafayette and currently resides at Rossmoor. Rieger was a member of the Cal football team from 1949 to 1953 and recently retired from his Snap-on Tool business. These days he plays a lot of golf, but also enjoys making rhubarb-strawberry pie, a hobby he's added to his retirement regimen over the last two or three years.

"I've always loved rhubarb," he said. "We had a rhubarb plant where I grew up in Berkeley and my mom used to make rhubarb pies for us and for our neighbor, Uncle Brown. She never used strawberries in those days. That is a modern trend to make the pies sweeter."

Rieger says juicy strawberries can make the crust a little soggy, so he prevents this problem with two easy steps. First, he allows the strawberries to sit with a sprinkling of sugar for an hour or two to leach out some of the juices. Secondly, he pre-bakes the bottom crust for 5-8 minutes at 350 degrees before adding fruit.

I had the good fortune to sample his pie while at my father-in-law's house last fall, and being a rhubarb lover myself, I sent off for his recipe. Rieger uses packaged crust, but for those readers who prefer to make their own, a recipe is included below.

So far, Rieger doesn't cook much else. "My wife has always done a great job of the cooking," he noted.

This leaves plenty of time for golf!

(Makes one 10-inch pie)

### Ingredients

- 1 recipe pie crust, below (or packaged crust) enough for top and bottom crusts
- 6 stalks, or three to four cups rhubarb, strings removed and coarsely chopped
- 2 cups strawberries, sliced or quartered, stems removed
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ cup flour

### Directions

On a floured surface, roll pie dough into two large circles, 12 inches in diameter. Place one round in a 10-inch pie dish and roll or crimp edges. With a fork, make little holes over bottom and bake in 350-degree oven for 5-8 minutes. Remove from oven and cool.

Clean and slice strawberries. Toss with 2 tablespoons sugar and place in a strainer situated over a bowl. Set aside for about one hour to allow some of the juices to leach out.

Meanwhile, string and chop rhubarb and place in a large bowl. Add strained berries, ½ cup sugar and flour and toss gently. Dump mixture into pie dish and arrange top crust, either lattice or whole crust. For lattice crust, slice second round of dough into ½ to ¾ inch slices and arrange over fruit, alternat-

ing over-under like lattice work. For a complete top crust, trim round to fit over fruit and tuck just under rolled edges of bottom crust. Cut air holes in top with cooking shears or a knife. Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 55 minutes, or until crust is golden brown and fruit is bubbly. Serve with whipped cream, vanilla ice cream or frozen yogurt.

### Pie Crust

- 2 cups all-purpose flour (can use whole wheat flour)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1½ sticks (¾ cup) unsalted butter, cut into small cubes
- 2 teaspoons cider vinegar
- ½ cup ice-cold water

Blend flour and salt in a large mixing bowl. Add butter and crumble with fingertips until butter is well integrated with flour. Sprinkle vinegar over the top and mix in with a fork. Finally add water, just a bit at a time, until dough forms. Add water slowly so the dough doesn't get too wet. Divide dough into two large balls.

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The recipe is available on our web site. Go to:  
<http://www.lamorindaweekly.com>