

Rheem Firefighter's Recipe is the Peachiest

By Susie Iventosch



Moraga Peach Recipe Contest grand prize winners, from left: Vince Matulich, Clayton Hoover (recipe creator) and Brad Nygard. Hoover created the recipe, but he said it was definitely a team effort. Photo provided

The first annual Moraga Peach Recipe Contest was a big success with 18 entries. All recipes were to be made with peaches from the contestants own tree or from the Moraga Farmers' Market.

"The goal was to dust off the traditional recipe boxes and bring out old family recipes," said Gail Hayden, director of the California Farmers Markets Association. "And, that's what we got. We were so pleased!"

Among the contestants were a Moraga fireman and a 10-year-old boy, who wants to be a chef when he grows up, but who also wants to play professional baseball and he's trying to figure out how to do both!

The judges, which included Hayden, Cheryl Sternman Rule, author of "Ripe: A Fresh Colorful Approach to Fruits and Vegetables," and Pamela Boyar, head of five farmers' markets on Oahu, said the dishes were so good, they were fooled into thinking that perhaps pastry chefs had errantly entered the contest. Professional chefs were not allowed to enter.

"When firefighter Clayton Hoover's (Campolindo Class of 2000) recipe won, we nearly had to call the police for crowd control, the booth was so packed," Hayden remarked.

Hoover said he and his fellow firemen were out shopping for groceries for the Rheem station, when they decided to pick up a few things at the farmers' market. It was then that a young woman approached them about entering the peach contest.

"I said sure, because we like to get involved in the community," Hoover said. "But, since I am not really a baker, I didn't

want to do a pie. I wanted to make something really different, and since it's been so hot, I thought something light would be great."

That's when he came up with the idea of cannoli made with peaches, a touch of mint and feta cheese added to the mascarpone, all served with a homemade caramel sauce. He also thought it would make a great presentation. And, according to Hayden, the presentation was striking with the cannoli served on an Italian platter.

This is a very creative dish, and though Hoover says he never cooked at home growing up because his mom always cooked wonderful homemade meals, he had to take his turn at cooking when he first joined the firehouse five or so years ago. That is really when his interest in cooking began.

"We rotate cooking duties at the firehouse and I always like trying new stuff," he noted. "This dish was definitely a team effort with my fellow firefighters doing a lot of the prep work."

The grand prize award was a \$200 gift certificate to Williams Sonoma and Hoover said he plans to buy some things they need at the station with his award.

"I think it's great the Moraga Farmers' Market puts on contests like this," Hoover said. "It brings the community together and it was lots of fun. I'd do it again!"

Hoover and his fiancé, Jill Dutcher, will be married in September, and I imagine they have some excellent meals in their future!

For 2nd and 3rd Place winners and Honorable Mention recipes, please visit Lamorindaweekly.com

Peach Mascarpone-Stuffed Cannoli with Rum-Infused Grilled Peaches and Caramel Sauce

(Makes about 10-12 cannoli, using a half-inch diameter cannoli maker)

This is the award-winning Moraga Peach Recipe Contest entry, created by Moraga fireman Clayton Hoover and prepared with the help of his fellow firemen. This is a very creative and delicious recipe, that comprises five parts, so be sure you have plenty of time before diving in!

Cannoli Dough

2 cups flour
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon salt
Zest of one lemon
1/2 cup white wine
2 tablespoons butter, cut into tiny pieces
2 tablespoons water
1 whole egg
1 egg yolk
1 egg white
1-2 cups canola oil for frying cannoli

Combine flour, sugar, cinnamon, salt and lemon zest in a large mixing bowl. Stir well. Cut in butter using a pastry cutter or two knives. (I melted the butter and mixed the butter with the liquids, and it worked great.) In a separate bowl or glass measuring cup, mix wine, water, whole egg and egg yolk. Add to dries and stir until you have a stiff dough. Turn onto a floured surface and knead for a few minutes, until no longer sticky. Let dough rest a few minutes.

Roll out on a floured board to a thickness of 1/8-inch. Cut dough into 4-inch squares and, one at a time, roll them around a cannoli tube. Brush seam with egg white and seal by pinching closed. Cannoli tubes can be found at most kitchen stores. I found cannoli tubes that were about a half inch thick and came in a set of four, but since Hoover did not have a cannoli tube, he used the handle of a wire whisk!

Heat oil in a small sauce pan over medium-high heat. Place cannoli in hot oil, a few at a time, or however many you can fit and still turn. Cook on one side, until just beginning to turn golden-brown and turn over, cooking the other side. Remove from oil and place on paper towel to cool. Stuff when completely cooled.

Mascarpone Filling

8 ounces mascarpone
3 ounces feta, crumbled
2 tablespoons sugar, plus 1 tablespoon for sprinkling over peaches
3 ripe peaches, peeled, pitted and cut into small pieces
4 sprigs mint, finely diced
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

Sprinkle 1 tablespoon sugar over peaches and allow to sit for up to an hour. Drain any excess juice from peaches before adding them to the filling mixture. Mix peaches and all other ingredients together and using a piping bag or a squeeze bottle with the opening snipped to about 1/4 inch, fill cannoli shells.

Rum-Infused Grilled Peaches

1 peach, peeled and sliced into grill-able slices
1 teaspoon olive oil
1/4 teaspoon rum extract

Mix oil and rum extract and brush on peach slices. Grill over medium-high heat until peaches being to caramelize and have black grill stripes. Then turn and continue to cook until the other side is also done. It is helpful to spray the grill with a non-stick spray before cooking. Place over cannoli as a garnish.

Caramel Sauce

1/4 cup light brown sugar
3 tablespoons heavy cream
1 tablespoon lowfat milk
Pinch of salt
Combine all ingredients in a small sauce pan and cook over low heat, stirring often, until smooth and desired consistency for drizzling on plate and over peaches.

Whipped Cream Topping

1 1/2 cups heavy cream
1 1/2 cups powdered sugar (I used only a couple of tablespoons of powdered sugar, but beat the cream with an electric mixer.)
Splash vanilla extract

Mix all in a bowl and whisk until thickened. Garnish cannoli with a dollop of whipped cream and place grilled peaches on top.

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:

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