



Taste

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THE NEW MEXICAN



TANTRI WIJA
Beyond Takeout

Farmers Market falls victim to apple fever

I had a frightening experience at the Santa Fe Farmers Market last Saturday.

I was there looking for garlic oil and some kind of exotic organic jam, both of which make good gifts for the mother of one's beloved. While there, I buzzed from free sample to free sample like a parasitic honeybee, my eyes trained for evidence of free cheese or bread cut into cubes. But all I could see in my peripheral vision were baskets and baskets and baskets of apples.

I stopped in my tracks and looked around — nothing but apples. Tons of them. Everywhere I looked, there they were: green ones, red ones, greeny-red ones, tiny ones with little dried leaves attached that had that "backyard-tree" quality — apples as far as the eye could see.

It was terrifying.

Where are all these apples coming from?!? They explode from their little rustic baskets like aliens in some horror movie — does no one see?

Does no one realize? The apple-to-human ratio at the farmer's market was easily 100 to 1 — if they wanted to take over, there would be nothing we could do.

There is only one thing to do about this apple invasion: We'll just have to cook them. Cook them all.

Sexing up the apple pie

Apple desserts have an image problem. While there is no evidence that Midwestern grandmas have a monopoly on the fruit, apples — and apple pie in particular — are largely associated with apron-clad matriarchs and down-home upbringings, which keeps them off the menus of many high-end, metro-centric establishments — the kind that favor desserts containing black pepper and single-origin chocolate.

Apple pie has a novelty-like quality about it, almost the rimshot of desserts.

It's invited to the party because everybody likes it, but it always wears a frumpy dress.

Well, not this pie. Strictly speaking, the recipe that follows is not for a pie; it is a tart, and was the first pie-like dessert I ever made successfully.

I had, as a young thing, experimented with brownies and chocolate-chip cookies (from a mix and otherwise) but the idea of anything made with a real "dough" I found daunting.

The appeal of this tart was that the dough didn't need to be cut into those bijou little shapes you see on the cover of *Bon Appétit* magazine. There is no pie dish involved, and the carefully crafted, sculptured crust that marks apple pie as the dessert of Ma and Pa Kettle is absent.

This crust is wild, tousled, artfully artless, the way all haute cuisine is supposed to be. This is pie crust that has been *Queer-Eyed*.

It is, in fact, a *crostata* (if you speak Italian) or a *galette* (if French is your reference) — both of which mean, I suppose, "adorably rustic-looking."

This is the sort of pie they probably serve in Provençal wine-producing chateaus that middle-aged women (or Russell Crowe) acquire with unrealistic ease in movies.

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Cream of the crop

Three exotic pumpkins eliminate the dull taste typically associated with ordinary orange pumpkins. **Page D-2**

A WORLD OF FLAVOR

SFCC: Culinary Arts Program offers course that takes students on an international cuisine adventure



Jane Phillips/The New Mexican

Michelle Retzer, who teaches the International Cuisine class in the Santa Fe Community College's Culinary Arts Program, flips nuts while walking through the kitchen during one of her classes Nov. 1.

By **Natasha Nargis**
For The New Mexican

Michelle Retzer tries to give students in her International Cuisine class at Santa Fe Community College a well-rounded experience.

One week, she said, they were in the Mediterranean, another week in Africa ... Germany — you name it.

A few weeks ago, when they were in Africa, the students concocted a tasty vegetable soup. A touch of peanut butter gave it a full, tangy flavor. Also included in that meal were a beet salad, *injera* (a flatbread traditional to Ethiopia) and *basboosa*, a rich cake with a subtle hint of lemon, popular in the Middle East and North Africa.

"We do everything from baking to butchery to sausage making to pasta making in our

international class, and in some of the other classes," said Retzer, who is the lead instructor in the college's Culinary Arts Program. "I try to teach them as many disciplines as are realistic — and to have them spend as much time with a knife in hand as possible."

Visitors are invited to Retzer's International Cuisine class at SFCC tomorrow to observe the students at work; taste appetizers, soups, salads and desserts; and to judge a "black box" cooking competition. Retzer said the festivities serve as a send-off for the graduating students.

"This opens up things for our students. It adds another dimension," Retzer said. "I think they play the game best when they're competing — and there is the additional challenge of not knowing what the ingredients are going to be."

The black-box competition always creates a buzz of excitement both among students

and those watching, tasting and judging, Retzer said. The idea came from the *Iron Chef* TV program, she said.

To set up the competition, Retzer will search the school's walk-in cooler, freezer and cupboards to find ethnic ingredients the class has used throughout the semester. Those ingredients go into a black box, the class is divided into two teams and the contest begins.

Retzer also allows the teams to use additional ingredients they find in the culinary-arts lab. "But I don't allow them to bring in their own ingredients. That could give one group an advantage over the other," she said.

Sweet success stories

Students in Retzer's International Cuisine class have been working together for three semesters, and have developed a camarade-

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IF YOU GO: Tasting and Black Box Competition with the International Cuisine class at Santa Fe Community College
WHEN: 3 to 5 p.m. Thursday **WHERE:** Culinary Arts lab, SFCC, 6401 Richards Ave. **COST:** Free and open to the public
FOR MORE INFORMATION: Call 428-1435

Gala to honor Girard, the man and the wing

Santa Fe chefs, caterers to mark textile artist's double anniversary with international theme

By **Heather Wood**
For The New Mexican

December 5th marks the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Museum of International Folk Art's renowned Girard Wing.

Housed within its walls are more than 100,000 pieces of folk art collected by Alexander and Susan Girard. The couple, longtime Santa Fe residents, donated their entire collection to the museum in 1978 and the state financed the construction of the special addition to the museum to house it.

Alexander Girard, who died in December 1993 at age 86, is considered one of the 20th century's finest graphic and textile artists, as well as an extensive collector of the work of other artisans.



Courtesy photo

Alexander Girard attends the grand opening of the Girard Wing at the Museum of International Folk Art on Dec. 5, 1982, in this Museum of New Mexico photo.

Internationally, he is best known for his design work with furniture manufacturer Herman Miller and now defunct Braniff International Airlines. Locally, he was responsible for the interior design of The

Compound — converted from a classic 19th-century adobe dwelling to a restaurant in the 1960s — as well as for other

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IF YOU GO

What: Celebrate Girard! — a gala and fundraiser at the Museum of International Folk Art celebrating the Girard Wing's 25th anniversary and commemorating the 100th birthday of Alexander Girard

When: Saturday 5:30-6:30 p.m., Cocktails & Girard gallery walk; 6:30-9:30 p.m., Dining, dancing and silent auction

Where: Museum of International Folk Art, Museum Hill

Price: \$150 per person, all inclusive, of which \$100 is tax-deductible

For tickets or more information: Call the Museum of New Mexico Foundation at 982-6366 ext. 112. To view a partial selection or auction items online, visit www.internationalfolkart.org and click on Events and Education