

taste of summer

We ask local personalities about their favourite fruit or veggie



ARROUZÉ

WHO: Eric Arrouzé, of www.911cheferic.com, is a French-trained freelance chef. He teaches cooking classes privately and online through UBC continuing education and the Cookshop

"My favourite vegetable is the leek. It brings back the memory when I spent my weekends with my grandmother Augusta. A pot, often the Garbure, (a robust goose, cabbage and leek soup) was always cooking on the wood stove. As we were approaching her place, we could recognize the fragrance of the leeks cooking. Leeks are widely used in French cuisine in simple ways, including leeks vinaigrette, leeks mimosa, leeks in bone-marrow gratin in red-wine sauce, leek quiche, and in potato-leek cream soup."

— Kerry Moore



Robert Krung for The New York Times

SCHOOLING Eric Arrouze, a chef, shoots step-by-step photos of himself making a recipe and posts the assembled clips online.

baked ziti, and I asked about preparing it ahead of time and how many pounds per pan could I use," she said.

Online courses like these consist of written lessons, often supplemented with downloaded pictures and links to relevant Web sites. Students can talk to the teacher on class bulletin boards and through e-mail. As in any classroom, some students prefer to talk directly to the teacher instead of in class.

Mr. Arrouze's classes are structured differently: he shoots step-by-step photos of himself preparing each recipe and assembles them into a QuickTime clip that he then

loads on the Web. Students can choose any recipe they want to learn instead of following a set class agenda.

Recording each recipe takes a day. "I go to market, go home, do my cooking, everything A to Zed, and take pictures every two to three seconds," Mr. Arrouze said. "Me and my wife eat, we enjoy our meal. In the afternoon I build a movie."

He likens the Web site to an animated recipe book. "They can watch the movie as much as they want, when they want," he said. "They bring their laptops into the kitchen." He also offers e-mail access, and students in a panic over a falling soufflé can

even call him on his cellphone.

Elana Brief, a physicist at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver and a student of Mr. Arrouze's, said she recently logged onto 911cheferic.com to check out the recipe for beef bourguignon. "It's not that difficult," Ms. Brief said. "The Web site reduced anxiety about cooking."

Whether online cooking instruction will ever attract a large following is debatable. Even Mr. Arrouze acknowledged that the Internet is a far-from-perfect medium for learning how to cook. "Teaching a class at the university is hands-on — that's the best way to learn," he said.

Can't Even Boil Water? Your Mouse Can Help

By BONNIE ROTHMAN MORRIS

IMAGINE you are in your kitchen, preparing a recipe that calls for homemade mayonnaise. You have never made it before, and the process as described in the cookbook seems daunting.

But if you are a student in Eric Arrouze's online cooking school, there is help. You can go to his Web site, 911cheferie.com, and call up a short clip of still images that shows Mr. Arrouze, a French-born-and-trained chef and cooking instructor in Vancouver, British Columbia, making mayonnaise himself. After these tips from a master, whipping eggs and oil into homemade Hellman's should be a cinch.

Mr. Arrouze's online tutorials are among a handful of cooking classes on the Web. None of these classes promise to turn the neophyte into the next darling of the food scene. What they do offer, online teachers and their students say, is a safety net for new cooks, and a place for kitchen enthusiasts to connect with an expert, no matter how far across the globe they are flung.

Mr. Arrouze, who also teaches classes at the University of British Columbia and other locations in the Vancouver area, says that a couple of hundred students have signed up for his online service, which costs \$7 a month. For that fee, they get unlimited access to several hundred QuickTime clips showing Mr. Arrouze at work.

In addition to basics, he offers tutorials on making exotic fare like escargots à la bourguignonne and pan-seared duck breast. There are even clips of kitchen techniques like boning fowl and chopping onions.

Other cooking instruction is offered by distance-learning Web sites like Suite University (suite101.com) and Universal Class (universalclass.com), which are the online

where just about anyone can offer to teach others about anything.

At Universal Class, for example, Tracy Farnsworth, a stay-at-home parent in Milton, Vt., teaches "Cooking Basics" and "Baking Basics." Mrs. Farnsworth says she started teaching online to help pay the bills, and now makes about \$100 a week from teaching about 27 cooking students, as well as 113 students who take her course in short-hand.

"Cooking Basics" is similar to a correspondence course, consisting of written lessons — 14 in all, covering fundamental concepts like kitchen equipment, terminology, menu planning and, at the end, simple recipes. Students pay \$10 for the course and can take written tests to earn a certificate of completion (which costs \$18 more).

Writing a class that works was not easy. "I took what I felt was the hardest things to learn when I started baking" and wrote down the details, Mrs. Farnsworth said. The class instruction took her about a month to write, proofread and copy onto the electronic form provided by Universal Class.

At Suite University, several classes are offered, including "Cooking for a Crowd," a four-lesson course designed for people who are planning a big event at home and do not know how to proceed. Topics include budgeting, choosing dishes and calculating quantities. The course costs \$15, or \$20 if e-mail access to the instructor is included.

Diane Marchese of Batavia, N.Y., enrolled in the course when she was planning a graduation party for her daughter, with more than 100 guests. She had never taken a cooking course before, nor had she tried online education.

Although she eventually decided to hire a caterer after the guest list swelled to 140 and her ambition drooped, Mrs. Marchese said, she liked having e-mail access to her

The Culture and Traditions of French Regional Cuisine (in English)

UBC Continuing Studies is proud to present a series of cultural cooking classes with Chef Eric Arrouzé of France. Each program is based on a different French region. This spring, we feature Provençal cuisine. In the summer, we present the Bordeaux region and its specialties.

Chef Eric has worked in famous hotels and restaurants in France and Canada and was Executive Chef in a five-star hotel on the French Riviera. He has a British Columbia Instructor Diploma and over five years of experience in teaching culinary arts to adults.

Provençal Cuisine

AB 108 P03A

As simple as they are exciting, the culinary traditions of Provence and the Southern Alps entice lovers of sunny, colourful cuisine and seduce the most demanding palates. The flavours and aromas reveal worlds that are echoed by the lively market stalls. Discover France through its cuisine, culture and traditions.

You will prepare a multi-course meal each week under the tutelage of Guest Chef Eric at Cyrano Restaurant in Vancouver. A sample menu could include Stuffed and Roasted Mussels Setoise, Crusted Rack of Lamb with Artichokes and Garden Aroma, Potato Anna, Tomato Provençal and Thyme Apple Tart with Almond Cream.

In addition, each participant will receive a chef's set including kitchen implements and an apron, courtesy of Genesis Food Equipment. All classes will be held at Cyrano Restaurant. Please register early as enrolment is limited.

6 Mondays, May 5-June 16 (no class May 19), 6:30-9:30 pm; Cyrano Restaurant, 1459 West Broadway, Vancouver. \$575, including course materials.

Note: no refunds are possible once classes have started. For those who have already received the chef's set in the previous course, the fee is \$495.

604-822-0802



Summer Institute on Bordeaux Cuisine

AB 128 S03A

Join this innovative program and discover the Bordeaux region through its cuisine, culture and traditions! This week-long program is designed specifically for home cooks, both beginner and advanced. Our hands-on classes have you rolling up your sleeves while you work in tandem with Chef Eric Arrouzé as he shows you his secrets to preparing fabulous food from Southwestern France.

Each morning, you learn about the historical and cultural background of a dish you then prepare. Then you enjoy the fruits of your labour with a beautifully presented lunch. A sample menu could include Terrine of Armagnac and Chicken Liver, Cassoulet Toulousain, and Poached Pears in Bordeaux Wine with Vanilla Ice Cream.

You'll leave the course with copies of our exceptional recipes and the confidence to prepare them on your own.

Monday to Friday, July 7-11, 10 am-2 pm;
Rm 140, Food, Nutrition and Health
(FNH) Bldg, UBC. \$650, includes
chef's set. For information,
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Chef Eric Arrouzé

Chef behind the camera, his hands in front of it

By Wendy McLellan
Business Reporter

Eric Arrouzé stands at the chopping block in his tiny East Vancouver apartment mincing green onions to garnish the day's lesson for his students.

He sprinkles the onions over the dish, adds a sprig of herb, then reaches for the camera that's set up on a tripod next to the chopping block.

He snaps a few photos.

Later, Arrouzé will turn his step-by-step photos into a QuickTime movie clip to teach amateur chefs around the world how to recreate his Dungeness crab and tomato clafouti with zucchini salad on the side.

After years of training and working as a chef in some of Europe's finest resorts, Arrouzé is happy cooking alone in the little kitchen and sharing his skills through his online cooking school.

It's the perfect recipe to blend his passion for food, love of teaching and entrepreneurial talent.

"I am very happy because I do what I love to do — teach and cook," says Arrouzé, 36. "I have fun, and I do something different than other chefs."

Born in the southwest region of France, Arrouzé decided when he was still a child that he wanted to be a chef.

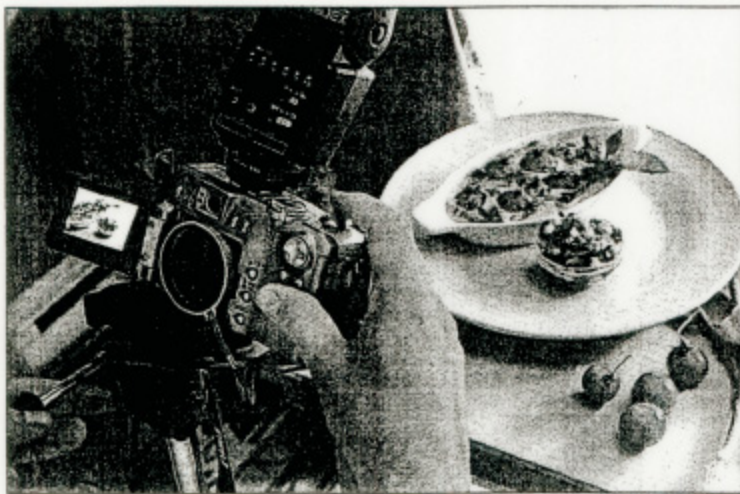
"At six or seven, I said I wanted to be a firefighter, but when I started to spend more time with my grandma, I wanted to be a chef instead. She was a great cook," he says.

At 16, he was working as an apprentice in a top restaurant in his city and, after completing three years of training, he began to work his way up the kitchen hierarchy in some of the best restaurants and hotels in Paris and on the Mediterranean.

At age 23, he was made executive chef at an exclusive five-star hotel on the French Riviera.

"I was there for three years and then I was bored," Arrouzé says.

Newly married, he and his wife moved to Montreal in 1993, where he found work as



Jon Murray — The Province

Eric Arrouzé photographs each step of the process as he prepares a French meal.

an executive chef at a downtown restaurant.

Two years later, the couple moved across the country to Vancouver to escape Quebec's harsh winters and economic climate.

Arrouzé spent nearly three years working as second sous chef at Le Crocodile in downtown Vancouver, but found he was getting tired of the work.

"I was getting bored," he says. "I worked in hotels and restaurants, and it's very hard work. I was fed up."

Unwilling to give up his passion for cooking, Arrouzé took a job teaching at a private cooking school, then started working as a substitute instructor at Vancouver Community College and developing a series of courses on French cooking that he now teaches through the University of B.C. and other schools.

"I really enjoyed teaching," he says. "Cooking was like a job, then I found I had

something to give and people will pay for this knowledge."

Arrouzé's website, 911cheferic.com, began with a simple webpage he had to design for a class assignment to earn his B.C. instructor's diploma.

The name of the site came from his students, who nicknamed him Chef 911 because he was always rushing to their rescue when things went wrong in the kitchen.

With help from his wife, Frédérique Niel, who is a web designer, Arrouzé started with a few recipes and basic cooking tips for creating French meals.

He added a newsletter (written by Niel) and then more recipes before deciding he could turn the website into a business.

The newly designed site was launched in November 2002 after 14 months of development and about \$50,000 — the couple's life savings plus a bank loan.

"At first, we had a few sales, but things

weren't moving much," Arrouzé says.

"Then the *New York Times* published a story about online cooking schools and talked to me, and that started everything."

That was last October, and Arrouzé's website now attracts about two million visitors a month, who are attracted by hundreds of free recipes and information on the finer points of French cuisine.

For a monthly fee of \$7 US, subscribers — a few hundred so far — gain access to the 300 movie clips, an animated cookbook with Arrouzé demonstrating how to make everything from mayonnaise to beef bourguignon to crème brûlée.

He also teaches basic techniques, such as how to properly slice garlic, make fish stock and debone a chicken.

He has students in 13 countries, including Australia, England, South Africa and France, although most are U.S. residents, he says.

Arrouzé creates each recipe then prepares the dishes, adjusting ingredients as he cooks. Using a digital camera, he photographs his progress every two or three seconds, then makes a four-minute movie of the process and downloads it to the website for students.

"People don't know where I am — they may think I have a great kitchen somewhere," Arrouzé says.

"It doesn't matter. What's important is what I do."

The website doesn't pay all the bills, but his subscriber list is growing by 15 per cent a month and he expects to pay back the bank some time next year, he says.

The next step is finding a bigger kitchen, then developing a line of ready-to-eat gourmet foods.

"I have fun. I like teaching and interacting with people. I get e-mail thank-yous from people and I've never met them," he says.

"You're not going to become a professional chef looking at my movies, but you will have enough information to recreate the recipes and you're going to cook great meals and have fun."

Seven pointers for success from Eric Arrouzé

Low expectations for financial reward may be the best strategy for beginning an e-business, says Eric Arrouzé, who runs an online cooking school for amateur chefs.

"I didn't have too many expectations — I didn't know what to expect, really," he says. "It just seemed like a logical step."

He may have started his cyber school with few ideas about success, but Arrouzé has learned a few other things along the way:

Figure out what you're trying to do: "If you go to a website devel-

oper, you have to be clear about what you want.

"Then shop around — there are a lot of crooks."

Cross-marketing brings business: Arrouzé promotes his website to his in-person cooking students, who pass the address to friends.

He also ensures that his site pops up on Internet searches for online cooking schools.

Make a plan: "You need an Internet marketing plan as well as a business plan," he says.

"You can have a great website, but if nobody can find you, it doesn't matter."

Learn to love technology: "I had to figure out a lot of things. I had to learn how to use a digital camera and how to make movies."

"There was so much technology, but I found out that I like computers and technology."

"I never knew that about myself."

Be prepared to wait for an income: Designing 911cheferic.com took more than a year, all of

Arrouzé's savings and a bank loan.

It costs about \$1,000 a month to maintain and it will be two years before he hopes to pay off the loan and start making a profit.

"A lot of e-businesses crash and don't make a cent," he says.

"There are a lot of people trying to sell. You don't make money right away. You have to persevere."

Dream small: It may be slow to make a profit, but Arrouzé's entire business fits in his rented two-bedroom apartment and is easily

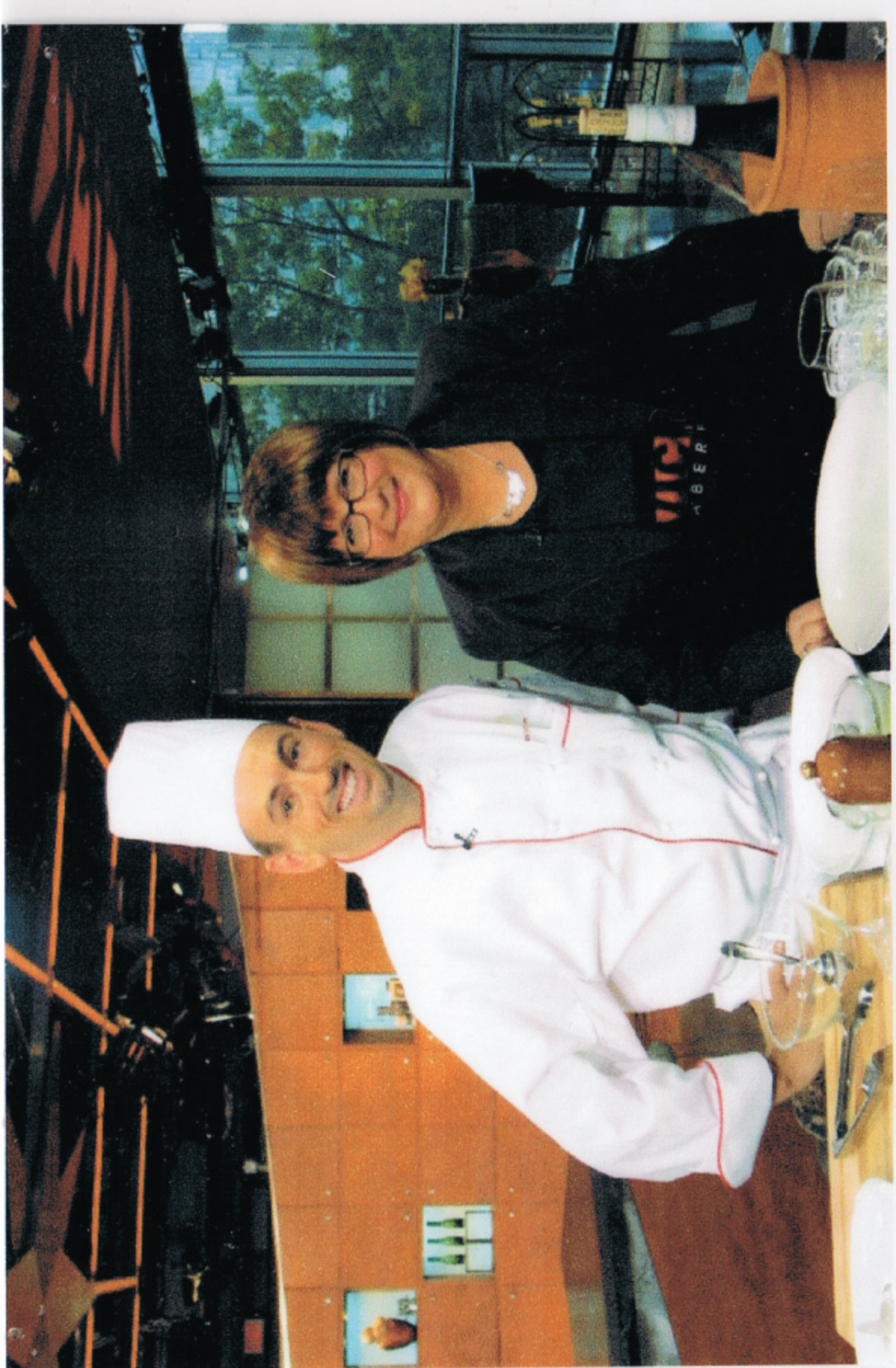
transported to Europe during vacations. He also had the good sense to marry a web designer.

The website only needs about 10 days of work a month to generate more recipes, regular newsletters and to answer questions from visitors, which leaves lots of time to teach cooking classes in person and for play.

"I don't have to be at the office all the time," says Arrouzé.

"I can be out playing squash and the subscriptions come in."

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Jim Wenzel - The Province

Eric Arrouzé (dubbed Chef 911 by his students) runs an online cooking school from the living room of his East Vancouver apartment. **Page A37**