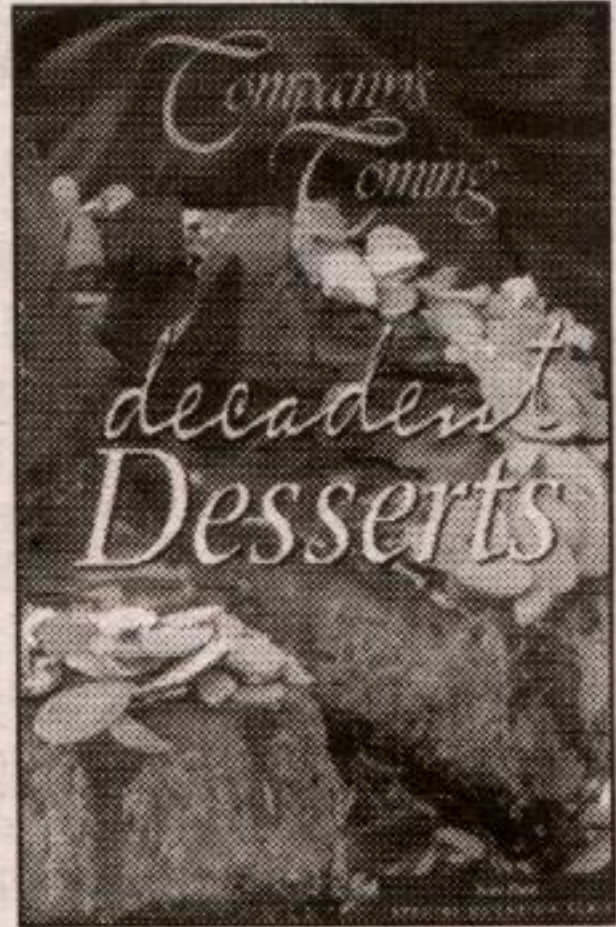


Get ready for Christmas entertaining—Win a chance for a cookbook

The Independent & Free Press and Company's Coming Cookbooks want to get readers ready for holiday entertaining with the latest Jean Paré cookbook, *Decadent Desserts*.

Colour photographs showcase every tantalizing recipe. The book includes informative how-to guides and step-by-step instructions.



Just complete the trivia quiz on page 33 and submit to *The Independent & Free Press* before 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 12. Eight entries will be randomly chosen from all correct submissions. E-mail your answers to cgamble@independentfreepress.com, or fax to Cookbook contest, 905-873-0398, mail to 280 Guelph St., Unit. 29, Georgetown, L7G 4B1 or drop it off at *The Independent & Free Press* front desk, located in the Georgetown Market Place. One entry per person.

See Trivia Quiz on pg. 33

Annual trip is a shopper's delight

(Gerry is writing this week)

Ashley's Warehouse Sale is my favourite non-food event of the year! Annually for many years (this was my 20th) in October and November for three weeks on Railroad Street in Toronto, the sale of the year is on. As we drive up to the building, we first see the huge white tent outside on the lawn, where the overflow of shoppers line up before being allowed to enter the building. We usually are fortunate enough to park very close in one of the adjacent parking lots. There is a charge, of course.

The lines inside the tent curve back and forth in a Disney-like pattern until we reach the door, generally in about an hour. Believe me, it is worth the wait but if you aren't a shopper, you will probably have given up by now.

Then we grab a cart, which holds three boxes to fill with our goodies and away we go! Oohing and ahing and 'oh look at this', 'oh, you've got to see that' as we proceed with mouths open and eyes wide.

What do they sell? Everything you would see in a Christmas decoration store, everything you would see in a candle shop, everything you would see in a children's shop (without the clothing), everything you would see in a fine china shop, a kitchen shop, a gift shop as well as linens, gourmet food items, walls of ribbons, calendars, silk flowers, garland and wreaths. Oh my! I am getting excited and may need to go again! We went on the third day of the sale so there is lots of time to return!

What's cookin'?

Lori Gysel
Gerry Kentner



Oh yes and partway through your shopping experience, there is a holding area where you can save your full boxes and get three more, which we always need to do!

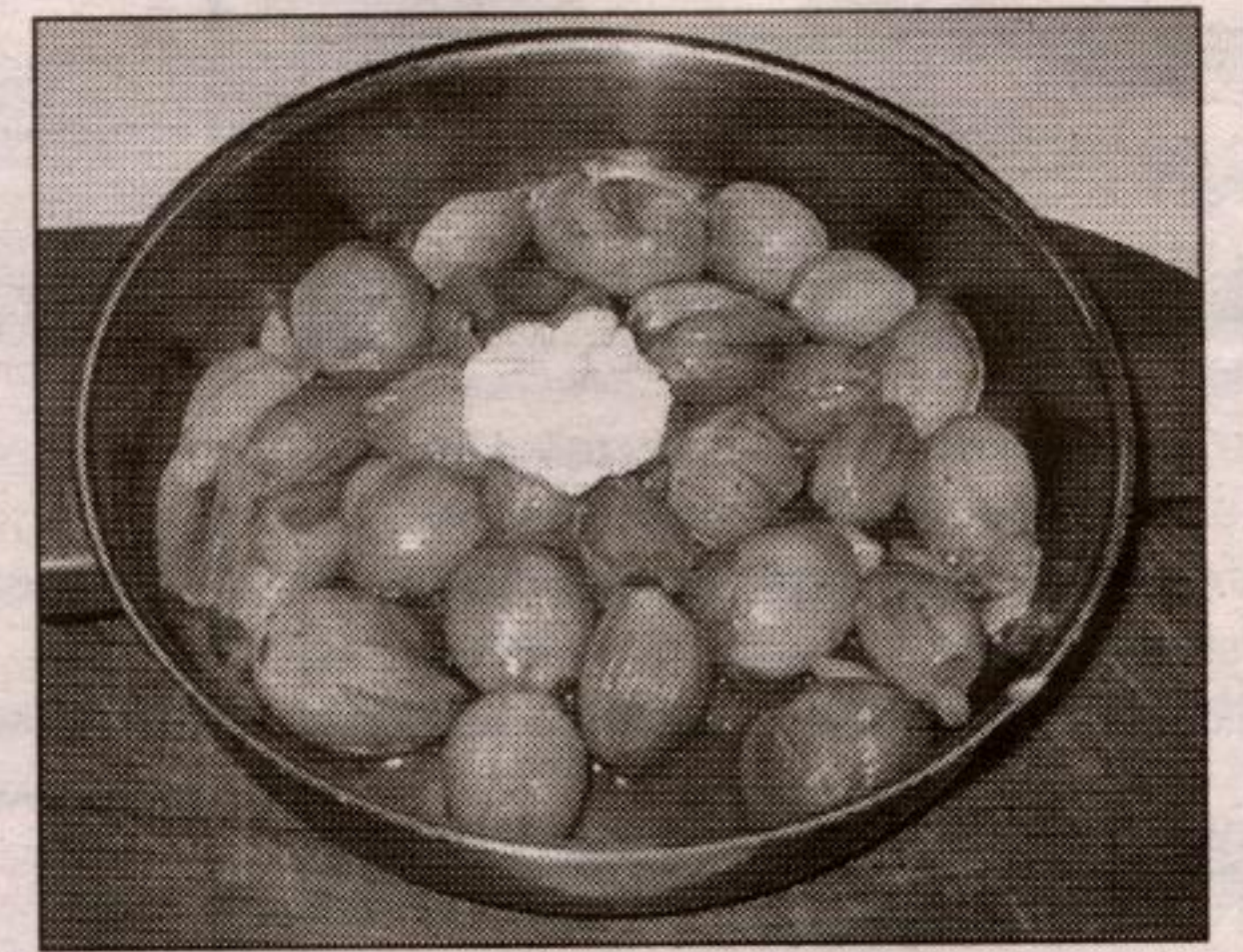
The food platters, bowls, soup tureens, teapots and serving dishes are all plentiful and assorted in design and texture. There is pewter, silver, glass, ceramic, porcelain, crystal and many others. I always treat myself to something new for my china pattern: Portmeirion Botanic Garden. This year it was a tablecloth and placemats.

Then, we arrive at the checkout line. Yes, there is usually a line here too. Then once you check out, you get to wait in line to have your purchases packaged!

Four to six hours after parking the car we are dragging our numerous bags and our bodies to a seat. I have always gone with a friend and this year, my friend from Ohio came all the way just for this annual ritual of ours. We had such fun and great success we talk of it all year. If you haven't been, give it a try. You too will be a 20-year veteran some day like me! (Even men go!)

Have fun and keep cooking!

www.kentnerscatering.com



Braised Shallots

Ingredients

- 1 lb shallots, peeled
- 1 cup white wine
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 4 sprigs of fresh thyme or 1/4 tsp dried
- 2 bay leaves
- salt and pepper
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter

Method

1. Cut a shallow X in the top of each shallot.
2. Combine the wine, stock, thyme, bay leaves and shallots in a sauce pan and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and cook at a gentle simmer until the liquid has reduced to approximately two tablespoons and the shallots are tender. Shake the shallots frequently so they become coated with the reduction.
3. Remove the thyme and bay leaves. Season to taste. Add the butter and swirl into the shallots. Serve immediately.



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