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Close — no, make that *intimate* — friends Liz Rozin, Andy Schloss and Jim Tarantino share a not-so-secret passion. However, it seems the passion is directed more toward culinary ingredients than each other.

In fact, they're almost totally consumed by their devotion to food and its preparation. And, as might be expected, all three are active in local cooking and eating circles: Each has served or is currently serving on the board of directors of the American Institute of Wine and Food, the prestigious organization founded a few years ago by Robert Mondavi and Julia Child, the "king" and "queen" of American wine producers and cooks.

But neither Rozin nor Schloss nor Tarantino has achieved status as a bona-fide celebrity "foodie" in the usual way — by being a chef at a well-known restaurant or starring in a television series. In fact, none of them has been known to cook for anyone else but their families and friends.

So, how did it happen? How did Rozin, Schloss and Tarantino go about expressing their passion and earning their stellar reputations? Oddly enough, they did it all through the written word.

It seems that each of them found that his or her passion became both aroused and fulfilled when writing about their favorite subject — food. Schloss indulged his fascination originally through articles in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and other major newspapers around the country, and Rozin and Tarantino by writing books.

And, just this year, Schloss joined them; like them, he will have a new volume on the shelves of cooking sections nearly everywhere such books are sold.

All three of these enthusiastic writers are among those cookbook authors being honored at Philadelphia's seventh annual Book and the Cook event, which runs this year from March 18 to 22. Schloss, Rozin and Tarantino will be recognized at a champagne reception tendered by the American Institute of Wine and Food at the Rittenhouse Hotel on March 21. Sparkling wines will be accompanied by hors d'oeuvres prepared from recipes in the various local authors' books. The reception is, like all the Book and the Cook events, open to the public. For reservations, call Joy Branner at 635-4463.

Although Schloss is new to the business of writing cookbooks, he is, by no means, a rookie as a writer.

In fact most of the 2,500 recipes that will be included in *Fifty Ways to Cook Most Everything*, his new book due out in September, were devised originally for his newspaper column. They were polished for the book with help from Ken Bookman, his



Conspiring to create some culinary magic are Philadelphia food luminaries (from left) Andy Schloss, Liz Rozin and Jim Tarantino.

Photo by Barbara Ann Rosenberg



Three local 'foodies' whet the appetite for 'Book and Cook'

By BARBARA ANN ROSENBERG
Special to the Exponent

former editor at the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

"*Fifty Ways* will give people a recipe for anything they want to cook with whatever they have on hand," says Schloss. "They won't have to rush out to the store to buy special ingredients to make a good meal."

For example, he mentions one startling alternative he used when he ran out of applesauce for a specific moist chocolate cake: Sauerkraut!

"Sauerkraut acts as a moisture retainer, too — just as applesauce does," he explains. "And, you get the mild acid you're looking for



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to enhance the richness of the chocolate."

Rozin and Tarantino, though, are veterans in the world of book publishing.

Rozin wrote *The Flavor Principle Cookbook* nearly 20 years ago, and it is considered a classic in cooking circles. It will be reissued this year at about the same time as her new volume, *Blue Corn and Chocolate*, appears. As the title suggests, it's based on the ingredients of the New World, in tribute to the quincentennial celebration of Columbus' discovery of America.

"I have the same editor at Knopf as Julia Child," says Rozin gleefully. "She's great — we sometimes argue on specifics, but when we get through, whatever results is absolutely on the mark."

Rozin began cooking as an adult. "Certainly *not* at my mother's knee," she says. Rozin recalls that her mother cooked infrequently — "only in the summer." She explains: "My mother was a professor of French, and that was really the only time she had."

However, Rozin recalls that when her mother did cook, "it was very cosmopolitan food — dishes from the Continent, not the usual fare my friends were eating."

Rozin remembers specifically,

though, how her passion first began to well up. "I was on an extended trip with my husband when he was on sabbatical — and I began to realize the reason the same foodstuffs tasted different in different countries." That realization sowed the seeds of *The Flavor Principle Cookbook*. And it is flavors that still intrigue Rozin as she continues her research.

Tarantino, on the other hand, says he "grew up cooking." He recalls, "My uncles were all army cooks — and when they got out of the service they stayed in the food business — so they always put us kids to work. Cooking was sort of my equivalent of having a paper route."

Then, when Tarantino met and married his wife, Ellen, they had no money (and neither did their friends) so when — and if — they all ate out, "it was in cheap ethnic restaurants. Then we started cooking for each other."

Tarantino reflects on the fact, however, that he couldn't always get what he wanted to put together a specific meal. "So I began to make things I hadn't previously thought about — and one day I was in the Reading Terminal looking for a recipe for a sorbet. They didn't have any books on sorbets — and the woman salesclerk suggested, 'Why don't you write one?' So I went

home and started fooling around with ingredients."

His book, called simply *Sorbets*, came out in 1988.

Tarantino's new book, *Marinades*, contains marinades he has devised for specific foods.

"Most people are under the impression that you can write a cookbook in your spare time," Tarantino says. To which he retorts, "Ha! When you write a cookbook, there is no spare time."

Tarantino carries a tape recorder in his car for ideas, transcribes them when he gets home from a full day in the printing business — and tests recipes on weekends. While Rozin is most interested in flavors and Tarantino in ingredients, Schloss is interested in "the whole ball of wax — nutrition and food chemistry."

Schloss recalls that he was always fascinated with the structure of food, but had other plans for his future, at least when he was growing up.

"I was studying to be an artist," he says. But then, after he dropped out of art school and went to Denmark to study at Norden Fjord World University, which he describes as "a sort of Summerhill model for higher education," Schloss got really involved. "I started working in the kitchen at the school — and the die was cast. Food was just my 'thing' after that. And it's still my 'thing.'"