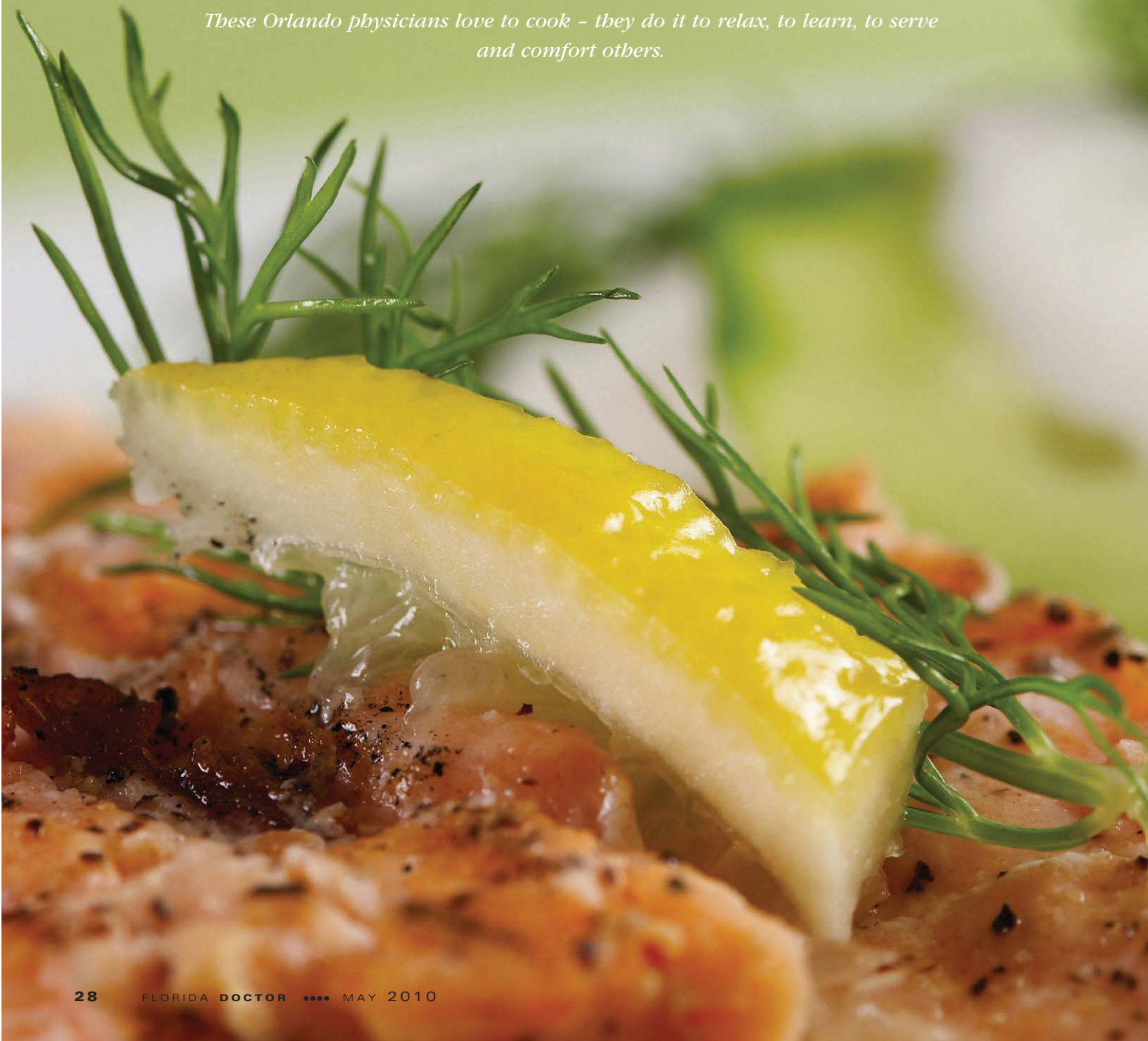


precision *in the* kitchen

By Virginia J. Pillsbury

Physicians hone their culinary skills as gourmet chefs

These Orlando physicians love to cook - they do it to relax, to learn, to serve and comfort others.



They are careful to use the best ingredients and the best recipes, and while they have different styles, they desire the same end result – sharing good food with family, friends or with those in need.

FROM JULIA CHILD TO FAST AND EASY FISH

For Bart Rodier, M.D., Chief Quality Officer for Health Central, his passion for cooking stems from his passion to eat good food. “It is so easy to cook wonderful food – all you have to do is start with excellent vegetables, fruits and cuts of meat. You can make it yourself and make it exactly how you like to eat it,” he says.

His wife Laura, and sons David, 11, and Corbin, 15, get to enjoy Dr. Rodier’s food nightly because he is the family’s head chef. He loves to grocery shop; Fresh Market and Publix are his favorites. “I like to shop on the weekends and then spend my weekend making food for the week,” he says. One weekend recently yielded such dishes as beef stroganoff, chicken and broccoli in teriyaki sauce and Bolognese spaghetti, among other dishes. “And Laura is very happy for me to cook and says she feels so lucky that I love to cook!” he says.

Dr. Rodier also enjoys butchering his own meat. “I’ll buy tenderloin and butcher it myself and get a lot of incredible meat from it.”

While Laura and son Corbin are not so adventuresome in the kitchen, their son David will try almost anything. Dr. Rodier remembers the night he cooked a lobster tail for him to sample. “He watched as I popped it out of the shell, showed him the secret of the melted butter, and then I watched as he took a bite and said that it was the most delicious thing he had ever tasted,” remembers Dr. Rodier.

When watching the Food Network, David will see something that looks

good and his dad will then get the ingredients and give it a try. “I started cooking when I was about ten years old,” says Dr. Rodier. “In college I loved cooking and even took some courses. In medical school and residency, I worked my way through Julia Child’s *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*,” he says.

Another way Dr. Rodier relaxes, of course, is with cooking shows. “I’ll DVR the Food Network shows and watch them when I have down time,” he says. He enjoys Tyler Florence’s and Bobby Flay’s shows as well as *Diner, Drive-ins, and Dives*; he is also a fan of “Good Eats” with Alton Brown because of the science included in the show. He reads *Cooks Illustrated* – which interestingly is the food magazine of choice for several of our cooking/baking physicians. “It includes science and the test kitchen approach where they make the recipe in different ways and then modify it to the best way. They do a fine job of explaining the science behind why they do things,” he says.

Dr. Rodier recommends using good olive oil – Columela is his favorite. “There is a tremendous variation in extra virgin olive oil,” he says. “And it is part of a healthy Mediterranean diet, but you need to use up a bottle within about three months,” he adds. When his olive oil goes stale, Dr. Rodier uses it in his diesel engine Jetta.

A favorite, quick recipe of Dr. Rodier’s is one for fish: line a 13 by 9 inch metal pan with tin foil; put mild whitefish filets in it; grate ginger root over the fish; squeeze half a lemon over it; then tin foil over the top; and bake at 450° for about 15 minutes.

SOUTHERN WITH A HEALTHY TWIST

Dr. Michael Howell, Chief Medical Quality Officer, Orlando Regional Medical Center, started cooking in high school. “I would start cooking dinner and I think it was driven by the fact



Bart Rodier, M.D.



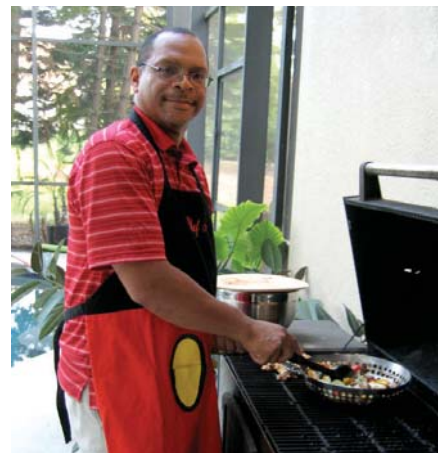
Michael Howell, M.D.

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— Dr. Rodier

Dr. Howell shows off his grilling skills.



“I like to shop on the weekends and then spend my weekend making food for the week.”

— Bart Rodier, M.D.



A sampling from one of Dr. Muszynski's famous holiday dessert parties.



Michael Muszynski, M.D.



Louis Barr, M.D.

that I like to eat," he says. He watched his mother cook and learned how to season. "I would take the recipes in the Boy Scout Manual and figure out how to make them taste better," he says.

"I enjoy cooking, enjoy the taste of good food and I got tired of being disappointed by restaurants. I've learned that I can create a great meal myself," says Dr. Howell. He enjoys Latin American and traditional Southern cooking. "I take Southern cooking and make it healthy," he says. "I'm not going to stop eating beef, but I will find ways to take the oil out and reduce the cholesterol," he says. "You can also season without using salt by using fresh herbs," he suggests.

"I look forward to weekends and deciding what I'm going to cook," he says. And he suggests the gourmet sauces found at TJ Maxx and Homegoods Stores. "I also love Tony Chachere's seasonings and Slap Ya Mama," he says. "When I get in the kitchen or on the grill I try to find ways to perfect my food, make it my own and eat hearty," he says.

COOKING FOR THE COMMUNITY

But for Dr. Howell cooking is also a way of giving back to patients and their families. A few years the administrative team at ORMC Lucerne decided to do something for the community at Christmas. They chose a Christmas Dinner for Hubbard House, a place that

provides on-campus housing for families who have patients at local hospitals.

Now the annual dinner has become an anticipated affair for the volunteers who put it on as well as the guests of honor. "We make everything fresh, work in teams, align ourselves to come at certain times and we test and taste as we go," he explains. "We also serve our food like we are at a five star restaurant and last year we even had aprons made," he continues.

Along with a traditional roast turkey, Dr. Howell and his team also cooked an herb crusted rib roast, along with soup, salad, vegetables and all of the trimmings. "That rib roast was so good that you would have thought it was a carnivore's kingdom the way the volunteers sampled it in the kitchen," he jokes. When all the dishes had been served, and the guests had enjoyed every mouthful, Dr. Howell and his team of cooks and servers received rave reviews and standing ovations.

A DELICIOUS DESSERT PARTY

Dr. Michael Muszynski, Dean, Regional Campus FSU School of Medicine, cooked his first meal for his family at age seven. Influenced by his mother and her Eastern European background and recipes, he was exposed to a variety of ethnic cooking. "The kitchen is like a giant laboratory for me," says Dr. Muszynski. "I love research and experimenting and cooking is similar to that." No wonder he also enjoys Alton Brown's Good Eats and his scientist in the kitchen approach. And he reads Cooks Illustrated too because of its scientific basis.

Dr. Muszynski cooks for his family every night and has taught his sons, ages 25 and 27 to cook as well. "I've always said to them that cooking is an art but baking is a science – don't mess with baking recipes because the more

Dr. Muszynski baking up a storm.



"The kitchen is like a giant laboratory for me. I love research and experimenting and cooking is similar to that."

— Michael Muszynski, M.D.

exact you are the better,” he says.

Since 1987, Dr. Muszynski has showcased his baking skills with a dessert party for the medical residents. Now as dean, he invites students and department heads to his gathering that he hosts along with his wife.

But the real work starts as Dr. Muszynski works by a timeline that he leaves up on the wall for his guests to see. “I have as many as 95 people come and so I’ve perfected a lot of techniques,” he says. “I always have about eight mainstay favorites and a couple of new recipes; I always look for a surprising taste that you just can’t put your finger on,” he says. One such surprise is a cake with cranberry and pears on the top – it sparkles he says – but he also puts fresh cardamom in the cake. He also makes a Black Forest Cake, but adds a little black pepper to the ingredients. “It does a little something to your tongue,” he says.

He has served the Arizona Princess Cake since 1982. “It’s really a tort and looks like it came from a French bakery,” he says.

“I like to take things to the next level and have some exotic or unusual tastes,” he says. He adds simple decorative touches as well. “I make chocolate leaves that are so ridiculously easy but look like I’ve slaved over them,” he says. He also goes the extra mile and when his English Trifle called for lady fingers, he made the lady fingers himself. “I like to use good ingredients and simple basic recipes,” he says.

When guests arrive they receive a dessert menu complete with a little historic information about where the recipe comes from. “I like to tease my guests too – so I hand out the menus and serve some munchies so I make their mouths water reading what they are about to sample. Finally my wife and her friends serve the long line of guests waiting to taste,” he says. “There is usually some left over so I can sample the next day.”

TASTY TRAVEL

While surgical oncologist at Florida Hospital, Louis Barr, M.D., cooks to

“My wife and friends of ours planned a semi-surprise fiftieth birthday cooking trip for me to Tuscany. Ever since then the four of us have gone on food and wine oriented trips to Italy and France, but we prefer Italy. In Europe, they go to markets, see what is fresh and then decide what they will make. My goal is to do more of that.”

— Louis Barr, M.D.

relax, his cooking reflects an international flair. “My wife and friends of ours planned a semi-surprise fiftieth birthday cooking trip for me to Tuscany, Italy,” says Dr. Barr. “Ever since then the four of us have gone on food and wine oriented trips to Italy and France, but we prefer Italy,” he adds. “In Europe, they go to markets, see what is fresh and then decide what they will make. My goal is to do more of that,” he says.

The Barrs and a few other couples enjoy a gourmet cooking club. “We rotate homes, pick a theme and make assignments,” he says. “The last one was a Julia/Julie theme and we used recipes from Julia Child’s Mastering the Art of French Cooking,” he says. At another dinner, two versions of each course were made and local restaurant people were invited to judge.

“I am constantly trying new things and find it fun and relaxing,” he says. He enjoys Food Network’s Iron Chef and is also a fan of Bravo’s Top Chef. “We were big fans of Chef Kevin Gillespie last season, and we’re going to Atlanta to his restaurant Woodfire Grill,” he adds. He also enjoys Cooks Illustrated and likes the tips on how to improve recipes.

When possible Dr. Barr and his wife bake Christmas cookies early in the season and deliver them to the different floors of the hospital.

Precision in the kitchen for these local physicians is a terrific way to have fun, unwind and give back. While cooking may be an art and baking may be a science, these physicians seemed to have mastered both to perfection. **FD**



In Sicily (left to right): Tom Muraca and Dr. Barr



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