

52 SPICY FALL FAVORITES

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VIRGINIA WINE

*Dutch's Blue Cheese and
Bacon Burger with Chipotle
Mayo, page 41*

\$4.95 US \$5.95 CAN



ALL-AMERICAN FARE—FIRE IT UP!
Meat & Potatoes | Fall Veggies | Classic Casseroles

October 2007

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Louisiana Love Fest

Imagine 1,000 different wines poured alongside dishes from more than 60 restaurants. That was the pants-busting scene at the 16th annual New Orleans Wine and Food Experience last Memorial Day weekend. Among the many highlights and discoveries:

- The French Quarter is intact and most New Orleans destinations are open. Before Hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans area boasted 810 restaurants; today there are 815.
- Iconic Creole destinations include Commander's Palace and Arnaud's; for Cajun, head to Mother's or K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen.
- Winemakers suggest pairing Creole or Cajun cuisine with full-bodied wines that have plenty of acidity to balance the richness and complex spice of these dishes.
- Rabbit is increasingly popular on New Orleans' menus. Peristyle's Chef Tom Wolfe makes a tasty

Pinot Noir—poached pear and rabbit. Rabbit and dumplings grace the menu at Donald Link's Cochon.

- Bananas Foster was invented at Brennan's Restaurant in the French Quarter in 1951; today it's the restaurant's most requested menu item.
- The famous Hurricane cocktail at Pat O'Brien's was once the city's strongest drink; today several bars claim that title including Tropical Isle with its Hand Grenade.
- It's easy to eat local when the harvest includes wild Louisiana shrimp, crawfish, Cajun caviar, oysters, satsumas and Creole tomatoes. Bourbon House restaurant is a great place to taste all of those in season.
- There are as many different kinds of gumbo as there are chefs making them. Try Begue's Restaurant's version, with decadent oxtail and duck confit.
- The St. Thomas Seven-Pepper



A festival for the senses

Hope S. Philbrick

Hot Sauce is made of seven different chiles grown on the God's Vineyard Community Garden at the Sixth Baptist Church. Sales benefit public housing residents (godsvineyard1997.org).

The 2008 NOW&FE will be held May 21 to 25. For more information visit noufe.com.

—Hope S. Philbrick

NOT OLDER, Spicier

Blair Lazar is always meticulous about making his employees at Extreme Foods wear protective masks, gloves and goggles when handling capsaicin. But one day, while concocting his famously potent 3am Reserve, Lazar didn't follow his own advice and was working sans mask when a filler tube burst and sprayed two million Scoville units of pure capsaicin all over his face. "My eyes and my face were completely swollen," Lazar says. "But three

days later, after the swelling went down, I said 'Look at that! My skin is tight!'"

Lazar is the first to say that hot sauce is still his passion and that anti-aging cosmetics are not his thing, yet he felt he had stumbled upon something big. "Who would tell you to take a known irritant, rub it on your eyes, and you'll see results?" he says incredulously. Lazar found a well-regarded

scientist who was willing to believe that he might be on to something. They worked together to create the first capsaicin skin cream, and dubbed it Biocap. "I'm proud to say we didn't use any animal testing," says Lazar. "I was the animal."

The *New York Post* commissioned Dr. Laurie Polis of SoHo Skin and Laser Dermatology to independently test Biocap, and she reported meaningful results. So why does it work? Capsaicin is a vasodilator, meaning it increases blood flow to the skin. It also has anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory properties. But don't shake some pepper extract into your moisturizer and expect it to work the same way. Biocap features a patented delivery system that allows the capsaicin to penetrate deep into the skin without pain or irritation.

"I've burned 30 million-odd tongues, and now I'm telling you you're going to look better," says Lazar with a laugh—but with no laugh lines, we're sure.

To purchase: blairlab.com

