



Winedog Speaks

Carolyn's Big Day at the Bake-Off

Let's say the average moderately successful working stiff jumps into the job market and can average around \$50K a year for 20 years. That person has generated pretax earnings of \$1 Million in a 20 year stint in the job market.

Now consider the person that everyone raves about when it comes time to make something special for their kid's bake sale. They're the one that creates a brownie that we all ooh and aaah about; or can whip up a cookie that just begs to be dipped in cold milk.

If you're wondering what the two have in common, you need to meet Carolyn Gurtz of Gathersburg, Maryland. Carolyn was this year's winner of the Pillsbury Bake-Off® Contest taking home a grand prize of \$1 Million. I wanted to know what a cool million tastes like so I picked up her recipe from the official website to find out for myself. If you'd like to give it a go, here you are...

Double-Delight Peanut Butter Cookies (Makes 24 Cookies)

Ingredients:

¼ cup Fisher® Dry Roasted Peanuts, finely chopped
¼ cup Domino® or C&H® Granulated Sugar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ cup Jif® Creamy Peanut Butter
½ cup Domino® or C&H® Confectioners Powdered Sugar
1 roll (16.5 oz) Pillsbury® Create 'n Bake® refrigerate peanut butter cookies, well chilled



Directions:

Heat your oven to 375°F. In a small bowl, mix chopped peanuts, granulated sugar and cinnamon; set aside.

In another small bowl, stir peanut butter and powdered sugar until completely blended. Shape mixture into 24 (1-inch) balls.

Cut roll of cookie dough into 12 slices. Cut each slice in half crosswise to make 24 pieces; flatten slightly. Shape 1 cookie dough piece around 1 peanut butter ball, covering completely. Repeat with remaining dough and balls.

Roll each covered ball in peanut mixture; gently pat mixture completely onto balls. On ungreased large cookie sheets, place balls 2 inches apart. Spray bottom of drinking glass with CRISCO® Original No-

Stick Cooking Spray; press into remaining peanut mixture. Flatten each ball to ½-inch thickness with bottom of glass. Sprinkle any remaining peanut mixture evenly on tops of cookies; gently press into dough.

Bake 7 to 12 minutes or until edges are golden brown. Cool 1 minute; remove from cookie sheets to cooling rack. Store tightly covered.

My batch turned out pretty darn good and was quickly gobbled up by my house full of cookie monsters. We are obviously peanut butter people and I'd say if you are also so inclined this is a winning recipe to put into your personal collection. The best part of this cookie is the "double" aspect which comes across with a crunchy exterior and a decadent soft filling.

I continue to peruse my notes from the big wine tasting here in Cincinnati and wanted to mention some selections that will match up well with the grill action that is certain to take place in the near future. One of the finest red wines made when it comes to enjoyment with all types of meat, pork, fowl and some fish is anything well made with the Syrah or Shiraz grape.

The Syrah grape found its way into the vineyards of Australia where it picked up the name derivation of Shiraz along with some basic styling differences most believe are the result of soil and climate differences in Australia compared to the Rhone River region of France.

Australian Shiraz has a pronounced spice note when you taste it next to a Cote du Rhone and that's a good point to remember when paring it to foods. A big juicy grilled ribeye steak would probably be better served with the French or California Syrah which barbecued pork short ribs or a peppery flatiron steak would call for a deep red, highly flavored Australian Shiraz.

Two wonderful Syrah I tasted were the 2005 Tallullah Shake Ridge Ranch Syrah and the 2005 Tallullah Del Rio Vineyard Syrah. Big styling, rich supple fruit and a wonderful round, lush complexity abound in both. These are serious wines that will spoil you for the nondescript Syrahs that show up on your supermarket shelf.

The Jacob's Creek Reserve Shiraz from 2004 was a really nice quality red for a budget minded wine lover. It offered lots of dark fruit and berry flavors along with a touch of bramble and black pepper. I also thoroughly enjoyed the selection from Robert Whale, the 2003 Rafferty's Rules Angels' Share Shiraz. This powerfully crafted Australian gem will impress the most discriminating wine lover. Rich, highly concentrated fruit of enormous size is the backbone of this wine. You'll love it!

What a magnificent time of year. I hope you're enjoying the season and look forward to our visit next week. Be sure to take some time to appreciate those beautiful flowers. Cheers.

Allison, a native of Warren County in Southwestern Ohio, has been in the fine wine and fine dining field for 31 years in the South Florida, Chicago and Southwestern Ohio markets. He writes a weekly syndicated column, manages a fine wine business and is the executive chef for Winedog Fine Wines and Catering Services. You can visit his column archive at www.winedog.com and take your comments and questions directly to him at 888-288-0668 or email him at winedog@winedog.com. He has resided with his wife and two sons since 1999 in the country outside of Morrow, Ohio



