



**Cooking with New Mexican artists
by Constance Counter and Karl Tani
with introduction by Vincent Price**

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INTROD

That Greek artist who centuries ago painted so realistically that the birds pecked at his painted grapes may have been inspired to the perfection of his art to preserve his supper!

Chardin, master of still life and simple family man, painted what his wife and children ate – and then he painted them, their fresh French faces flowing with life as surely as the fruits and meats and vegetables inside them.

Lautrec made dainty menus, works of art, for ladies of easy virtue, but, artist at the stove as at the easel, he could follow up a planned seduction with a succulent dish learned from his ancient family in Toulouse.

A few examples of the practicality of this often-thought wastrel breed, the artists. I have never met one who did not savor food and few who could not do their will on it to make it at least seem better than it might have been. Surely there is some definition of all art here, even mine, the ultimate make-believe.

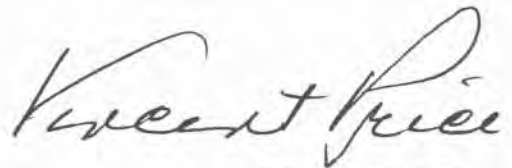
Artists love to eat and eat well – all truly civilized people do – but

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they are creative in cookery and always personal. They love the stuff from the ground up and there's the difference, "the respect," which to misquote Hamlet, avoids the "calamity of so long life."

What a dull world of food we Americans have been forced into. Perhaps Andy Warhol made that comment with his soup can. The artist, being life's greatest lover, loves food as nourishment for the soul as well as the body, but because the corporeal artist is only as well-fed as his spirit, he sees to it that the fodder, the fuel, is inspired too.

Food is functional for sure, but it can lighten life and lift us from the heavy task of locomotion; it can levitate and let fly the imagination. . . the artist's product functions for his earthbound brothers in the same way. Art, artist and food are reciprocal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Vincent Price". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent initial "V".

Vincent Price

“Being a Scorpio (they usually think they can top anything), I have even tried to improve on traditional Indian cooking after having lived in India for five years. One of my many experiments resulted in the following recipe. This includes the primary ingredients of many dishes of the Parsi community, whose forefathers were of Persian descent.”

Bombay Brinjal

2 large eggplants
1 pound ground lamb (or mutton)
1 cup cashew nuts
2 eggs
1 medium onion
1 clove garlic
1 large tomato
1 tablespoon curry powder
1 1/2 tablespoons fresh ground ginger root
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup yogurt

Halve eggplants and scrape out pulp. Steam pulp for 10 minutes and chop finely. Fry the meat, onions, garlic and seasonings lightly in butter. Do not overcook. When cool, mix in the crushed tomato, eggplant pulp, beaten eggs, 1/2 cup nuts, and yogurt. Fill eggplant shells with the mixture. Bake for approximately 45 minutes in 350° oven. Fry remaining nuts in butter and use for garnish on your Bombay Brinjal.

Serves 4.

Serve with a side dish of chilled cucumbers tossed in yogurt with chopped fresh mint and a little lime juice. And, of course, a hot-sweet mango chutney.

RICHARD MAITLAND



Photo – Hugh Weymouth