

## Locally famous chefs deliver tasty nutrition at women's health seminar

**By Cynthia Robertson**

FOR THE EAST COUNTY CALIFORNIAN

Hospital food is not a favorite of people, but at Sharp Grossmont Hospital, people showed up to get a taste of food to write home about. Chefs Bernard Guillas and Ron Oliver, of Marine Room fame in La Jolla, put on a cooking demo for a women's health seminar.

Candy Cunningham, senior nutritionist at the hospital, introduced the pair of chefs. "These two chefs have put together a cookbook called 'Flying Pans: Two Chefs, One World,'" she said. "It takes you on a culinary journey through 40 countries."

"Bon jour," Chef Guillas said to

the group of 100 men and women filling the auditorium. "We are preparing pistachio-crusted salmon, sweet corn quinoa salad and brown rice fennel risotto."

Oliver explained that quinoa is not a true grain, but it is one of the most protein-packed plants in the world.

"It grows near the Andes Mountains," he said.

For the brown rice fennel risotto, the chefs chopped shallots and garlic.

"Shallots are great," Oliver said. "Very high in anti-viral qualities, even higher than leeks or garlic. My grandmother, who was from Romania, said she used garlic like medicine."

Oliver said that risotto was an easy dish to make. "In fact, when



Photo by Cynthia Robertson

**Chef Ron Oliver, left, and Chef Bernard Guillas, right, of the Marine Room did a cooking demo at Grossmont Hospital.**

I make risotto, I clean out my refrigerator because I put everything into it," he said.

Added to the risotto recipe is toasted sesame seeds, parsley, sage and madras curry. "I love this curry. I use it to jazz up vegetables," Oliver said.

"Now I can actually get excited about veggies. If you want really good produce, go to farmers'

markets," he said.

Also in the ingredients for the risotto recipe was sesame oil. Sesame is one of the first oils to be used in the east. Oliver said that there was an old eastern myth that the gods drank the oil before creating the earth.

"That's a little crazy, I know. Speaking of crazy, we have a crazy French-speaking chef here," Oliver said affectionately of Guillas.

Guillas laughed. "You've got to have a passion for everything in life, including cooking," he said. "And these recipes are wonderful ways to get good salmon recipes, which is great for the upcoming salmon [season]."

He used readily available ingredients anyone can find at high-quality grocery stores such as Trader Joe's and Whole Foods. All of the salmon recipes featured at the women's seminar could be substituted with

shrimp, chicken or vegetables.

"The biggest problem in society today is that everybody is working too much, so nobody has a time to cook. There's a big demand for pre-fab food," Guillas said.

"I make and use my own homemade chicken stock," he said. "I recommend you all make your own, because any store-bought is very salty. In fact, all processed foods are high in sugar and salt. That's why they're so addictive."

If salt must be used, the chefs recommend using organic salt.

Both he and Oliver recommend going to farmers' markets and "grabbing those beautiful veggies and fruits."

"But always grow your own basic herbs, like sage, rosemary, basil, cilantro," Guillas said. "Herbs in the store don't have the root source, so all the good oils are gone. If you grow them at home, you're getting the whole plant."

They said the price of salmon this year will likely rise because of the virus in Chile affecting salmon. However, they added, salmon is always a best buy in terms of nutrition if you know how to shop for it. Salmon that is hatched and fed on fish farms may or may not be a good bet.

"If ever you see the words 'color added' on a package of salmon, don't buy it," Guillas said. "At Whole Foods, you can be guaranteed you'll get good salmon."

Guillas prefers steelhead salmon, with its white streaks marbling through the meat. "The streaks are fat, the good fat," he said.

Cooking better means a better life, for both Guillas and Oliver. "If you have to choose between passion and reason, go with passion. It's the stuff of life, of cooking," Guillas said.

The women's health seminars are a regular feature of Sharp Grossmont Hospital. For more information, visit [www.sharp.com/grossmont](http://www.sharp.com/grossmont).



Photo by Cynthia Robertson

**Chef Ron Oliver uses fresh parmesan cheese in a recipe for hazelnut tarragon pesto at the women's health seminar.**