

"Flying Pans" Chefs On the Virtues of Root Vegetables

The Food Channel Interview

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FLYING PANS TWO CHEFS, ONE WORLD



RON OLIVER | BERNARD GUILLAS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREGORY BERTOLINI

We recently caught up with California chefs Bernard Guillas and Ron Oliver of the landmark Marine Room restaurant at the La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club. The pair are the authors of "[Flying Pans--Two Chefs, One World](#)," selected as one of the country's top cookbooks at the Book Expo American in New York earlier this year.

Their cookbook features over 100 exotic global recipes from 40 different countries and has been endorsed by culinary masters, Chef Mario Batali and Chef Roy Yamaguchi, among other notable industry innovators. Guillas has been named "Chef of the Year" by *Chef* magazine, "America's Rising Star Chef" by *Food Arts* magazine and was featured on the TV series "Great Chefs of the World." Chef Oliver has led the Marine Room to eight titles of "Best Restaurant in San Diego."

The chefs visited with us about the wonders of root vegetables, farmers markets and growing up in Europe. Plus, a recipe suggestion for your Thanksgiving turkey.

FC: *Why is the cookbook called "Flying Pans"?*

Chef Ron: "Well, it's based on our travels all over the world. Each recipe in the book has a travel story to it that we talk about in the book. Bernard and I travel much the same way. When we arrive in a country, we go right to the local market first—the farmers market. That's where you find the true soul of the place you're visiting. And the people tend to be happy there, and proud of their local cuisine.

Chef Bernard: We really encourage people to go to the farmers market. There you will see the people who bring joy to everyone's table. They grow everything with love. It's not just a business with them. Three of my uncles were farmers and I saw how much dedication and hard work it takes to grow fruits and vegetables. They really do grow it with love.



FC: *You have quite a few recipes for root vegetables in the book.*

Chef Ron: We have root vegetables strewn throughout the book, yes. And while root vegetables never really went away, now that the no-carb diet trend seems to be over, root vegetables are kind of back in fashion. But the fact is, many root vegetables are not high in carbs—some have almost none. One of my favorite recipes is made with boniato—a yellow sweet potato from Cuba that has a nice natural sweetness to it. Being from the Caribbean, the boniato takes well to the flavor of rum. We make a Whipped Boniato with rum, maple and a touch of cayenne pepper that people go crazy for in the Marine Room.

FC: *Are root vegetables still considered a fall and winter vegetable?*

Chef Bernard: Yes, they are still associated with winter, really. Few other things grow in the winter the way they do.

Chef Ron: One thing I like about them is they take kind of a long time to cook, so on a cold day you can warm up the household as you cook them. So they're warming inside and out.

Chef Bernard: Growing up where I did in Bretagne (France), it would get very cold in the winter and I remember my grandmother would make a pot au feu, a big pot filled with root vegetables that she would cook right in the fireplace every Friday. We'd eat the soup and vegetables on Friday night, and then on Saturday we'd add meat to it. It was amazing. So good. Then sometimes we'd have a lamb roasting on the spit, and we'd put the root vegetables all around it. The drippings from the lamb would make the root vegetables taste really wonderful.

FC: *Can you talk about some of the recipes you have in *Flying Pans*?*

Chef Ron: We have a braised lamb shank with rutabegas, carrots and parsnips that's really good. The lamb and the vegetables take about the same amount of time to cook, so it's one-pot-cookery at its best.

Chef Bernard: Root vegetables have a soul of their own. You don't need to manipulate them too much. They can speak for themselves.

FC: What is your favorite root vegetable?

Chef Bernard: I love the celery root. I like to thinly julienne it, add a little bit of lemon juice, a little homemade mayonnaise, salt and pepper and you're done. It's really cool. We also make a nice confit in the restaurant using celery root. You can also make wonderful soups with it.

Chef Ron: Beets are my favorite. In the restaurant we have a cold salad that we make from sliced beets. We toss them with truffle oil, a little bit of pancetta, some micro greens, sea salt, and black pepper. That's it. A great chilled salad. No cooking.

FC: Is there a special recipe you can share with our readers? You know Thanksgiving is coming up.

Chef Bernard: We have a recipe for [Blood Orange Lavender Glazed Turkey with Winter Root Vegetables](#). We created it years ago and one of the restaurant owners has it for Thanksgiving every year. He absolutely loves it. (For recipe, see link in Related Recipes below.)

Chef Ron: We should also mention the chips we make in the restaurant. People go crazy for them.

Chef Bernard: We slice celery root or lotus root very, very thin using a mandolin, and rinse off the excess starch. Then we fry it in grape seed oil at 325°. Grape seed oil is very important. It's the secret to keeping the chips from burning and being greasy. Your readers should try making them. They are really cool.

Related Recipes

- [Blood Orange Lavender Glazed Turkey](#) by Editor

