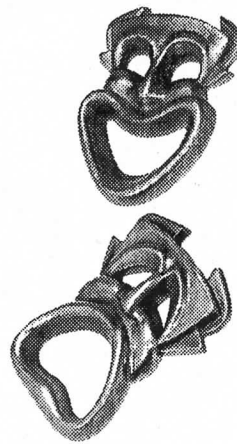


SCENE



SCENE ON FILM

Few actors have played two losers with more inspiration.

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GARDEN

In Victorian England, Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, gave the Christmas tree a stamp of acceptability.

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THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 26 - DECEMBER 3, 2004

Lox And The City: Food Maven Arthur Schwartz Writes Culinary History Of New York

WOULDNT IT BE great if you could put New York City in a box, tie it up with a red ribbon and present it to someone you love this holiday season?

But since you can't, perhaps the next best thing might be to buy a copy of Arthur Schwartz's *New York City Food* (Stewart, Tabori and Chang, November 2004.)

Part cookbook, part memoir, part history and part elbow-to-elbow chitchat at your favorite unpretentious city diner, *New York City Food* takes readers by the taste buds and leads them on a neighborhood by neighborhood tour of Schwartz's beloved native city.

"The book is really about how New York became the food capital of the world and all the influences, cultural, geographic historical things that happened here. We're a part of entry and a lot of people stayed."

Schwartz had long wanted to write a book that paid tribute to the cultural diversity of New York food from Jewish delis and automat to the finest restaurants and hotels.

He knew he would do it well. He knew he would do it better than some guy from Toledo who couldn't tell a Knish from a Cannoli.

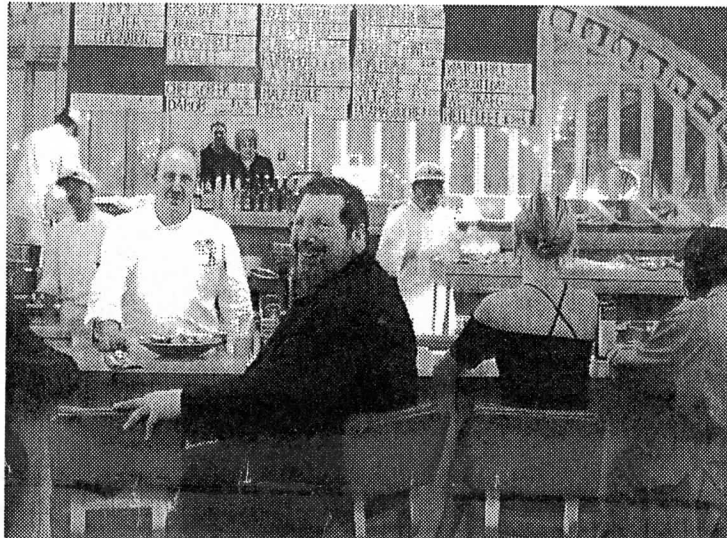
It was 15 years before he had the opportunity to do it, and he wasted no time embarking on the project.

As Schwartz points out, great New York food began in the humble kitchens of immigrants from countries around the globe.

Schwartz's maternal grandmother, Elsie Ginder Sonkin specialized in the traditional Russian-Jewish cooking learned at her own mother's knee.

Then there were the Schwartz's downstairs neighbors, who taught Schwartz's paternal grandmother, Rose Cohen Schwartz, the secrets of Neapolitan cooking and the delights of homemade wine.

During the years Schwartz was growing up in Brooklyn, his mother would sleep late on Sunday morning and he and his father would embark on "food adventures," going to Chinatown, to a Times Square cafeteria, or to the Acme Smokehouse for



CHRIS CALLIS

For Food Critic Arthur Schwartz, New York City food is the pearl in his oyster.

Schwartz's grandfather was one of those "curmudgeonly Jewish waiters," the temperamental stars on the stage of the New York City dining rooms in which they worked. "For a long time, he was a waiter at a place called the Little Oriental," Schwartz said.

He also knew his way around a kitchen.

"At one point my grandfather made pickles, potato salad and sauerkraut and sold it during pickle season, nice little Kirbys," Schwartz said.

Which is all to establish Schwartz's credentials for knowing whereof he speaks - credentials further

way Volvo drivers turn to the guys on Car Talk.

Schwartz also leads culinary history adventures in New York City and in Italy, a place he visits as frequently as possible.

The prevalence of diners and cafes in New York began in the early 1820s to serve workers who lived too far away to go home for lunch, Schwartz notes.

People pouring in from cultures around the globe carried their food traditions with them. Recipes in general weren't written down, of if they were, weren't written down with any consistency, Schwartz said.

lowed feed-the-masses meccas of Manhattan like Schrafft's and Child's and of course, Horn and Hardart, as well as the elegant dining establishments frequented by New York City's elite.

The book includes passages on the history of many legendary New York restaurants, including Delmonico's, The Four Seasons and the Stork Club.

"A lot of people who went to Schrafft's remember the cheese bread," Schwartz said. Through a friend, Schwartz was able to get the recipe for the rich bread that might possibly be the supreme choice for slathering with mayonnaise and building a BLT on.

"The cheese bread's fabulous," Schwartz said.

Child's restaurants, which were famous for their wheat cakes (pancakes), were established in the late 19th century to feed working class laborers in downtown New York. The restaurant prided itself on its sparkling white decor and its waitresses in crisp white uniforms.

"Germs had just been discovered and people were crazy for that," Schwartz said. "The waitresses dressed in white uniforms so they looked like nurses to give the idea that everything was hygienic."

Although to Schwartz's dismay, a third of the book was left on the cutting room floor due in part to space constraints. Schwartz also cut some recipes that he deemed too complicated to appeal to today's cooks.

"For instance, the Colony restaurant, - which was one of these places for what they used to call Cafe Society - the Colony's signature dish was a seafood crepe but it requires making three sauces and one of the sauces is a combination of other sauces."

Instead of the seafood crepe recipe, Schwartz included in the book another Colony star - a pot roast recipe billed as John Wayne's favorite.

Among the other recipes included in the book are Crab Remick from the Plaza Hotel, Creamy Vichyssoise Glace from the Hotel Ritz Carlton, the Waldorf Astoria's Truffled Waldorf Salad, the Union Square Cafe's Grilled Filet Mignon of Tuna and Lindy's Strawberry Shortcake.

It's a close to New York City in a box as you can get.

Schwartz will be signing copies of his new book