

Stop and smell the cinnamon

by Linda Allen

As the rain silvers past the window, darkening the tree trunks and puddling in green grass and rain lilies, I can smell the cinnamon from the carrot cake drifting back to the office from the kitchen. It's my mother's recipe, and she died six years ago last April.

People ask me sometimes where I learned to love cooking. Did I grow up as a child cooking at my mother's elbow reading recipes? No. Mostly I set the table and made the salad. We were a sizeable family, and I think my mother found it easier to cook without children underfoot.

Still, I have an early memory of spring in California, when sweetheart roses spiraled through the rain at the kitchen window. My mother was making a cake. Probably it was carrot cake, and I was underfoot, so she set me down with a bag of flour, water, an egg or two, and whatever ingredients you give a child when it's too rainy to make mud pies and there's some serious baking going on.

I remember a fascination, a sense of unlimited possibility as I stirred alongside my mother with the rain thrumming through the blue hydrangeas, the cinnamon, the roses. Then, suddenly, it was naptime. But my cake, I said. What about my cake? I'll save it, she said.

When I awoke, all traces of the cake – and there had been traces – were gone. Where was my cake, I wailed in a high pitch perfected from much practice. So my beautiful dark-haired mother picked me up in her warm arms and sat me on the counter where she told me about how she had baked the cake while I slept and ate the whole



thing fresh out of the oven because she couldn't help herself. She was sorry, but it was so good.

I remember the huge swelling of my heart, the amazing jolt of happiness. I don't think I realized until I was in high school that probably that's not what happened. And by then it was too late.

The world is spinning all too fast these days, the children growing even faster. But we can heal each other. Stop to smell the cinnamon. Share the carrot cake.

Linda Allen is the owner of Linda Allen Catering and Linda's Fine Food to Go. Located at 500 FM 2325 in Wimberley, Linda's Fine Food to Go offers a wide selection of carry-out items and entertains special orders. Linda Allen Catering has offered full service catering to the Hill Country for 15 years. Call her at 512-847-5464.

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Why do marketers ...?

by Star Carey

From a marketing perspective, have you ever wondered about some of the things you have seen organizations do? Some of the oddities are basic such as: Why do they call it "telemarketing" when it is really teleselling? That is easy to explain since one sounds better while the other is the truth.

Now, how about some others that are not as intuitive. This is a listing of marketing activities you have observed – and perhaps wondered about – and the reasons for them.

Why are Campbell's Tomato and Chicken Noodle soups nearly always on the grocers' bottom shelf? Because these flavors are the most popular types and customers will go to the extra effort to seek them. Meanwhile, at eye level, and hoping to attract a precipitous purchase, are soups such as Nacho Cheese.

Why are there mirrors near elevators in high rise buildings? Because of vanity. It is boring waiting for an elevator but if we have a chance to see how good we look today then the wait is not as noticeable. Folks don't get as upset with a delay if they are looking at themselves.

Why do airport terminals (such as Austin's) that are long and narrow not have moving walkways to hasten the trip to distant gates? Because then passengers would ride right past the shops. The

airport needs the income from those stores and wants to encourage patronage. People who are forced to walk by merchants are more likely to stop in and buy.

Why do airlines encourage passengers on overseas trips to put down the window curtain? The airlines say it cuts the ambient glare which makes it easier for people to view movies. The truth is a dark cabin makes passengers both more docile and also less likely to make frequent requests of flight attendants.

Why are competitors located so close to each other? Because it has been discovered that for some categories, customers are drawn to an area and then more likely to purchase. Car dealers are neighbors; CVS is across the street from Walgreen's and restaurants are in a row. For example, a person in search of a new car is able to comparison shop easier if competitors are nearby. That allows the buyer to make the decision quicker. We have found that often the closer an attractive alternative, the more likely the decision will be made to buy.

Why is the bread at one end of the grocery store and the milk at the other end? You don't need someone with a PhD to explain what you have already noticed. The store wants you to make an impulse purchase while walking between the two major line items you came to buy.

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About rum

by Justin King



Rum has played a significant role in social history, trade routes, the military and world economics. From the pirates and buccaneers of the seventeenth century to the American Revolution and onward.

In 1775, more than 12 million gallons of rum were consumed annually in the 13 colonies. Sugar and rum introduced globalization to a waiting world, tying together Europe, the Americas, Africa and the Caribbean in a complex alcoholic web of trade and credit. Not until oil was any single commodity so important for world trade. The use of rum as a trade commodity and as a staple aboard ships has integrated references into literature for centuries. Even youngsters are familiar with “Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum” from *Treasure Island*.

Unlike other spirits that are fermented into sugar, with rum, the sugar is ready made as the natural content of sugar cane or its by product, molasses, deriving light-bodied and full-bodied rums.

There are three types light-bodied rums. Light rums by law must spend at least one year in oak barrels. Light rums are clear with a dry subtle flavor. Another type of rum, aged in wood at least three years and with caramel added for color, is termed gold or amber. The gold rum is slightly mellower and more aromatic than the light. A third type is anejo, the mellowest and most flavorful. Anejos are aged in wood from four to six years, and sometimes longer.

Full bodied rums are made using a different process. Skimmings from previous distillations are added to the molasses in the fermentation vats. This is followed by a natural fermentation of five to 20 days and then redistilled. Again, only middle rum from the distillation is taken. This results in a very flavorful, aromatic spirit that is almost always blended. Before bottling, this full-bodied rum normally requires at least five to seven years of barrel aging.

There are more than 1,500 rum labels worldwide. Many countries in the Carribean, Central and South America produce their own labels. These labels almost have their own recipe that makes it unique from others. While vacationing in the Carribean a rum connoisseur can be his or her own pirate.

Justin King is the owner of Liquor on the River in Sattler and Liquors at the Lake in Startzville. He can be reached on the River at 830-964-2673 or at the Lake, 830-899-5626, or by email at LiquorOnTheRiver@GVTC.com. If you would like to know when tastings or special sales are planned, email them to be included on their Friends’ List.

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