

Famous Chefs Demonstrate Fusion Cooking at UNH Feb. 16

Mary Ann Esposito (Ciao Italia) and Martin Yan (Yan Can Cook) Combine Italian and Asian Cuisine

By *Michelle Gregoire*
UNH News Bureau

DURHAM, N.H. -- Two of America's most famous chefs will combine their talent and their heritage in a day-long event at the University of New Hampshire Wednesday, Feb. 16. Mary Ann Esposito, host of the public television series *Ciao Italia*, and Martin Yan, star of the show *Yan Can Cook*, will demonstrate fusion cooking, melding the flavors and presentations of Italian and Asian cuisine.

Titled "Mary Yan Can Cook," this multifaceted event is part of the Great Cooks on Campus series sponsored by UNH Hospitality Services. There will be opportunities for the public to meet the celebrities and sample the unusual menu of the "East Meets West Dinner."

Yan, a certified master chef who has hosted more than 1,500 cooking shows and published 20 cookbooks, travels the world to film on location. Esposito, a UNH alumna who has authored five books, is in her 10th year with *Ciao Italia*, one of the most popular cooking shows on PBS. Both dynamic personalities, they met a few years ago in San Francisco and struck up a friendship but have never before had the opportunity to work together in public.

"Mary Yan Can Cook" opens with a morning lecture at the university's Thompson School of Applied Science, where Esposito was once an instructor of Italian cooking. Yan and Esposito, who both hold master's degrees, will speak to university and high school students about the importance of a college degree to careers in the hospitality industry.

At noon they'll give a live demonstration of fusion cooking before an expected audience of 400 at the

Memorial Union Building. Admission is free and open to the public; seating is on a first-come basis in the Strafford Room, with seats available in MUB Theater II for remote viewing. Afterward, Yan and Esposito will devote an hour to greeting their fans and signing cookbooks.

In the afternoon, they will tour the three university dining halls, meeting the staff who will be creating the "East Meets West Dinner" for 4,000 students that evening using more than 30 recipes of Esposito's and Yan's. Entrees include Torta di Spinaci, Lychee Chicken and Chinese Pizza, along with special appetizers, soups, salads, vegetables, breads and desserts, all examples of the fusion of Italian and Asian traditions.

Topping off the day is another version of the "East Meets West Dinner" at Acorns Restaurant at the New England Conference Center and Hotel. Esposito and Yan will demonstrate the preparation of three items from the menu, which offers Rotolo di Vitello Ripieno (rolled stuffed veal breast) and Shrimp Filled Chicken Breasts as the main course.

The dinner is open to the public, UNH alumni, faculty and staff. Advance reservations are recommended; for reservations, call (603) 862-2815.

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