

Class is now in session...

Today's class has arrived and settled in and Broder starts the class, like he does every class, by washing his hands. He tells them he expects them to do the same once they come into his kitchen. He also expects them to keep their work stations clean and says that he doesn't have a five-second rule, eliciting giggles from the class.

"How many of you have a dog or cat at home?" he asks. "How long does it take a cat hair to attach to that blob of butter you just dropped?" Hearty laughs erupt from the class. "That," he says, "is why I don't have a five-second rule."

Broder uses dry wit and humor to get his points across. His approach is less *Hell's Kitchen* and more *Father Knows Best*.



GRILLED ROMAINE SALAD WITH CREAMY BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

Recipe courtesy of Andy Broder

- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- Salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ⅓ cup cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 4 hearts of Romaine, halved (keep heart/root intact)
- 1 carrot, grated

In a blender, combine the vinegar, oil, mayonnaise and Parmesan until the mixture is uniform. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Heat the grill (or a grill pan) on the high setting. Grill the Romaine cut side down just until grill marks appear—about 2 minutes. Cut the grilled Romaine into 1-inch strips—horizontally or across the “grain.”

Place the Romaine and grated carrot into a large bowl. Add the dressing and toss to incorporate.

Serves 6.



He announces the class has an hour and a half to get a lavish buffet on the table. Nervous looks ensue. Some of these professionals have little or no cooking skills. First, he runs through each recipe, demonstrating certain techniques. He's easy on this class, he says, compared to others. This class isn't about fixing problems; it's about building relationships and fostering better communication.

Broder's chosen a “rustic Italian menu” that's fairly simple but elegant. The recipes include crostini with a duo of toppings, several side dishes (see the sidebar for his grilled Romaine salad) and a main course of individual ramekins of lasagna, an artful presentation of a homey dish. The dessert, buttery Marsala tartlets topped with cherry preserves, is a project that will involve the whole team.

“Everyone has to roll out at least three tarts,” he says, waving off groans of protest. But this, too, has a place in the lesson plan. The dessert is the one dish that was created by the whole team. Some of the tarts are pretty, some are not, but no one can tell who made which one. And that's the point. They worked as a unit—rolling, filling and finally eating—together, without any disasters, and with lots of laughter and camaraderie.

Communication, relationship-building and mission accomplished.

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