

ACCENT

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THIS WEEKEND'S BEST BETS

'Casablanca' on the big screen

When: 2 and 7:30 p.m. today and 7:30 p.m. Saturday

Where: Artcraft Theatre, 57 N. Main St., Franklin

Admission: \$5 for adults, \$4 for students and seniors, \$3 for children

Valentine's Day wine trail

What: Free dessert and wine tastings in honor of Valentine's Day at Indy Wine Trail wineries

When: Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday

Where: Mallow Run Winery in Bargersville, Buck Creek and Easley wineries in Indianapolis, Simmons Winery in Columbus, Chateau Thomas Winery in Plainfield and Grape Inspirations and Ferrin's Fruit wineries in Carmel

Information: (888) 846-6463 and www.indywinetrail.com

Chinese New Year celebration

What's there: Food, martial arts and drama demonstrations by Chinese college students studying in Indianapolis, games, music

When: 6:30 p.m. Saturday

Where: Community Church of Greenwood, 1477 W. Main St.

Information: Pen Young, 888-9915

Web Extra: Find more events and activities at www.thejournalnet.com.

TAKE IT HOME ON DVD

'Flags of Our Fathers'

The first of Clint Eastwood's book-end films about the World War II battle for Iwo Jima

received excellent reviews yet failed to find the audience it deserved.

With the buildup to the Academy Awards — where the follow-up film, "Letters From Iwo Jima," earned a best-picture nomination and a best-director slot for Eastwood — "Flags" may find a second wind as viewers catch up with his overlooked war epic.

"Flags" follows the fate of U.S. troops immortalized in the legendary photo of the raising of the American flag on Iwo Jima, the film seamlessly flitting from the battlefield to a home front built more on propaganda than truth.

The DVD has just the film, lacking any extras.

'The Grudge 2'

Sarah Michelle Gellar returns for a small role in this followup to her horror hit, which stars Amber Tamblyn as her sibling, sent to Japan to find out what's up with her hospitalized big sis after the fiery finale of the first flick.

The followup tracks Tamblyn and a disparate group of people from Tokyo to Chicago, all inexplicably haunted by the same creepy spirits from the original movie.

The DVD comes in the PG-13-rated theatrical version or in an unrated edition that adds about six minutes of footage.

Both DVD editions have deleted scenes and a couple of featurettes, including one on director Takashi Shimizu, who also created the Japanese franchise on which "The Grudge" movies are based.

— The Associated Press

AT THE MOVIES

'The Lives of Others'

A miracle of a film that manages to be both subtle and intense at the same time.

What's even more astounding is that this is the feature debut from German writer-director Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, who previously had made a few shorts and done some TV work.

Henckel Von Donnersmarck confidently paints a claustrophobic picture of East Berlin in the mid-1980s through the eyes of a playwright (Sebastian Koch), his actress-girlfriend (Martina Gedeck) and the Stasi captain (Ulrich Muehe) assigned to spy on them.

All three of them alter each others' lives in ways large and small, accidental and profound.

It's a political story but also a portrait of unexpected humanity, a marvel of controlled storytelling and mood, with brilliant performances.

Rating: R for some sexuality/nudity
Stars: Four out of four

RECIPE FOR A SUCCESSFUL ROMANTIC DINNER AT HOME

Chocolate cups with whipped cream

Start to finish: 2½ hours, 15 minutes active

¾ cup whole milk
1 egg
4 tablespoons sugar, divided
Pinch salt
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
1 to 2 tablespoons hazelnut liqueur or dark rum
1 cup whipped cream
Edible flowers (found in produce department with the fresh herbs), for garnish (optional)

In a small saucepan over medium heat, bring the milk to a boil.

While the milk heats, in a blender on low, combine the egg, 2 tablespoons sugar, salt, chocolate chips and liqueur.

In a slow, steady stream, pour the boiling milk into the blender while it is turning. The hot milk will cook the egg and melt the chocolate. Blend for 1 minute, or until smooth. Spoon the chocolate mixture into small cups and chill.

After dinner, use an electric mixer to beat the cream in a medium bowl until soft peaks form. Add the remaining sugar and beat to combine. Top the chocolate cups with a dollop of cream and garnish each with an edible flower.

Place the cups on saucers and serve with spoons.
Makes four small cups.

Caramelized onion-dressed salad

Start to finish: 25 minutes

½ cup whole hazelnuts, peeled
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
1 large onion, finely chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, divided
½ tablespoon Dijon mustard
3 plum tomatoes, sliced
4 cups baby spinach or arugula (or other greens)
¼ cup crumbled blue cheese

Heat the oven to 325 degrees. Place hazelnuts on a rimmed baking sheet and put it in the oven. Toast the nuts for 10 to 12 minutes, or until just lightly browned. Remove them from the oven and cool. Transfer the nuts to a cutting board and run your knife through them once to coarsely chopping them.

While the nuts are toasting, place a large skillet over medium high heat. Add 2 tablespoons of olive oil and the onions. Season with salt and pepper, then cook, stirring frequently, for 10 minutes.

Add 1 tablespoon of balsamic vinegar and a big splash of water. Use a wooden spoon to scrape up any bits on the bottom of the pan and cook for another 1 minute.

Transfer the onions to a bowl and add the mustard and remaining vinegar. In a slow, steady steam, whisk in the remaining oil. Set aside.

In a salad bowl, combine the tomatoes, greens, cooled hazelnuts and blue cheese. Pour the caramelized onion dressing over the salad and toss to coat. Adjust salt and pepper to taste.

Makes 2 servings.

Cognac-sauced pepper steaks

Start to finish: 20 minutes

Two 10- to 12-ounce sirloin steaks, 1½ inches thick
Salt
1 heaping tablespoon coarsely ground black pepper
Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling
½ small onion, chopped
1 large garlic clove, chopped
1 nip of cognac (or 2 healthy shots)
¾ cup beef or chicken stock
¼ cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley

Season the steaks with salt, then sprinkle one side of each with the pepper and press it in with your fingers.

Preheat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the steaks, peppered side down, and cook for 4 minutes. Turn and cook an additional 3 minutes for medium-rare. Go a minute longer on each side for medium to medium-well.

Transfer the steaks from the skillet to a plate and cover them loosely with a piece of foil to keep them warm while they rest.

Return the skillet to the heat and add a drizzle of oil. Add the onion, garlic and a pinch of salt. Sauté, stirring frequently, for 3 to 4 minutes.

Remove the skillet from the heat, add the cognac, then carefully return it to the burner and let it flame up. Be sure to stand back. You might need to tip the pan toward the flame to get it to ignite. Do not let the contents spill onto the burner.

Once the flame dies down add the beef stock and the cream. Increase heat to high and cook until it is lightly thickened. Add the parsley to the sauce, then pour it over the steaks.

Makes 2 servings.

SOURCE: Rachael Ray

A table for two at your place

Fun-loving cooking guru Rachael Ray gives the scoop on cooking for your sweetie

STORY BY J.M. HIRSCH ■ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Strapped for cash or failed to make dinner reservations before your honey's favorite spot was booked?

Get out the apron. Valentine's Day need not be ruined.

Food Network's culinary speed queen Rachael Ray says cooking for someone is the ultimate way to show affection.

"It's very romantic to keep it at home. Any guy or girl can make a reservation," she said. "It's also a lot easier to have a lot more truly intimate moments (at home), and funny moments."

For this dinner, Ray suggests starting with a salad of caramelized onions and toasted hazelnuts over baby spinach and plum tomatoes.

Pair that with a skillet steak with a cognac sauce, a good opportunity to impress your date by getting fancy with flames in the kitchen. It's also a good chance to end the evening in the emergency room, so don't get too cocky.

And for dessert, chocolate cups topped with whipped cream.

To pull this together on the big day, make the dessert first to allow it several hours to chill.

The chocolate can be served in small cups or bowls. Some gourmet food shops also sell small cups made out of chocolate.

Make the salad next, but hold off on tossing the onions with the greens until just before serving.

Most importantly, don't stress, Ray says. If the meal tanks, get takeout.

"Even if you burn everything, even if it looks like charcoal briquettes or there's too much salt or if you brought a cava melon home instead of a spaghetti squash, it doesn't matter because the effort was made," Ray said.



For a simple but elegant Valentine's Day dinner at home, celebrity chef Rachael Ray suggests a salad of caramelized onions and toasted hazelnuts over baby spinach, a skillet steak with cognac sauce and chocolate for dessert.

AP PHOTO

This is what they mean by a *hot* cup of coffee? It's news to me

And now, the latest news from the western front in the coffee wars, also known as Seattle.

It seems that some coffee shops are using feminine pulchritude to lure in customers for a cup of josephine.

We're talking bikini baristas serving lingerie lattes. Espresso undresso. Cappuccinos with ... well, OK, I can't think of one for cappuccinos.

But the way they're dressing at some of these places, handing out the ventis while wearing cups than don't even qualify as mezzos, it's more than the milk they'll be heating up.

I've wondered for years how something as simple as a cup of coffee could grow into the gajillion-dollar business it has become.

Not that I begrudge the people in the coffee business their suc-



Mike Redmond

cess. Build a better mousetrap, or brew a better cup of coffee, and the world will indeed beat a path to your door, I guess.

I'm just not convinced that it is a better cup of coffee.

Part of what they sell, of course, is a sort of "this isn't your Grandma's Chase and Sanborn" snob appeal: "We only use the tiniest beans picked in an area of Costa Rica accessible only by caravans of mountain goats. We then roast

the beans to a precise 447.5 degrees over a fire fueled by charcoal made from our proprietary blend of hickory and mesquite, grind them by hand with lava-rock mortars and pestles, and brew with water collected as morning dew from the deepest parts of the rain forest. Do you want creamer with that?"

And part of what they sell is strength.

Frankly, a lot of coffee shop coffees are too aggressive for my taste, and I'm a guy who was raised on farm coffee, percolator coffee that had been boiled to the consistency of syrup.

Strong coffee doesn't usually faze me, but I've had a cup or two of designer coffee that made me wonder if someone hadn't fallen asleep at the roaster. Which would indicate that they weren't using the product,

because I couldn't shut my eyes for three days.

And part of what they sell, with the caramel and whipped cream and sprinkles, is coffee for people who evidently don't like coffee.

That's all it really is: humble, everyday, warm-that-up-for-ya? coffee.

You can add tack a frappuccino to the front and a -cino on the back, charge seven bucks and serve it in your unmentionables, but in the end you're still talking about a cup of coffee.

Well, anyway, now Seattle has so many designer coffee shops that they're turning to scantily-clad baristas to lure in the customers, who tend to be male. Imagine that.

I suppose the next thing will be topless coffee shops.

Or remember those places that offered "the bottomless

cup of coffee"? Well ...

Maybe they should have coffee shops where the baristas remain clothed but the men have to sit around in their underwear.

Look at it this way: If the place got any business at all, you'd know it was because they really *did* brew a superior cup of coffee.

Or it was in a neighborhood full of weirdos.

Oh, well. It makes no difference to me. I'm a tea drinker nowadays, and I usually brew it myself, clothed. Not because I'm a prude but because I tend to spill.

I hope someone warned those women in Seattle about that.

Mike Redmond is the author of "Six of One, Half-Dozen of Another" and "The Night the Wheels Fell Off." Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.