

**Faraday's Kitchen Store's 2009 Holiday Baking Contest was a great success!** With just over 50 entries in a wide variety of styles, there was something to please everyone. The judges diligently and delightedly tasted each entry, choosing their winners with care, and then the public entered a spirited voting battle for their favorites.

The **Grand Prize went to Katy Franceschini** of Austin, for her simple yet delicious Buttermilk Pie. She was the proud winner of a Cuisinart 14 cup Elite Food Processor, valued at \$300. **Other category winners included Sherry Horan's** Elegant Gingerbread House, **Claudia Aechternacht's** Buttery Baked Chipotle Toffee, and **Carrie Harris** with her Great's Fruitcake. **The People's Choice favorite was Chocolate Panna Cotta with Port-Balsamic Cherries, prepared by Linda Bishop.**

Our thanks to Virginia Wood and Chef Kelly Casey for their kind assistance with judging, to all of our entrants who baked their best, and to our sponsoring vendors for their generous donations of prizes. We can't wait for next year!

**BELOW ARE THE RECIPES FROM EACH WINNER**

**GRAND PRIZE WINNER  
PIE CATEGORY WINNER**

**Bobby's Buttermilk Pie**

Entered by Katy Franceschini, Austin  
Recipe from Pedernales Electrical Cooperative

1 ¼ cup sugar  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
2 large eggs  
1 ½ T. flour  
½ stick margarine, melted  
¾ cup buttermilk  
¼ cup graham cracker crumbs  
½ cup chopped pecans  
9" pie crust, unbaked

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Mix sugar and eggs, then add vanilla and flour. Stir in melted margarine and buttermilk. Fold in graham cracker crumbs and pecans. Pour into pie shell. Bake 40 minutes or until dinner knife inserted in center comes out clean.

## DECORATED SPECIALTIES WINNER

### **Elegant Gingerbread House**

Entered by Sherry Horan, Austin

#### Gingerbread House

2  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups sifted flour

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt

1 tsp. ginger

$\frac{2}{3}$  cup molasses or honey\*

1 tsp. cinnamon

2 tsp. baking powder

$\frac{1}{8}$  tsp. cloves

$\frac{1}{3}$  cup packed brown sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup oil

1 egg

Lemon Drops, crushed.

\*Dark molasses makes a darker gingerbread than does light molasses or honey.

Mix ingredients thoroughly and chill for easier handling. Lay aluminum foil on cookie sheet and mark edges. Lightly oil foil and roll out gingerbread within marked edges.

Lay pattern pieces on gingerbread and cut pieces. (Dip pattern pieces in flour so it does not stick to the gingerbread.) Carefully pull excess dough from around pieces. You may need to reroll this dough to cut out some of the pieces. Cut out windows and doors at this time. Discard windows, but keep door piece and gently lay back on aluminum foil.

Place aluminum foil on cookie sheet to bake.

Bake at 300 degrees for approximately 25 minutes. This depends on the thickness of the dough- thicker dough will require more baking time. Remove from oven. Add crushed lemon drops to window areas. Cook additional 5-10 minutes until crushed lemon drops are melted, making "glass".

If you do not want to make these windows, it is possible to make windows with mylar paper, candy or chiclet gum. If you do not cut windows, cook gingerbread pieces for approximately 30 minutes total, or until gingerbread is lightly browned.

Regardless of which method you use, the gingerbread needs to be like a crisp cookie instead of a soft cookie.

Cool and carefully remove pieces from aluminum foil. Allow to dry at room temperature so that gingerbread is hard and dry.

Using a cardboard cake round, hot glue the pieces together to make the house.

## **MERINGUE ROYAL ICING**

¼ cup meringue powder (Just Whites)  
¾ cup water  
2 lbs. confectioner's sugar  
¼ tsp. cream of tartar

Beat ingredients on low speed to mix and then on high speed until icing is thick. Use a disposable decorating bag that has a star design tip inserted in end and fill with icing. Pipe icing on edges of house as desired and apply silver dragees. Use cotton for smoke from chimney. Frost remaining base and make a fence with pretzel twists. Frost ice cream cones and sprinkle with dragees for trees. Drizzle pine cone with icing and sprinkle with dragees. Put a toothpick in a large gumdrop and stick a small tootsie roll on top to form mailbox.

## **CAKE CATEGORY WINNER**

### **Great's Fruitcake**

Entered by Carrie Harris, Austin

1 lb. dates  
1 lb. pecans  
1 cup flour  
½ tsp. salt  
1 cup sugar  
4 eggs, beaten  
½ lb. candied cherries  
½ lb. candied pineapple  
2 tsp. vanilla

Cut dates in halves. Leave nut meats whole. Sift flour and salt together and add dates and nuts. Sift sugar into beaten eggs, then add dates and nuts. Add cherries, pineapple and vanilla last. Bake 1 hour at 300 degrees and then 20 minutes at 275 degrees.

## MISCELLANEOUS CATEGORY WINNER

### **Buttery Baked Chipotle Toffee**

Entered by Claudia Aechternacht, Spicewood

Makes about 1 ½ lbs. toffee

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

1 cup (2 sticks) salted butter  
1 cup light brown sugar, packed  
1 ¾ cup chopped pecans (divided use)  
1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips  
½ teaspoon chipotle powder

Lightly butter a 9 x 13 inch sheet pan. Place butter and brown sugar in a heavy saucepan and bring to a boil over medium heat. Stir in chipotle powder. Do not allow to boil over 2-3 minutes. Stir in 1 ¼ cups of the chopped pecans, reserving ½ cup. Pour into the prepared pan and bake for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle the chocolate chips over the toffee.

When the chocolate chips have softened, using an offset spatula spread chocolate evenly over toffee. Sprinkle with remaining pecans. Place pan in freezer to set and when hardened, break into bite sized pieces. Keeps and tastes great when kept in the freezer and eaten frozen!

## PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINNER

### **Chocolate Panna Cotta with Port and Balsamic Glazed Cherries**

Entered by Linda Bishop, Austin  
Recipe from Bon Appetit Magazine

Panna Cotta:

Canola Oil Spray  
1 cup whole milk  
2 ¼ teaspoons unflavored gelatin  
2 cups whipping cream  
½ cup sugar  
5 oz. bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, chopped  
½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Cherries:

1 pound frozen pitted cherries, soaked in vodka for 1 day  
¾ cup ruby Port Sandeman Founders Reserve  
½ cup sugar  
2 T. balsamic vinegar

Brush six ¾ cup glass custard cups with canola oil. Pour milk into medium bowl. Sprinkle gelatin over; let stand until gelatin softens, about 5 minutes.

Stir cream and sugar in heavy medium saucepan over medium-high heat until sugar dissolves. Bring to a boil; remove from heat. Add chocolate; whisk until melted. Whisk warm chocolate mixture into gelatin mixture; stir to dissolve. Stir in vanilla. Working in two batches, transfer mixture to blender and use only 3 on/off turns to just fully blend mixture (do not overmix). Divide mixture between custard cups. Cover and chill for 24 hours. (Can be made 2 days ahead. Keep chilled.)

For cherries, stir cherries, port, sugar and vinegar in heavy large skillet over high heat until sugar dissolves. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium and simmer until cherries are soft and wooden spoon leaves path in sauce when drawn across the bottom of the skillet, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat. Cool to room temperature. (Can be made 2 days ahead. Cover and refrigerate. Bring to room temperature before continuing.)

Set custard cups in large baking dish. Pour enough hot water into dish to come halfway up sides of cups. Let stand 1 ½ minutes. Take cups out of water; wipe bottoms dry. Invert each onto plate, shaking gently to dislodge panna cotta. Spoon cherries and sauce over panna cottas and serve.