



ARTSDAY

Livin' large

Ken Burns' new documentary champions the extraordinary life and struggles of boxer Jack Johnson. 14E

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AFFIRMATION

When life is busy, focus on the task ahead, not the one passed.

—Kate West, *The Real Witches' Year*

On DallasNews.com Go to the Texas Living page on DallasNews.com to see more affirmations and an essay on inspiration.

WINE OF THE WEEK

Domaine Chandon, Carneros, Pinot Meunier 2002, \$33.99 A cousin of pinot noir, pinot meunier (mun - yea) is usually a member of the cast, not the star. This wine is a virtuoso performance of vanilla, cinnamon and cherry fruit with the acid and tannin structure to carry it off with finesse. Available at Central Market Dallas, select Goody Goody stores, and King's and select Majestic Liquors stores in Fort Worth.

Rebecca Murphy

INSIDE

You say fee, I say fi

Is it fee-lo? Or fi-lo? Me-o, my-o. But now it comes in flavors. 2E

A new flavor in the melting pot

Penang Nyonya doesn't offer your typical fare. Add a bit of Malaysia to your own cooking with takeout sauces and desserts. 7E

Beating back the crunchies

Snap. Crackle. Crunch. It's what most people who have adopted low-carb miss. You don't have to. 9E

THINK YOU'VE GOT PROBLEMS?

Hide those views

Is there an easy way to cover bumper stickers? Click and Clack, 9E

FUNNY OF THE DAY

Workplace reality

Our favorite employee finds an interesting way to get his computer upgraded. Dilbert, 12E



NEXT WEEK

Big hopes for vanilla's slender bean

The vanilla harvest in the Mexican city of Papanla, once legendary for its vanilla production, is laden with expectations: for a brighter future, for a return to its cultural identity, for the higher yield that technology can bring. *Texas Living: Food & Wine*

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The top-rated sausage in the competition was from Kuby's, founded by Karl Kuby (with Karl Kuby Jr., right) in 1961.



KUBY'S SAUSAGE HOUSE

85 points

The top finisher was from Kuby's Sausage House — known for its German sausages. But it's Al's recipe. "I would never steal anybody's recipe," says Karl Kuby, who founded Kuby's at Snider Plaza in 1961. "But people that came when Al's closed up wanted it." At the time, Mr. Kuby says, he hired back an employee who worked first at Kuby's, then defected to Al's until the store closed. Mr. Kuby says he immediately asked the employee about Italian sausage. "I said, 'Are we doing this right?'" "He told me one more ingredient they added to it which I did not have," Mr. Kuby says. And that was: Parmesan cheese. "In all the years, I'd never heard of Parmesan cheese in sausage," Mr. Kuby says. "But Al used to add Parmesan cheese — 1 pound to a 100-pound recipe." Both the mild and hot Italian sausage at his store replicate Al's recipe, Mr. Kuby says, right down to the Parmesan.

Photos by EVANS CAGLAGE/Staff Photographer

The Great Italian Sausage Contest

In which a German market aces its Italian competitors — but only just

By KIM PIERCE
Special Contributor

Despite a relatively small Italian population, Dallas is wild about Italian sausage. No fewer than 11 places custom-blend their own. But no matter how good the individual blends might be, the legacy of Al's Import Foods — gone since 1995 from the corner of Park Lane and Greenville Avenue — still influences local tastes. The store's sausage is still held up as the gold standard in Dallas. After hearing so many purveyors allude to Al's — "My customers tell me mine is just like Al's — we decided to put Italian sausage to the test. We asked four experts to blind-taste each one on a scale of 0 to 100. We used only the mild, or sweet, flavor, so there would be no bias in favor of spicy vs. no-spicy. We had no idea how deep Al's legacy runs. When the last morsel was savored and scored, it turned out that two of the top three sausages trace their lineage to the legendary store. And the other is a

perennial favorite. But don't read too much into the rankings, say the parties involved. "Best" is in the palate of the beholder.

"Let me tell you something about Italian sausage," Mike DiCarlo, co-owner of Jimmy's, said last fall before the store burned. "Everybody's family has the 'best' recipe. Just like [ragu] sauce, everybody does a little different twist to it." "Everybody — basically salt, pepper, fennel and pork — every family goes from a variation of that," Mr. DiCarlo says. And if they make additions, such as basil, cheese or white wine, "that's what they're used to. Just like their grandmother's sauce. That's what's best."

Kim Pierce is a Dallas freelance writer.

How the sausages scored, 8E

The judges, 8E

Recipes, 8E

What to drink with Italian sausage, 8E

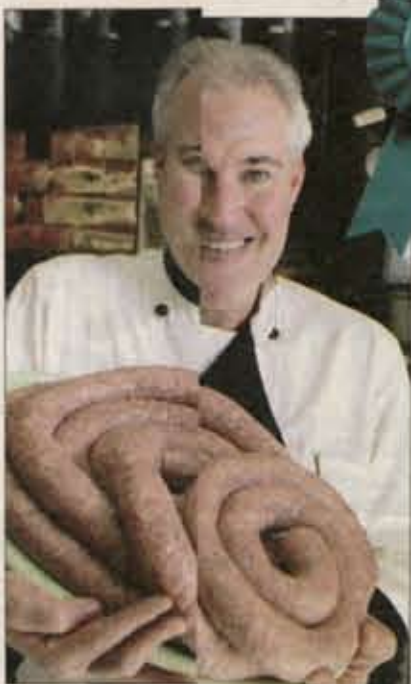


JIMMY'S ITALIAN MARKET

84 points

The sausage from Jimmy's Italian Market at Sigel's in the Quadrangle came in second by a single-point margin. This store-in-a-store is the new incarnation of the popular Jimmy's Food Store, which burned in October. Urban legend had it that co-owner Paul DiCarlo had worked at Al's Liquor Store, near Al's Import Foods, and so might have had access to the famed Al's recipe. Mr. DiCarlo scoffed at the idea, although he did work briefly at the liquor store. "I worked in the store for three months, right out of high school," he says. But he swears he never watched or borrowed from the sausage making. "My recipe came from two people," Mr. DiCarlo says. "One was my aunt's father, James DeGelia, and then my grandfather's, which was Jimmy DiCarlo. ... I took both of those recipes. ... I took something of each and played around with it." Mr. DiCarlo's father and grandfather opened Jimmy's Food Store at Bryan and Fitzhugh in 1966. But Mr. DiCarlo says the family was making Italian sausage before that for family members at Christmastime.

Paul DiCarlo handles the sausage making at Jimmy's. The Italian store has taken up temporary residence in Sigel's at the Quadrangle.



AL'S

80 points

Al's sausage, resurrected last fall after nine years by his son, Paul Cascio, pulled 80 points in our taste test. Mr. Cascio uses the original recipe, he says, noting that often he made the sausage at his father's store, which opened in 1957 and became a magnet for the Italian community. "I made it many a night, many a day," he says. Now he's making it twice a week at Eat the World in East Dallas.

Paul Cascio resurrected the recipe used by his dad, Al Cascio.