

THE TASTE TEST POMEGRANATE JUICE

Jeanette Wang
jeanette.wang@scmp.com



Biotta Pomegranate
HK\$68 for 500ml, ThreeSixty
Unlike the other two products, this isn't pure pomegranate juice; this 100 per cent organic Swiss product is a combination of white tea, agave concentrate, pear purée and aronia (a type of berry) juice. The packaging advises to enjoy a glass of this before each meal to "enrich your diet".
Verdict: the added ingredients balance out the tartness of the pomegranate and make this a more palatable drink.



Nature's Sensation Organic Pomegranate
HK\$23.50 for 250ml, ThreeSixty
This 100 per cent fresh-pressed fruit juice is not from concentrate and has no added sugar or additives. In other words, this is as pure as bottled pomegranate juice gets. A product of Turkey.
Verdict: the most tart of the three, but not too dry, so it goes down pretty easily. Best served ice cold.



Pom Wonderful
HK\$29 for 236ml, ThreeSixty
This 100 per cent pomegranate juice from concentrate is said to be packed with powerful antioxidants that help neutralise free radicals. The Californian manufacturer claims the benefits are backed by 47 published medical studies.
Verdict: tart, bitter and very dry; so much so that it lingers and irritates the back of the throat. Not one for quenching a thirst.

HEALTHY GOURMET



Andrea Oschetti
healthpost@scmp.com

On August 11, 2008 I was an overweight 99kg and my liver was not functioning properly. I'd held a gym membership for five years, but had used it only four times and my track record with weight-loss programmes was not good. I had also developed spinal problems that forced me into bed twice a year. I was deeply unhappy, but somehow managed to live with this failure despite the success in other parts of my life.

One day later, I started a seven-day detox at Kamalaya Koh Samui, a wellness sanctuary and holistic spa resort in Thailand.

It was an amazing experience:



Years of bad habits and a sedentary lifestyle brought issues with my liver and intestines

deliciously healthy food in a stunningly beautiful environment.

At the end of the week, I had lost 5kg, felt more energetic and had developed an appetite for exercise. By September 28, I weighed 87kg, my tastes had changed and I was eating plenty and healthily, without feeling deprived of the things I like. I had also started running regularly, and

by November 28 I tipped the scales at 81kg. It was then that I ran my first half marathon. I was hooked.

Three-and-a-half years later, I am a competitive triathlete and runner, my back issues have disappeared and my liver is functioning perfectly. I am fit and look years younger. I have always loved food and wine, and I continue to enjoy them. So what happened at Kamalaya?

Basically, years of bad habits and a sedentary lifestyle brought issues with my liver and intestines so that they no longer did their jobs properly, and my whole body suffered as a consequence. The Kamalaya programme restarted my internal engine. Rather than working on calorie intake, it focused on making my body work again.

I am now passionate about

healthy living. And good health starts with good food: we are what we eat, physically and emotionally. Many people think you can't have healthy, nutritious food that tastes good. With this weekly column, I aim to prove them wrong. We will feature recipes that summarise my four principles of healthy cooking: mindfulness, nourishment, flavour and positive indulgence.

Let's start with flavour: when I cook, my goal is to bring out food's natural taste by respecting the ingredients using light cooking techniques, such as this spin (below) on a usually heavy lasagne dish.

The best flavours are to be found in high-quality fresh food, herbs and spices. Sugar, fat and processed foods are often used to disguise inferior ingredients.

ANDREA'S OPEN BUCKWHEAT LASAGNE

This is a simple recipe for open buckwheat lasagne, thyme-scented mushroom and oven-baked goat cheese with a light basil pesto. The buckwheat flour is free of gluten and highly nutritious.

Ingredients
200 grams buckwheat flour
200 grams mushrooms
50 grams goat's cheese
2 bunches thyme
3 bunches basil
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 cloves garlic
100ml vegetable broth
1 tbsp grated parmesan
10 grams pine nuts

Mix the flour with water and knead the dough for a few minutes until you obtain a smooth and even consistency.

Roll the dough and cut it into rectangles of 10cm.

Cut the mushrooms into slices and cook them in a sauté pan.

You do not need olive oil when you sauté vegetables; a little bit of water will do. When cooked, set aside and sprinkle generously with fresh thyme.

Cut the goat's cheese - which has the lowest fat content among cheeses - into medallions 1cm thick.

To prepare a light version of the traditional pesto, put basil, oil, garlic, parmesan, pine nuts, vegetable



broth and a pinch of salt in a mixer and blitz briefly. Lay the squares of lasagne on an oven tray covered with greaseproof paper. Place the mushrooms on the lasagne and finish with a medallion of cheese and a twig of thyme on top.

Put the tray in the oven at 200 degrees Celsius for 10 minutes.

Remove, place the open lasagne on a plate, garnish with the light pesto and serve.

Buon appetito.

Healthy Gourmet is a new weekly column by private chef Andrea Oschetti. He can be reached at andrea@fioreblu.com