

IDEA FOOD AND NUTRITION TIPS

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[SPE Certified® Delivers Health Through Food](#)

by Sandy Todd Webster



With new evidence demonstrating that certain foods could be as detrimental to our well-being as cigarettes, consumers may find comfort in knowing instantly and unequivocally that a menu item they are about to select has been bestowed with a health halo by a trusted, independent source.

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[Culinary Institute of America: Worlds of Healthy Flavors](#)

by Sandy Todd Webster



Corporate and executive chefs helping the action at chain restaurants, hotels, supermarkets and other high volume foodservice operations have very full plates these days. On one hand they are charged with delivering great flavor and consistency for a good value, while on the other, they are increasingly under fire to serve up healthier plates without impacting margin or deliciousness.

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[What is a Macrobiotic Diet?](#)

By Lourdes Castro MS, RD

The macrobiotic diet is more than just a dietary regimen; it's a lifestyle. Many people erroneously believe this diet is a very rigorous version of a vegan diet, but while the macrobiotic diet shares many of the same attributes as the strictly plant-based diet, it does allow some animal products.

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[Is Obesity a Socially Transmitted Disease?](#)

by Sandy Todd Webster

If someone in your social circle was making specifically healthy or unhealthy food choices, would it influence your behavior? [read more](#)

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[Kale Pesto](#)

These days, when many chefs are sourcing locally and seasonally, and abiding by sustainable practices, they may believe they are cooking healthy meals, says Emmanuel Verstraeten, founder and CEO of SPE Certified® (see feature story). "While [sustainability] is an appropriate first step, it is not sufficient to close the loop on delivering nutritionally balanced, great-tasting dishes. [read more](#)

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With new evidence demonstrating that certain foods could be as detrimental to our well-being as cigarettes, consumers may find comfort in knowing instantly and unequivocally that a menu item they are about to select has been bestowed with a health halo by a trusted, independent source.

SPE Certified is to dining what the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval® is for household products or what LEED® certification is for green building standards. This is much more than simple feel-good labeling, however.

SPE, *sanitas per escam*, literally translated as “health through food,” is a practical philosophy for daily living and long-term wellness. Backed by a thoughtfully written 90-page manifesto outlining “a holistic approach that focuses not just on health, but on **S**ourcing, **P**reparing and **E**nhancing of food,” SPE Certified aims to steer restaurants, schools, airlines—potentially any dining environment—in a more clear direction toward health. At least that is the hope of founder and CEO Emmanuel Verstraeten, a Belgian entrepreneur who launched this concept in 2008 as a natural parallel path to that of his Michelin-starred Manhattan restaurant Rouge® Tomate.

“Given the current epidemic of obesity and diet-related diseases, SPE Certified is poised to change the way America eats when dining out precisely because it is equally (and easily) adaptable in *any* foodservice establishment (be it restaurants, hotels, cruise lines, airlines, cafeterias, schools and universities, health care facilities, etc.). It therefore has potential to positively impact attitudes and health across the country,” says Greg Deligdisch, VP of Marketing for SPE Certified.



Verstraeten’s vision for SPE bloomed from a desire to effect positive change and to help alter people’s attitudes toward food. The critical success marker for SPE Certified, he says, is “when every child in America has access to a healthy and sustainable meal, which is our principal objective.”

SPE uses proprietary methods developed over the past decade by leading chefs, registered dietitians and a scientific committee of public health and nutrition experts to deliver foods that score high on all fronts. This collaborative approach, rooted in Verstraeten’s original Rouge Tomate restaurant in Brussels, Belgium, enhances the nutritional quality of meals

while adding healthy options to restaurant menus and other dining venues. It combines current research with international health standards into its charter of practical guidelines and is applicable to a wide variety of cuisines. While this is a fine idea on paper, if the food is not delicious, it will miss the target in a culture so consumed with flavor.



“These days many chefs are sourcing locally and seasonally, abiding by sustainable practices—and therefore thinking they are cooking healthy,” says Verstraeten. While this is an appropriate first step, it is not sufficient to close the loop on delivering nutritionally-balanced, great-tasting dishes. What is missing is a culinary approach to

nutrition whereby dishes are created to deliver the maximum in nutrient density, while retaining every ounce of deliciousness and taste. This is the piece of the puzzle that SPE Certified so uniquely provides.”

Rather than “demonizing” ingredients such as butter, cream and sugar, SPE challenges chefs to work differently. In fact, the charter doesn’t limit chefs with regard to ingredients; it simply guides them to use certain components in moderation. Bottom line, says Verstraeten, “Our goal is not to eliminate the *status quo*, but to provide guests with a sustainable, healthy and nutritionally balanced alternative. It’s all about increasing the options available when dining out.”

SPE Certified counts fine dining restaurants, Celebrity Cruises and the University of Massachusetts-Amherst among its growing clientele. In its launch semester (Spring 2013), though SPE dishes made up only one-third of the options in the main line of the UMass dining halls, they were chosen 60% of the time by students, points out Deligdisch. In a survey comparing dining hall food during spring 2013 versus the previous year, UMass students expressed a 12% increase in satisfaction with healthy choices, a 21% increase in satisfaction with taste and a 10% increase in satisfaction with dining options overall.



“While we can’t take full credit, SPE Certified undoubtedly contributed to a leading college website (www.universityprimetime.com) naming UMass Amherst number one among the top 50 schools in the US in 2013 based on food!” says Deligdisch. “As to Celebrity Cruises, on the inaugural voyage of *Celebrity Reflections*, certain SPE Certified dishes garnered some of the highest guest scores ever.”

Try this month’s healthy recipe for Kale Pesto and watch the video web extra of SPE Certified’s executive chef Anthony Moraes creating it. Learn more at www.SPEcertified.com.

http://www.idealife.com/fitness-library/spe-certifiedreg-delivers-health-through-food?utm_source=IFNT+March+2014&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=IFNT+March+2014+%285%29



Kale Pesto

Recipe for Health:



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See how SPE Certified's executive chef Anthony Moraes uses the SPE tenets to maintain month's

build flavor while health in this recipe.



1 ½ C kale, destemmed, tightly packed
¾ C walnuts
2 cloves garlic
1 ½ T lemon juice
½ C Pecorino Romano or Parmigiano Reggiano
1/3 C olive oil
Recipe Key: C = cup; T = tablespoon

Source: Anthony Moraes, executive chef, SPE Certified.

http://www.ideafit.com/fitness-library/kale-pesto?utm_source=IFNT+March+2014&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=IFNT+March+2014+%285%29