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YOUR DINNER FOR TWO

SHRIMP WITH GARLIC
AND HERB BUTTER

CITRUS SALAD WITH GINGER
PEPPER STEAKS WITH FENNEL
AND GARLIC PUREE

CHAMPAGNE MOUSSE

time just for two

Take a break in the bustling holiday season with an elegant meal for you and your special someone. Try this menu from the *Two for Tonight* cookbook by Chef Jacques Haeringer, chef de cuisine of one of the country's most romantic restaurants, L'Auberge Chez Francois in Great Falls, Virginia.

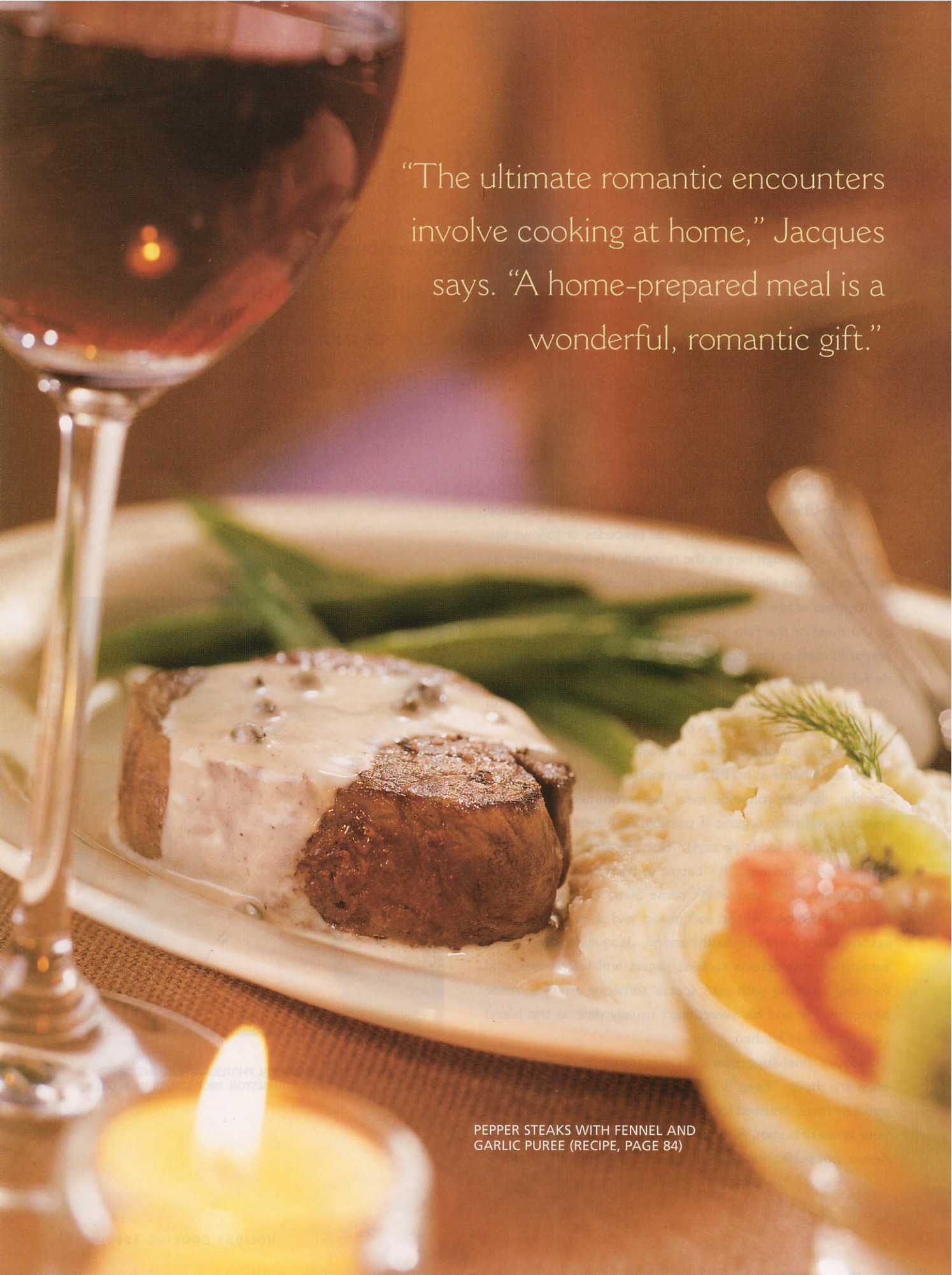
"The French have no idea that food and love are different," says Chef Jacques Haeringer, chef de cuisine of Virginia's L'Auberge Chez Francois, known for its mastery of romance and dining. "To the French, one just precedes or follows the other." Even though he's in the restaurant business, Jacques believes that the ultimate romantic encounters involve cooking together at home. "Whether one person leads preparation of the meal or the two of you prepare it together, a home-prepared meal or time spent preparing one together is a wonderful, romantic gift. You chop, you talk, you bump into each other on purpose, you help each other sample the dishes. You can't get more romantic than that."

The menu on these pages is drawn from Jacques' book by the same name as his PBS television show, *Two for Tonight*. For the ultimate romantic meal, he recommends using the finest ingredients, organic if possible (the best aphrodisiacs are whole, good foods, he says). "Don't be afraid of butter and cream," says Jacques. "It's better to have small portions of high-quality food; you won't come away feeling leaden or heavy." While candlelight, soft music, and an attractive table setting will contribute to the mood, Jacques suggests that turning off distractions such as pagers and telephones, and focusing on being with your special someone are even more powerful. He and his sweetheart usually dine at the island counter in their kitchen.

Jacques' final suggestions for any romantic dining experience are these: "Keep it simple. When things are complex, you'll be too exhausted for together time after the meal. Keep your sense of humor. A romantic dinner is about shared experience, not perfection. Laughter has a light, romantic heart."



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“The ultimate romantic encounters involve cooking at home,” Jacques says. “A home-prepared meal is a wonderful, romantic gift.”

PEPPER STEAKS WITH FENNEL AND GARLIC PUREE (RECIPE, PAGE 84)

time just for two



SHRIMP WITH GARLIC AND HERB BUTTER (RECIPE, PAGE 85)



CHAMPAGNE MOUSSE (RECIPE, PAGE 96)

WINE NOTES FROM JACQUES

Enjoy Champagne through the entire meal, especially on such a festive evening, suggests Chef Jacques Haeringer. With this menu, Jacques recommends a Champagne with "some power" to it, such as a Veuve Clicquot rosé. "I'm not a wine snob," he says, "but I do prefer French Champagnes if I choose to go with a rosé." If you like to enjoy a variety of wines, Jacques suggests Chateau Souverain Alexander Valley sauvignon blanc to accompany the shrimp and salad, then Wolf Blass Yellow Label cabernet sauvignon, a prize-winning red wine from Australia, with the steak. "But do finish the meal with mousse and Champagne!"

Set the scene for a romantic dinner for two with tips from www.bhg.com/sipcookingfortwo.



PEPPER STEAKS WITH FENNEL AND GARLIC PUREE

Less pungent than ripe black peppercorns, green peppercorns are a soft, underripe berry of the peppercorn plant. Look for the water- or brine-packed form in the specialty food section of larger supermarkets.

Pictured on page 82.

Prep: 15 min. Cook: 31 min.

- 1 large fennel bulb
(about 10 ounces)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup peeled and sliced potatoes
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon lemon juice
- 7 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon whipping cream
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 2 5-ounce beef tenderloin steaks,
cut 1 inch thick
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sea salt or salt
- 1 tablespoon cracked black pepper
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 to 2 teaspoons drained green
peppercorns or cracked black
peppercorns
- 2 tablespoons cognac
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons beef broth
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Dijon-style mustard
- Sea salt or salt
- Freshly ground pepper

COUNTDOWN TO DINNER

Prepare the foods together on the day of the dinner. It's a great way to slow down, encourage intimacy, and tantalize the senses.

THREE HOURS BEFORE

- Prepare flavored butter for shrimp appetizer; wash and devein shrimp.
- Prepare the salad.
- Prepare Champagne Mousse; chill in crystal champagne flutes.
- Marinate strawberries for garnish in Champagne Mousse; cover and chill.

ONE HOUR BEFORE

Now is a good time to start working in the kitchen together. Pour a glass of Champagne for each of you, then prepare and enjoy the shrimp appetizer.

- Cook fennel and potatoes, roast garlic, and puree mixture; keep warm.
- Prepare citrus salad; cover and chill.

15 MINUTES BEFORE

- Cook steak and prepare sauce.
- For a more robust meal, steam a green vegetable and set out crusty bread. Use the flavored butter on both.

JUST BEFORE YOU SIT DOWN FOR THE MEAL

- Remove mousse and strawberries from refrigerator.

TIME FOR DESSERT

- Spoon strawberries over mousse.

1. For puree, remove feathery leaves from fennel stalks; reserve for another use. Cut off and discard upper stalks. Remove wilted outer layer of stalks; cut off thin slice from base. Wash and thinly slice the cleaned fennel. Place fennel and potatoes in a medium saucepan. Add lemon juice and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water. Bring mixture to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer about 25 minutes or until fennel and potatoes are very tender.

2. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350°F. Place garlic on a greased baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven for 25 to 30 minutes or until garlic is tender and lightly browned. Place fennel mixture, garlic, 1 tablespoon butter, and 1 tablespoon whipping cream in a food processor bowl or blender container. Cover and process or blend

about 1 minute or until smooth. Season to taste with sea salt and freshly ground pepper. Cover and keep warm until serving time.

3. Sprinkle steaks with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sea salt; rub in 1 tablespoon cracked black pepper. Heat a large skillet over high heat until extremely hot. Add cooking oil and butter. Add steaks. Reduce heat to medium; cook for 6 to 8 minutes for medium-rare or 9 to 12 minutes for medium doneness, turning meat frequently. Remove steaks from skillet. Drain off fat. Add peppercorns and cognac to skillet. Return steaks to skillet. Cook over medium-high heat until cognac is almost evaporated, turning steaks frequently.

4. For sauce, remove steaks from skillet. Cover and keep warm. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whipping cream, beef broth,

and mustard to skillet. Bring mixture to boiling. Cook and stir about 5 minutes or until mixture is reduced to about ½ cup. Season to taste with sea salt and freshly ground pepper. Serve steaks with sauce and fennel puree. Makes 2 servings.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING: 770 cal., 59 g total fat (28 g sat. fat), 192 mg chol., 858 mg sodium, 18 g carbo., 19 g fiber, 37 g pro. Daily Values: 29% vit. A, 29% vit. C, 14% calcium, 25% iron.

CITRUS SALAD WITH GINGER

Fresh ginger heightens the flavor of juicy, ripe fruit in this sparkling salad. When you peel the ginger, remove only the skin—the delicate flesh just under the surface is the most flavorful.

Pictured on page 82.

Prep: 20 min. Chill: 1 hour

- 1 small grapefruit, peeled, seeded, and sectioned
- 1 medium orange, peeled, seeded, and sectioned
- 1 medium banana, peeled and cut into ¼-inch-thick slices
- 1 medium kiwifruit, peeled and cut into ¼-inch-thick slices
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh ginger

1. In a medium bowl combine the grapefruit sections, orange sections, banana, kiwifruit, sugar, and ginger. Toss gently to combine. Cover and chill up to 1 hour. Makes 2 servings.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING: 173 cal., 1 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 2 mg sodium, 43 g carbo., 5 g fiber, 2 g pro. Daily Values: 155% vit. C.

SHRIMP WITH GARLIC AND HERB BUTTER

Save the extra herb butter to spread on bread or toss with cooked vegetables.

Pictured on page 83.

Prep: 25 min. Cook: 5 min.

Broil: 2 min.

- ½ cup butter, softened
- 2 teaspoons snipped fresh parsley
- ½ teaspoon lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt or salt
- ¼ teaspoon finely chopped shallot
- ¼ teaspoon finely chopped garlic
- Dash bottled hot pepper sauce
- 4 fresh or frozen jumbo shrimp (about 8 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons dry white wine
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup hot cooked angel hair pasta

1. For herb butter, use an electric mixer or wire whisk to combine the ½ cup softened butter, parsley, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, pepper,

salt, shallot, garlic, and hot pepper sauce until well combined. Cover and refrigerate until serving time.

2. Thaw shrimp, if frozen. Peel and devein shrimp.

3. In a large oven-going skillet heat wine and 1 tablespoon butter over medium-high heat. Add shrimp. Cook, turning frequently, for 5 to 6 minutes or until shrimp turn opaque. Dot shrimp with 1 tablespoon herb butter. If desired, place skillet under broiler, 3 to 4 inches from heat, for 2 minutes or until shrimp are lightly browned.

4. Toss warm pasta with 2 to 3 teaspoons herb butter. Divide pasta between individual serving dishes. Top with shrimp. Cover remaining herb butter and refrigerate or freeze for another use. Makes 2 servings.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING: 208 cal., 14 g total fat (8 g sat. fat), 162 mg chol., 276 mg sodium, 1 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 17 g pro. Daily Values: 12% vit. A, 11% iron.

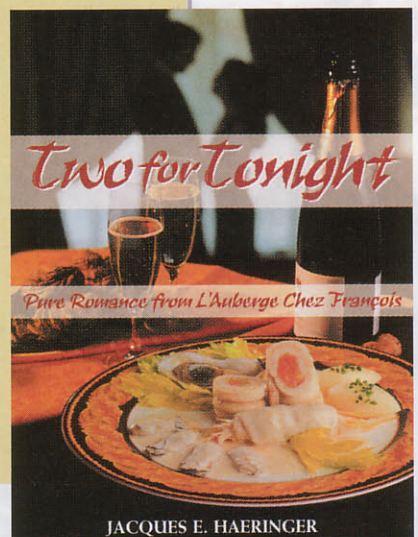
CONTINUED ON PAGE 96

MORE RECIPES FOR TWO

If you believe, as Chef Jacques Haeringer does, that there's a natural relationship between love and food, the heart and the palate, then check out his book, *Two for Tonight*. It's filled with simple recipes that kindle romance and are a delight to prepare with or for your sweetheart. From appetizers to breakfast dishes, midnight snacks to main courses, the recipes focus on quality ingredients that nourish the body and spirit.

From Bartleby Press, the 269-page hardcover book costs \$26.95.

Watch for Jacques' television cooking show, *Two for Tonight*, on PBS, and visit his Web site: www.chefjacques.com.



Time Just for Two

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 85

CHAMPAGNE MOUSSE

Top a sweet, light-as-air mousse with

Champagne-marinated berries.

Pictured on page 83.

Prep: 30 min. Cook: 12 min.

Chill: 2 hours

2 egg yolks

3 tablespoons sugar

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup Champagne

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon unflavored gelatin

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup whipping cream

**Fresh strawberries, halved or sliced
Champagne**

1. In the top of a double boiler* combine egg yolks and sugar; add $\frac{2}{3}$ cup Champagne. Place over but not touching simmering water in bottom of double boiler. Beat with a portable mixer on medium speed about 12 to 14 minutes or until mixture thickens, scraping sides and bottom frequently.

2. Remove top of pan from heat; beat 1 minute more. In a 1-cup heat-proof glass measure combine gelatin and 1 tablespoon water; let stand for 5 minutes. Set the measure in the simmering water; stir about 1 minute or until gelatin is dissolved. Stir gelatin into Champagne mixture. Let stand at room temperature for 20 minutes.

3. In a medium bowl beat cream with an electric mixer on medium speed until soft peaks form; fold into Champagne mixture. Cover and chill for 1 hour. Spoon or pipe into champagne glasses. Chill at least 1 hour.

4. Marinate strawberries in Champagne in the refrigerator for 1 hour; drain. Spoon berries over mousse just before serving. Makes 2 servings.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING: 394 cal., 27 g total fat (15 g sat. fat), 295 mg chol., 31 mg sodium, 22 g carbo., 0 g fiber, 5 g pro. Daily Values: 24% vit. A.

***Note:** If you don't have a double boiler, place a metal or heat-resistant glass bowl in a saucepan. The bowl should be wide enough so its bottom doesn't touch the bottom of the pan.