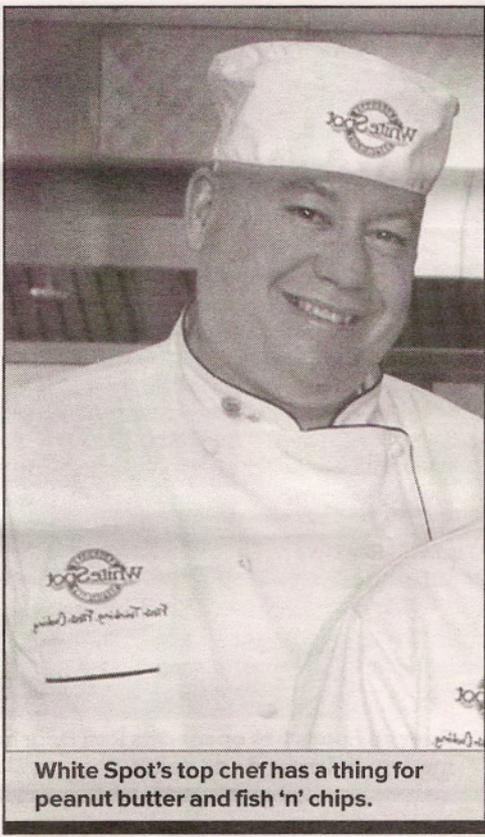


# 'Fessin' up to 1,200 biscuits-like hockey pucks

## FOODIE Q&A



White Spot's top chef has a thing for peanut butter and fish 'n' chips.

**You are...** "Chuck Currie, executive chef of White Spot Restaurants."

**We might also find you dining out at...** "La Bodega. Great mussels, rabbit livers, quail, unique chicken wings (marinated in fresh tomatoes and garlic, and breaded). It's kind of 'my place'; I've been a regular since 1984 and the people there feel like family. I popped in late one Sunday night after the kitchen was closed. I wasn't upset, but as I walked down the street, their terrific cook, Niri, ran out after me and said she would re-open for me! Jose, the owner, is very personable and gracious."

**Your dream dinner date:** "Eleanor Wachtel, the incredibly intelligent and personable host of CBC Radio's *Writers and Company* and *The Arts Tonight*. I love the depth of research she does on her guests, her sense of humour, and her unobtrusive interview style. We've corresponded but never met."

**Last night's dinner:** "It was a Sunday night, and I had spent all day teaching clarinet and saxophone in my studio (I am also a freelance classical musician and teacher). I also taught all day Saturday and partied that night, so I was bagged and kept it simple: pan-fried wild sockeye salmon fillet with lemon-basil-tarragon butter, and a salad with a dressing of extra-virgin olive oil and Kelowna 'Saucier' red wine vinegar. This B.C. vinegar is remarkable; it's made in small batches from organically grown grapes and allowed to age naturally in oak barrels. You can sip it like wine!"

**If you had a date with the electric chair, your last meal order would be...** "Fish and chips, because it is so good when *fried!* (And we would want plenty of *real* tartar sauce and lemon for the fish and HP Sauce for the beefy fried Chuck.)"

**You'd gag if you ate ...** "I can't help you there. I will eat anything and everything. I once ate a steamed barnacle at Café Babareeba in Chicago. I was with a food purchaser and a chef who I thought would also eat anything, but they wouldn't touch that barnacle. It was kind of bland, too, but there was a good scratch-made mayo with it, so all was cool."

**You'd be happiest at Happy Hour with...** "A glass of Muga, a red wine made from tempranillo, my favorite grape. It is from a tiny little winery in Spain, and not available in Canada any more. They crushed their grapes by hand right up to 1989, and still add no sulfites or preservatives at all."

**Secret treats:** "I'm a peanut butter fanatic. I can't keep it in the house or I would eat it right out of the jar with a spoon in one long burst of depravity."

**You'd take a long flight in economy class for that one meal in...** "Chile. I was there on an all-expense-paid wine tour about a decade ago with a restaurant group. My roommate got deathly ill in Peru just before we took a bus over the Andes. By the time we reached Chile, he was so sick that I booked us a

flight home, as we could not seem to even get him diagnosed down there. I never got to leave the hotel in Chile while I was taking care of him and saw nothing of the country or its cuisine. My favorite protein is goat, and they really do a great job with it there, so I still feel kind of [ripped off]."

**Culinary confessions:** "Brunch for 600 on a Mother's Day. We were going to serve biscuits hot out of the oven, so I had a cook mix up the dry ingredients for 1,200 biscuits the night before. We added the cream and butter in the morning and pulled the first batch out 10 minutes before the doors opened. We filled instantly just as I realized that we had made 1,200 white hockey pucks. He had forgotten the baking powder. I spent the next four hours frantically making biscuits to keep up, and never even saw the production line or how the rest of the food looked."

**Menu suggestion for a hassle-free, sit-down dinner party for six:** Hire me! It will be expensive, but worth it! Seriously.... Appetizer: Buy a good quality commercial salsa and add chipotle peppers, lots of fresh chopped cilantro, diced cucumber and green onions. Serve with plain tortilla chips. Main course: Roast a side of salmon with just pepper, salt, lemon juice and melted butter in some foil. Saute some diced onions very lightly in butter, mix in sour cream and chives and a little white wine, and just bring to a bubble.

**Accompaniments:** Steam new potatoes in a tightly lidded pot with a half-inch of water in the bottom, a handful of chopped fresh mint, and a sprinkle of salt and pepper. Caesar salad: Use *really* good parmesan cheese and a decent commercial dressing like René's or Duso's. Make your own croutons, because you just cannot buy good ones, and it really impresses your guests; just put some stale bread pieces in frying pan with olive oil, thyme, pepper and salt, and toast over a flame. Dessert: A really high-fat and high-egg vanilla ice cream. Pour some Frangelico liqueur over it!"

**Five must-have ingredients in your kitchen:** "Shallots, saffron, Reggiano parmesan cheese, garlic, sambal oelek. And... dijon mustard, ketjap manis, miso, apples, Italian sausage, vine-ripened tomatoes, extra-virgin olive oil, fresh herbs (tarragon, thyme, marjoram, bay leaves, oregano, chives, basil), jasmine rice, sea salt, lamb.... What's the use? There are hundreds of must-haves."

**Our pocket version of *The Iron Chef*. The secret ingredient you must use: Triple 'O' sauce. What's for dinner?** "Make a really superior meat loaf with 50 per cent beef, 25 per cent veal, and 25 per cent pork, and fresh white breadcrumbs, Dijon mustard, dill, marjoram, thyme, pepper, salt, fresh chopped parsley, and egg. Chill it. Purchase a great sourdough rye and an extra strong cheddar cheese (Balderson's or Village Cheese.) Spread the Triple 'O' sauce on each side of the bread slices, close over slices of cheese and meatloaf, butter the outside, and fry in a pan slowly to melt the cheese, brown the bread and heat the meatloaf. Use three napkins!"

—Michael White