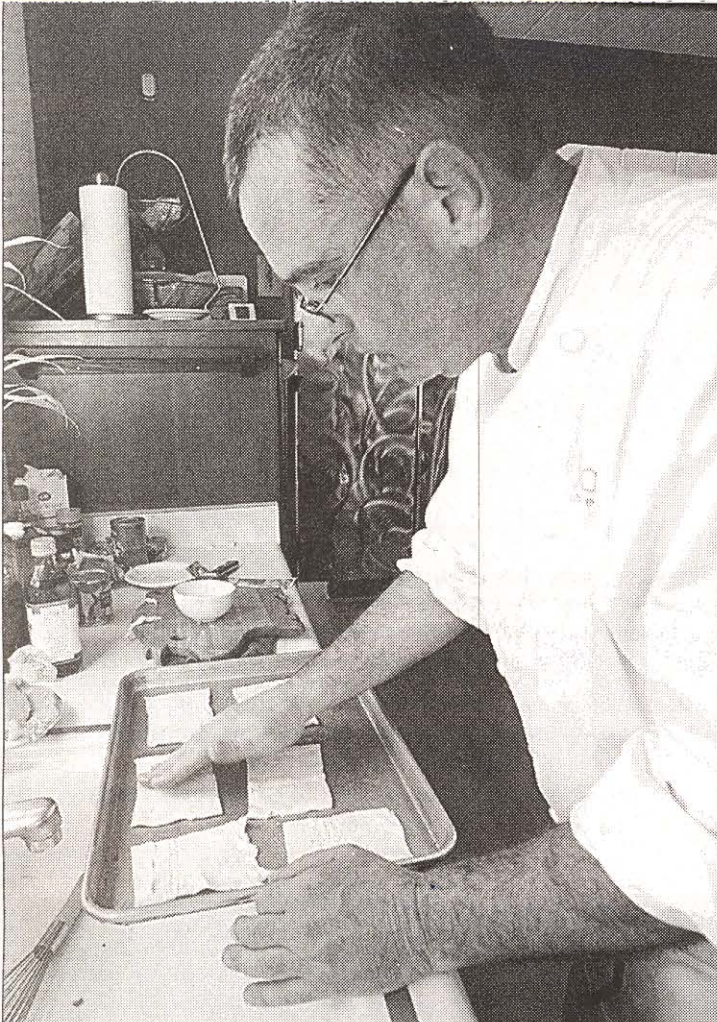


# Chefs turn up heat in Walnut Creek



## Surprise

FROM PAGE 1

"It's like a papillote," Jellison says of his foil-wrapped vegetables. "You let it all steam together, open it at the table and — Poof! — everybody gets those nice fragrances."

At the end, each foodie was asked to compare each course and pick a favorite. Then it was time for Mennes to pick a winner. Voting for the crowd favorites — Jellison's appetizer and Wall's entree — it started as a tie. It all came down to dessert.

Two of her friends had been simply flabbergasted that Wall had turned English muffins into dessert. But Mennes went with Jellison's Cherry Napoleon.

"Really classy, really elegant, really light. And when I saw him using the puff pastry I thought, 'That's awesome,'" Mennes says.

All the guests were impressed with the chefs' performance.

"I didn't know you could use cherries in this many ways," says Meribeth Wolf. "I just eat them from the stand. I never thought to cook with them. This is very, very cool."

While Wall was "banking on corn" to be the surprise ingredient, Brentwood cherries turned out to be just right for such a hot night.

## RECIPES

For more photos from this Surprise Chef and the recipes, please see **Page 10**.

"I tried to keep everything nice and light because of the day we're having," Wall says. "All of us were just sweating in there."

While summer doesn't officially begin until tomorrow night, Menne will likely remember June 13 as the hottest day of 2007.

"Luckily I had shorts on," says Menne, whose husband, Donovan, was away on business. "I have to say that I feel like I won the lottery. And I got to have my dream job of food critic for one night." Mennes is currently pursuing a culinary career.

Jellison, who's working on opening a second Havana in Alameda with owner Zack Scott next month, will return to Chefs Surprise in August. Meanwhile Wall, who took over as chef at Lark Creek late last year, retires with one solid victory and a near miss.

If you'd like a chance at being surprised by a pair of East Bay chefs, send your name, address and phone number (including a cell number) to the e-mail address below.

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