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In Recess

Meat Maven

Mitchell Tarighati offers thoughtful presentations at the dinner table and in mediations.

By Shane Nelson
Daily Journal Staff Writer

Encino mediator Mitchell Tarighati landed an unusual gift for his 12th birthday.

“My mom asked me what I wanted, and it really threw her off when I said, ‘I want a wok,’” recalled the Sepassi & Tarighati LLP co-founder.

Living at the time in the English seaside resort town of Brighton, Tarighati later accompanied his mother to pick out that first wok, a Chinese cooking vessel similar to one he’d seen on a television cooking show.

“It seemed exotic and different, and we didn’t have one in the house,” Tarighati said of the wok. “And I thought, ‘Wow, let me try that.’”

Tarighati plunged right into creating his first Chinese dishes and said those early endeavors, combined with encouragement from his mother and some instruction in middle school home economics courses, sparked his passion for food.

Today, the attorney is often dry-aging meat, making salami and pancetta, or handcrafting his own sausages.

Tarighati also makes his own sushi, his own pasta and he bakes from time to time while occasionally turning out what he described as delicious head cheese.

“I did a half-hog butchering class last year around this time for my birthday,” he said, noting that he’s surprised his wife on at least one occasion with an entire pig’s head on their kitchen counter.

Tarighati later boiled that head for several hours, infusing the concoction with a range of aromatics. Then he roughly shredded the meat, separating the good from bad before



Juliane Backmann / Special to the Daily Journal
Mitchell M. Tarighati of Sepassi & Tarighati LLP poses with his kitchen tools in his Encino office

adding cilantro, parsley, sage, lemon juice, salt and pepper. The end product was a 16-inch loaf he left in the fridge overnight.

“Then you cut it into slices,” he said of the pig’s head terrine. “You can eat it cold, you can use it as a spread, or cut it thick and sear it in some butter and have it hot.”

Santa Monica civil rights attorney Afshin Mozaffari, who’s known Tarighati since 2010, has sampled his friend’s charcuterie on several occasions.

“Mitch was a foodie before it was cool,” said Mozaffari, who later described a memorable salami tasting at Tarighati’s home.

“He cut it all right there on the spot in his kitchen with a deli slicer and paired the different salamis with beer and wine,” Mozaffari explained. “It was really, really good.”

Longtime firm partner Steven Sepassi once accepted a Tarighati sushi night invitation expecting the evening’s cuisine to be provided by

a local restaurant.

“I had no idea Mitch would be the sushi chef,” Sepassi explained. “He was actually cutting the fish, preparing the sashimi, preparing the sushi. ...It was all Mitch from A to Z, and it was just an amazing dinner experience.”

Sepassi also mentioned the thriving vegetable patch Tarighati tended at an Encino public garden on different occasions over the last five years.

“Zucchini, carrots, tomatoes, broccoli — whatever you can think of, Mitch was growing in that garden,” Sepassi reported.

“Then every so often, as if he’s coming from the old village, he would bring a huge box of fresh vegetables to our home when he’d visit,” he added. “My wife just loved it.”

Born in Iran, Tarighati moved to England at 8, living with his mother but making regular visits to his father’s home, where preparing meals developed into a practice. The future attorney relocated to the U.S.

in 1995, later earning undergraduate and master’s degrees in business before completing his law degree at Albany Law School in 2004.

A personal injury plaintiffs’ attorney as well as an educational institution defense lawyer, Tarighati added a mediation practice in 2012. He joined ADR Services Inc. in September, 2017.

“He has an excellent reputation as a mediator,” said Woodland Hills attorney P. Christopher Ardalan, adding that Tarighati is well-respected by the plaintiff and defense bars.

“The care and attention he gives to creating and presenting his meals are just a sign of his character as a person and as a mediator,” said Ardalan, who raved about a sea bass dinner he enjoyed at Tarighati’s home.

“In my experience with Mitch, he was just as charismatic, thoughtful and thorough in the mediation process as he was in the preparation and presentation of his cooking,” Ardalan added.

While mediation work has always been appealing, Tarighati said the practice area has become increasingly enjoyable over the years.

“Peacemaking and diplomacy are in my DNA,” he said.

Now the father of a 5-month-old, Tarighati admitted some elements of his cooking pastime have been relegated to the back burner, but he said new interests, such as molecular gastronomy, won’t remain unexplored for long.

“Cooking allows me to express my creativity,” he said. “I don’t draw or paint or sing or play musical instruments. ...Plating a dish is my equivalent of painting. Cutting meats and vegetables in a particular way for a dish is my way of writing a few bars of a song.”