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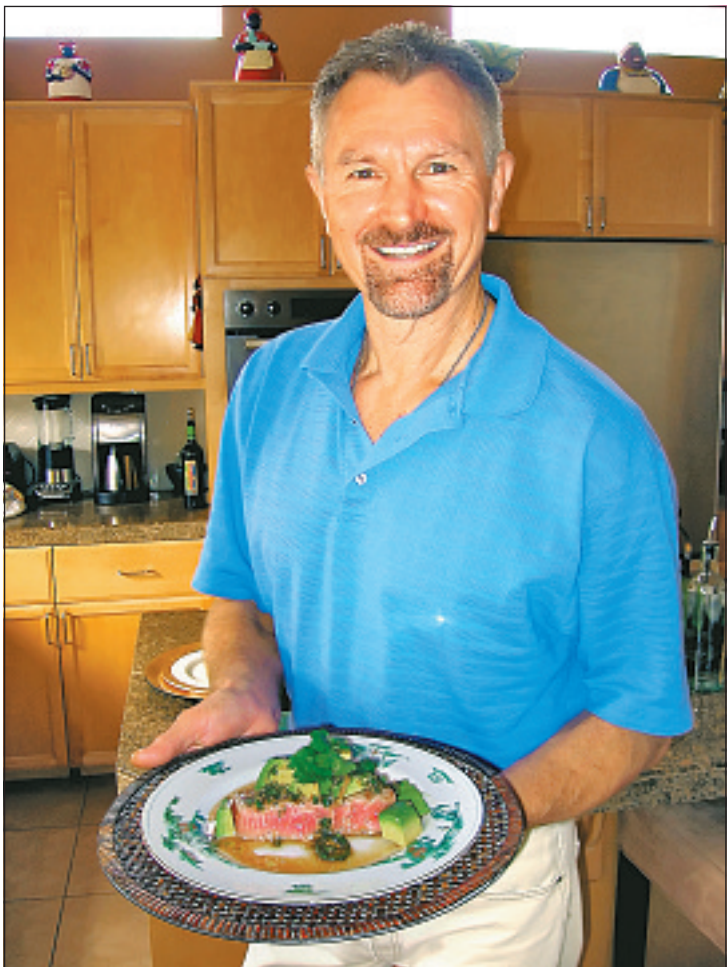
**FOOD & DRINK**  
**WHAT'S COOKING AROUND TOWN**  
**Celebrity chef is hooked on grilling**



**SUE RAPPAPORT**  
 Name: Rick Ameil  
 Home: Cathedral City, originally from Santa Cruz  
 Occupation: Restaurateur of Grill-A-Burger, 166 N. Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs, 327-8175 and 73091 Country Club Drive in Palm Desert, 346-8170.

**Favorite foods to prepare:** "I cook Indian, Italian, Chinese, Thai, French, Mexican, Middle Eastern and classic American comfort dishes. And with our wonderful climate, I barbecue year round."  
**Proudest cooking accomplishment:** Hosting his weekly television show called "I Love Cooking" seen at 4:30 p.m. Saturdays on Channel 13.

**Most memorable baking experience:** He once baked a pie for what was supposed to be a chic dinner party for friends. "I failed to notice that the canned cherries I used in the pie were not pitted. Needless to say, dessert that evening was truly the pits."  
**Favorite part of owning a restaurant:** "It's like having a dinner party every day. I enjoy visiting with the customers and hearing compliments knowing that we're putting out a great product."  
**Interesting tidbit:** His mom has won nearly 3,000 ribbons for baked-good entries in the Santa Cruz County Fair.



Rick Ameil displays a plate of Asian Grilled Tuna with Avocado.

**What people don't know:** He worked for 30 years in the non-profit sector. He is preparing to launch the Academy of Culinary Arts and Sciences, a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to fostering, promoting, encouraging and inspiring appreciation for the culinary arts

**and food sciences.**  
**Act of kindness:** He prepares a home-cooked meal for employees and friends who otherwise would be alone during the holidays.  
**Customers' favorites:** Cheeseburger, homemade French fries and Cobb salad.  
**Restaurant preference:** Shame on

the Moon in Rancho Mirage.

**Asian Grilled Tuna with Avocado**

**Serves 4**  
 For vinaigrette:  
 4 handfuls fresh cilantro, finely chopped  
 1 fresh jalapeño pepper, sliced  
 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger  
 2 cloves garlic, finely minced  
 Juice of 4 limes  
 1/4 cup soy sauce  
 1/4 teaspoon sugar  
 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil  
**Instructions:** To make vinaigrette: Whisk together all ingredients until well combined. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste.  
 For tuna:  
 4 (6 ounce) blocks Ahi tuna or other sushi-quality tuna  
 4 ripe Haas avocados, halved, peeled, pitted and sliced  
 Cilantro sprigs, for garnish  
 To make tuna and serve:  
 Preheat outdoor gas or charcoal grill. Season tuna generously with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper. Brush grill lightly with olive oil. Place tuna steaks on hot grill and sear for 1 minute per side to form a slight crust. Drizzle the fish with a few tablespoons of the vinaigrette. Transfer fish to plates and serve with sliced avocado. Drizzle with some of the remaining vinaigrette and serve the rest on the side. Garnish with springs of cilantro.

**Sue Rappaport** is a freelance writer in Rancho Mirage. To recommend someone for this feature, e-mail [whatscooking4u@hotmail.com](mailto:whatscooking4u@hotmail.com)

**Roll up a versatile, Asian-inspired meal**

**BY BILL DALEY**  
 CHICAGO TRIBUNE  
 Microwaving is one of the newest cooking methods yet it has much in common with two of the most ancient, steaming and poaching. With a covered plate and a little liquid, the microwave oven cooks food fast without burning or drying it out.



These Asian-inspired chicken rolls can be served hot or cold.

These Asian-inspired chicken rolls can be served hot, cold or room temperature. If a peanut butter-based sauce doesn't appeal to you, try a little hoisin sauce instead.

Feel free to improvise with both filling and sauce, shifting from country to country for inspiration. Make it French with mushroom duxelles, fresh tarragon and a dab of Hollandaise. Or, go Spanish with diced ham, chopped green olives and a drizzle of olive oil.

**Asian Chicken Roll-Ups**  
**Preparation time: 10 minutes.**  
**Cooking time: 6 minutes. Serves 4**  
 4 boneless, skinless, chicken breast halves  
 4 green onions, cut into 1/2-inch lengths  
 2 jalapeños, seeded, sliced

2 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 piece (1/2-inch long) fresh ginger, minced  
 2 teaspoons each: soy sauce, toasted sesame oil  
 2 tablespoons dry sherry or white wine  
 Sauce:  
 1/2 cup peanut butter, preferably

all-natural  
 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil  
 1 teaspoon red chili paste  
 1/4 cup water, optional  
 4 To 5 sprigs cilantro, chopped  
 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds  
**Instructions:** Pound chicken breasts to flatten; set aside.

Combine the green onions, jalapenos, garlic, ginger, soy sauce and sesame oil in a small bowl; divide the mixture evenly among the four chicken pieces. Roll up each breast; secure with toothpick or tie with string.

Pour sherry into microwaveable container; add chicken rolls. Cover; cook the chicken rolls on high (100 percent power), rotating the container occasionally if needed, until cooked through, about 5 minutes. Let the rolls rest 1 minute before serving.

Meanwhile for sauce, stir together the peanut butter, sesame oil and chili paste in a small bowl; add water to thin to desired consistency, if necessary. Drizzle sauce over rolls; garnish with the cilantro and sesame seeds.

**Note:** To toast sesame seeds, heat in a small, dry skillet over medium heat. Cook, shaking occasionally, until seeds brown, about 3 minutes.

Nutrition information per serving: 408 calories, 57 percent of calories from fat, 27 g fat, 5 g saturated fat, 73 mg cholesterol, 9 g carbohydrates, 36 g protein, 445 mg sodium, 3 g fiber

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