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Yan Can Cook at the Library

By Cathy Tyson



Celebrity Chef Martin Yan informs and entertains at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Photo courtesy Stephanie L. Jan

after spoonful of hot sauce to the dish, he said "This is ridiculously hot - I cook, you eat."

He had fans in stitches as he demonstrated how to de-bone a chicken in 18 seconds flat. "Emeril (Lagasse) can do it in 18 minutes," Yan teased. After building up to the moment of truth, explaining that you need to relax your chicken first, he really did de-bone it in 18 seconds - a very challenging task for the home cook.

Attendee Kathy Mosher commented, "He's a showman and a wonderful chef." She and a friend thoroughly enjoyed the event, although they weren't sure if they would sign up for the trip to China.

How did organizers manage to arrange for rock star chef Martin Yan to make an appearance at the suburban Library? Kathy Merchant, President of the Library Foundation said that Gloria Gee, the Program Coordinator of the Diablo Valley Chinese Cultural Association, helped underwrite the program.

Throughout the joking and interaction with the audience, Yan was very gracious, "It's an honor and privilege to be here tonight."

Originally from Guangzhou, China, Yan started cooking at 13-years-old in his uncle's restaurant in Hong Kong. He eventually came to California, by way of Calgary, Canada, where he pursued a Master's Degree at UC Davis in food science. He hosted a cooking show on a local PBS affiliate - and the rest is history.

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A standing-room only crowd greeted energetic celebrity chef Martin Yan at a sold out event at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center for a cooking demonstration, tasting and advice. Yan has accumulated a food related empire that includes three restaurants, Yan Can Cook - the iconic Asian cooking show, recipe books and kitchen knives that bear his name, a consulting business, and "gourmet adventure" Asian culinary tours.

While Yan demonstrated how to prepare a couple of dishes and to debone a chicken, the audience ate up his cooking tips, signature sense of humor, and the complimentary lo mein noodles and Chinese chicken salad. His appearance is part of the Glenn Seaborg Learning Consortium Series, and was a fundraiser for the Library Foundation. A percentage of the profits from cookbook and accessory sales were donated.

"How can you gain weight with this - holding up a sliver of bell pepper. His bubbly and downright funny monologue was punctuated with comments about portion size - "enough meat to feed four villages in China."

As he prepared Shangri La Beef on stage, he said, "This beef been in my fridge four months already - I save it for you." Adding spoonful