

COUNTRY

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Hail to the Chef

From Nashville to Hollywood, the stars can't stop raving about chef **Tim Creehan's** creations.



Amy Grant usually collaborates on tunes, but today it's a tuna! Amy and chef Tim Creehan, author of the cookbook *Simple Cuisine*, make seared Tuna Rare Won Ton look easy indeed.

The stars are well accustomed to fan mail – but when it comes to chef Tim Creehan, it's the celebrities who are doing the writing.

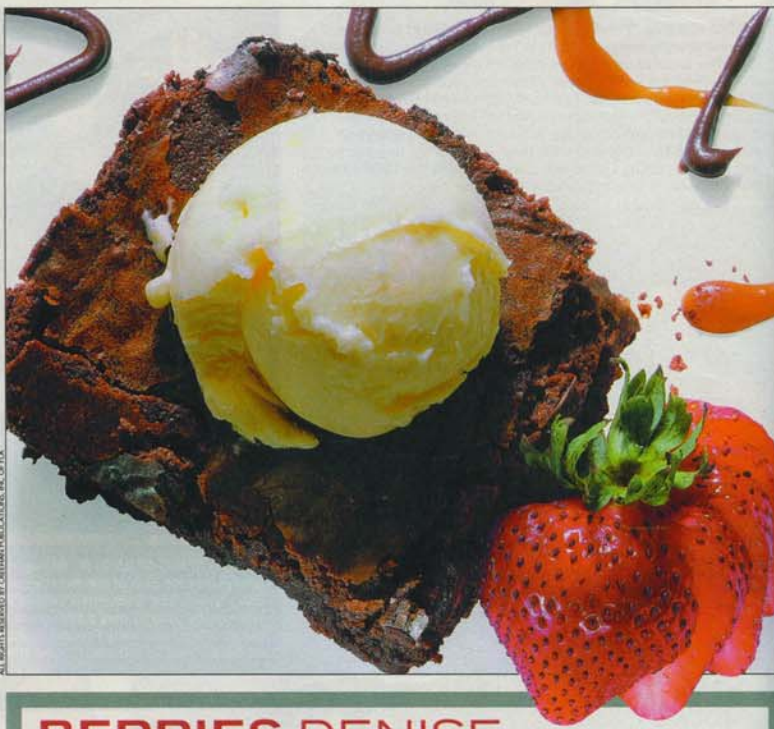
Just ask Amy Grant, Vince Gill, Tammy Cochran and Hollywood's Bruce Willis and Cybill Shepherd. To them, he's as much an artist with food as they are in the entertainment world.

Tim, the executive chef and owner of the Beach Walk Café in Destin, Fla., began his impressive culinary career in Baton Rouge when he was just 14. And he's been dazzling palates ever since – including those at Vince and Amy's wedding reception in 2000, where Amy requested that he cater something "simple and easy."

The menu? Seared Tuna Rare Won Ton, a Caesar-salad bar and Amy's favorite – tomato, basil and mozzarella salad. (Tim actually made the mozzarella cheese in Amy's backyard!) Perhaps not so simple or easy, but the guests raved, as did Vince and Amy.

"You have a gift," Amy later wrote to Tim. "Thank you for sharing it with us."

In fact, so many folks discovered that Vince and Amy had dined at the Beach Walk Café several weeks earlier that they started coming into the



BERRIES DENISE

INGREDIENTS

- 3 sticks butter
- 2 tablespoons espresso grounds
- 1½ lbs. broken dark chocolate
- 6 eggs
- ¾ cups flour
- 2¼ cups sugar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 12 small scoops vanilla ice cream
- Caramel sauce
- Chocolate sauce
- 12 fanned strawberries

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350° and spray a 9x12-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Combine butter, espresso grounds and chocolate in a double boiler. Heat 'til butter and chocolate melt, stirring to mix well. Combine next four ingredients in a mixing bowl and mix well. Add chocolate mixture gradually, stirring constantly until smooth. Pour into baking dish. Bake for 25 minutes. Cool on wire rack. Cut into squares and place on microwave-safe plates. Microwave on high for one minute to reheat. Top brownies with ice cream and drizzle with caramel sauce and chocolate sauce. Garnish with strawberries.

Chef Tim Creehan's desserts are among the reasons celebrities flock to his Beach Walk Café in Destin, Fla. – and eventually persuaded him to start sharing his secrets in a cookbook.



restaurant asking for what Vince and Amy had. To make it easier on his staff, the chef renamed their dishes for them – Amy's Tuna Won Tons and Grouper Vince!

The chef has earned kudos for his creations such as sautéed red snapper and Oriental Mango Duck, which are included in his first cookbook, *Flavors of the Gulf Coast*. His latest effort, *Simple Cuisine*, features a

special dessert inspired by his sister Denise, who raved about a dessert she'd had in Atlanta. Tim created his own version from her description, and called it Berries Denise.

To order Tim's books or his Grill Plus sauces, call (888) 457-4735 or visit his website at chefsgrillplus.com.

— Bob Paxman