

SEARAY

LIVING®

SEARAY *zest*



The Thrill of the Grill

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A BOY SCOUT TO EARN YOUR BARBECUE MERIT BADGE. PREPARATION IS THE KEY TO THRILLING GRILLING

BY LINDA A. ULLIAN • PHOTOS BY STEVEN J. CONWAY



Firing up the grill is a wonderful way to capture the essence of late-summer and early-fall entertaining. The days are a little shorter, the temperature less warm and the pace a little slower as we begin the march toward winter hibernation. This is a perfect time to entertain on your Sea Ray or at the dock after a day of cruising, skiing or relaxing at the water's edge.

Tim Creehan, owner and chef of Beach Walk Café in Destin, Florida, shared the grill with me at Sea Ray's July Rendezvous in Cambridge, Maryland. He taught me loads of great ideas for making grilling truly thrilling, and I would like to share these with you. The grills of Dynamic Cooking Systems (DCS) were highlighted in the shrimp cook-off and in preparing delicious, lip-smacking shrimp, pork and beef seasoned with Grill Plus products created by Chef Creehan. You, too, can be a barbecue thriller and the envy of your boating pals by using these suggestions.

Before putting the food on, make sure to clean the grill thoroughly and pre-heat for 15

minutes. Also, double-check the propane level in the canister to make sure you won't run out halfway through cooking. I know firsthand: this does not lead to happy guests. Always light the grill with the lid open and never use below decks, only topside or on the dock. Tim further cautions, "When the boat is at anchor or underway, special attention should be given to items rolling or falling off the grill, and never leave a grill unattended while cooking."

Since most of us want hassle-free, time-saving entertaining on our boats, Tim has some suggestions. "Always do most of the washing, cutting, trimming and chopping in advance. These steps are the most time- and space-consuming. When possible, prep any sauces, dressing, marinades or mixtures at home. But stop at a point in the recipe where the quality would be diminished if prepared too far in advance. You may find that you do two parts of a recipe separately and marry them on the boat when ready to serve."

Meats, seafood and vegetables all can be

marinated ahead in zip-top bags. It is much better to have the food oiled and marinated versus coating the grill rack with oil, as it leads to fewer flare-ups. When basting meats or seafood, use a heat-proof grill brush so the bristles will not burn. I am also never without long-handled tongs, forks and heat-proof mitts for my hands.

The last thing you want to happen after all the fun of grilling, eating and being merry is to have any of your guests or family get ill from incorrectly prepared or stored food. Tim suggests you know the danger zones for temperature. "Cold food should be kept below 45 degrees and hot food above 140 degrees," he says. "Any food kept in between these temperatures for any long period of time should be discarded. I personally like to see all fish, shellfish and chicken bagged and iced to keep as close as possible to frozen right up to cooking time."

Two really fun ways to prepare vegetables for grilling are to either skewer them or wrap them in aluminum foil packets. A variety of colorful and tasty vegetables can be cut into large chunks, threaded on wooden skewers, then marinated and grilled. Think about using eggplant, zucchini, yellow squash, red onions, green onions, peeled sweet potatoes, radicchio and cherry tomatoes. Soak wooden skewers overnight in water and turn often. To roast in aluminum foil, simply place your vegetables in the center of a 12" x 12" square of heavy-duty aluminum foil, dot with butter or olive oil, season and seal. *Voilà*, you have succulent roasted vegetables that can be served right in the foil packet for easy clean-up.

Finally, when the party is over and the chill of the night slowly wraps itself around you, clean-up and storage of the grill is quite easy. Tim suggests, "Simply disconnect the gas source, clean the grates and drip pans and allow the grill to cool completely. Store in a sturdy waterproof box or canvas bag and place it below decks or in your dock box for the next party." 58