



CRUNCH TIME

THE MILLS FAMILY FÊTES A DELICIOUS DYNASTY.

Words and styling by ELLIOTT SHAFFNER
Photos by FREDERICK TURKO

With colorful Chinese lanterns artfully arranged in the trees, a freshly mowed lawn and hopeful hearts, Anya and John Mills had everything in place for a Pinterest-worthy outdoor fête. It was the launch party for Crunch Dynasty, their family's culinary legacy. The weather forecast had been tenuous all week, with its promise/suggestion/denial of rain. As the sky opened up with great force at the eleventh hour, an executive decision was made to move the event indoors. →



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Tasting Party

May 15, 2014

- Raw oysters on the half shell
- Flaming deviled eggs & Chinese tea eggs
- Chicken salad on assorted crackers
- Roasted potato leek soup
- Chinese noodles
- Napa cabbage salad
- Cucumber & radish salad
- Macaroni + cheese
- Lollipop lamb chops

RIDE THE TONGUE TIGER.

牙周病
人工植牙專家

SMILEY DENTAL
姚克誠 牙醫





[Top]
Shiu-min Block enjoys her signature crunch topping with an American chicken salad.

[Middle]
Scott Culpepper and Susan Versen catch up while sampling Crunch Dynasty on everything from raw oysters to mac 'n' cheese.

[Bottom]
Yanci Wu serves an assortment of deviled eggs and Chinese tea eggs accented with Crunch Dynasty.

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ot that anyone noticed. Instead, the focus was on the food. Overheard about midway through the evening was Anya's mom, Shiu-min Block, with her soft-as-a-sigh voice, somehow tuning out the laughter, conversation and soundtrack of the party, imparting the words that defined the evening: "The Crunch really shines tonight."

The "crunch" she is referring to is Crunch Dynasty, the Asian-inspired hot (and crunchy) topping that's a blend of garlic, shallots, soy sauce, sesame seeds, hot peppers, special seasonings and oils that transcends category. Block, the creator of the exotic, crunchy, palate-igniting recipe, made sure there was always a gracious plenty of the stuff in the family kitchen to sprinkle atop the authentic Chinese dishes she prepared for her family.

After John came into Anya's life, he fell in love with both her and the family Crunch. He realized it enhanced everything from mac 'n' cheese to sushi, and beautifully elevated the humble egg. After a decade of struggle to re-create the recipe himself — unsuccessfully — Block felt John had finally earned his chops and proved his loyalty to the Dynasty, and she shared with him her recipe.

In 2010, the Millses started making large batches to share with family and friends. The response was overwhelmingly positive, and they began the long process of creating a brand as unique as the product itself. Though the couple is new to the food business, both have professional backgrounds in marketing and advertising: Anya is an art producer with the Martin Agency, and John is the owner of brand marketing firm Release the Hounds. →



CHINESE EGG NOODLES WITH CUCUMBER AND RADISH SALAD

CHINESE EGG NOODLES WITH CUCUMBER AND RADISH SALAD

BY SHIU-MIN BLOCK
[Serves approximately 6]

INGREDIENTS

- 14 ounces to 1 pound of Chinese egg noodles, fresh
- 1 large cucumber, julienned or shredded
- 8-10 radishes, julienned or shredded
- 2/3 cup of soy sauce
- 1/3 cup of white wine vinegar or cider vinegar
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 3 tablespoons of sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
- 2-3 sprigs of fresh cilantro for garnish
- Crunch Dynasty, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook the noodles in boiling water for 2 to 4 minutes, testing frequently so that they don't overcook; you want them slightly al dente. Drain well and toss with 2 tablespoons of the sesame oil and all of the vegetable oil. Mix well and set aside in a large bowl.
2. For the dressing, combine the soy sauce, vinegar, 1 tablespoon of the sesame oil and garlic together in a small jar with a lid. Shake well.
3. Place the noodles, radishes and cucumber into three separate bowls and transfer them to the fridge to chill for at least one hour (up to 2 days ahead).
4. To serve, transfer the noodles to a large serving dish and layer with the cucumber and radish. Spoon the dressing over the noodles. Top with cilantro and a generous sprinkle of Crunch Dynasty.



[From left] John and Anya Mills, Anya's brother, Ezra Block, and their parents, Shiu-min and David Block, celebrate the success of the spicy topping that has been a fixture at the family dinner table for generations.

First, they successfully got the recipe tested and approved — in addition to the label and package design — through the food lab at North Carolina State University and the Department of Agriculture. After eight months of selling Crunch Dynasty online, the Mills are now ready for their close-up.

“Our push now is to create partnerships with local retail and try to grow the brand locally,” Anya says. “Richmond has really become a sophisticated and experimental culinary community.” Crunch Dynasty is now being sold at Whole Foods in Charlottesville and Richmond, Libbie Market, Yellow Umbrella, Harvest Gro-

cery & Supply, Saison Market and Little House Green Grocery. That's a pretty good reason to party.

As the sunny afternoon slipped into the cool rain of the evening, family and friends filled the warmly lit house, and the sounds of Hall & Oates spilled from the speakers. Guests sipped drinks as they sampled Crunch Dynasty topping everything from Chinese tea eggs to roasted potato leek soup, from raw oysters on the half shell to grilled lamb chops. “So far, we've received a lot of support and excitement about Crunch Dynasty, and that invigorates us to keep pushing it,” says Anya.

Rain? Not with all that shine.

FLAMING DEVILED EGGS

BY EZRA BLOCK
[Makes 1 dozen]

INGREDIENTS

- 6 eggs
- 1/4 cup of mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon of white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon of yellow mustard
- 1/8 teaspoon of salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Smoked Spanish paprika
- Crunch Dynasty, to taste

DIRECTIONS

- Place the eggs in a single layer in a saucepan and cover with water until it's about 1 1/2 inches above the eggs. Heat on high until the water begins to boil, then cover, turn the heat to low and cook for 1 minute. Remove from the heat and leave the eggs covered for 14 minutes, then rinse them under cold water continuously for 1 minute.
- Crack the eggs carefully and peel them under cool running water. Gently dry with paper towels. Slice the eggs in half lengthwise. Remove the yolks and place in a medium bowl and arrange the whites on a serving platter. Using a fork, mash the yolks into a fine crumble. Add the mayonnaise, vinegar, mustard, salt and pepper, and mix well.
- Evenly disperse heaping teaspoons of the yolk mixture into the egg. Arrange on plate. Sprinkle with smoked paprika and with Crunch Dynasty and serve.

MARINATED CHINESE TEA EGGS

BY SHIU-MIN BLOCK
[Makes 1 dozen]

INGREDIENTS

- 6 peeled hard-boiled eggs

For the marinade:

- 4-5 cups of water
- 5 slices of fresh ginger
- 3-4 fresh scallions
- 4 pieces of star anise
- 1/2 cup of dark soy sauce
- 1/2 cup of regular soy sauce

Crunch Dynasty to taste

DIRECTIONS

- To make the marinade: Heat a medium saucepan on high, and add the water, scallions, ginger, star anise and both kinds of soy sauce. Bring the marinade to a boil and add the peeled hard-boiled eggs. Simmer for about 20 minutes.
- Turn off the heat and allow the eggs to rest in marinade for about 2 hours.
- Remove the eggs from the marinade and allow to cool. (Make sure you pat the eggs dry at least 30 minutes before serving.) Cut the eggs in half lengthwise and place on a large platter. Sprinkle generously with Crunch Dynasty.



FLAMING DEVILED EGGS

MARINATED CHINESE TEA EGGS



CHICKEN SALAD

CHICKEN SALAD
BY ASHLEY HADEED

- INGREDIENTS**
- 2 bone-in, skin-on chicken breasts
 - 2 tablespoons of fresh lemon juice
 - 2 tablespoons of white vinegar
 - 2 stalks of celery, diced
 - 1/2 red pepper, diced
 - 1/2 yellow pepper, diced
 - 2 tablespoons of chopped fresh parsley
 - 1/4 cup of green olives with pimento, diced
 - 2 tablespoons of grated onion
 - 1 cup of mayonnaise
 - 2 tablespoons of mustard
 - 2 tablespoons butter, softened
 - Salt and pepper, to taste
 - Crackers
 - Crunch Dynasty, to taste

- DIRECTIONS**
1. Combine the lemon and vinegar in a medium bowl. Wash the chicken breasts and add them to the bowl for a few minutes. Rinse. Remove and place the chicken breasts in a large saucepan and add enough water to cover. Bring it all to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat and cover, simmering until the chicken is no longer pink and the temperature is 170 degrees. This will take about 30 minutes.
 2. Remove the chicken from the liquid; cool and shred. Add the celery, red pepper, yellow pepper, parsley, green olives with pimento and grated onion. Stir in the mayonnaise and mustard and then mix the soft butter with the contents of the bowl at the end. Add salt and pepper to taste. Spread the chicken salad on crackers, and sprinkle liberally with Crunch Dynasty before serving.



[Top]
Anya Mills, a producer at the Martin Agency, enjoys sharing the legacy of Crunch Dynasty with friends in Richmond.

[Middle]
Friend and Crunch Dynasty publicist Carrie Nieman Culpepper

[Bottom]
Ruby Mills enjoys a plate of her grandmother's noodles topped with the Crunch.



CHINESE NOODLES WITH MEAT SAUCE

CHINESE NOODLES WITH MEAT SAUCE (ZACHAING MEIN)
BY SHIU-MIN BLOCK
[Serves approximately 6]

- INGREDIENTS**
- 1 pound of ground pork or beef
 - 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
 - 3-4 slices of fresh ginger, finely diced
 - 2-3 fresh scallions finely diced
 - 1 large yellow onion, finely diced
 - 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
 - 3/4 cups of hoisin sauce
 - 1 tablespoon of sesame oil
 - 3 tablespoons of soy sauce
 - Fresh or dry pasta

DIRECTIONS
For the sauce:
Heat a large saucepan on high heat. When it is very hot, add the scallions and ginger, and stir for one minute. Then add the onion, stirring for two minutes. Add the ground pork or beef, stirring for five minutes. When the ingredients are mixed well, add the soy sauce and hoisin sauce. Stir for two minutes, then add the garlic. Cook for 15-20 minutes, adding a bit of water if needed.

For the pasta:
1. Bring a large pot of water to boil and add the pasta. If using fresh noodles, add a bit of cold water at the same time as the noodles. When the water comes to a boil again, the noodles will be done. Remove from the heat and rinse the noodles under cold water. Drain completely. If using you're using dry noodles, follow the package instructions. Drain completely.
2. Add sesame oil to the meat sauce, toss it with the noodles and serve. ❖