

Sudoku | Answer, Page 4

1		6		5	9			
	2	8				1		
9	5	3		2				
2		4			6			3
5	3	1		4		2	8	6
6			3			5		4
				7		9	3	1
		5				4	2	
				9		8		5

HOW TO PLAY: Fill in the squares so that each row, each column and each 3-by-3 block contains each digit from 1 to 9. Use each numeral only once.

GRILL

FROM PAGE 1

summer grill segment.

"They conducted phone interviews and ultimately selected me as a contestant," Pikus said.

The show was shot April 24 in the outdoor kitchen on Sunset Magazine's resort-

style campus in Palo Alto, Calif. The winner would receive a \$1,000 grand prize to a home décor store — and, of course, bragging rights.

Producers revealed the show's theme to Pikus and his competitors: preparing a grilled summer meal.

According to Pikus, making tasty food over charcoal was totally in his comfort zone.

"I have formidable grill skills," he said, "which gave me an advantage over the other contenders."

Pikus, dad of three kids ages 2 to 6 and husband to Amy, owns an insurance agency and peddles a signature line of barbecue products, Grill Side Barbecue Sauces. No stranger to competition or the camera, the former sportscaster has entered barbecue contests and his sauces have won ribbons, including second place in the 2012 American Royal Tomato Hot Sauce category.

In addition, Pikus is the spokesman and trade show chef for Wilton Armatale Gourmet Grillware, a handcrafted collection of grill-to-table platters and vessels.

In "Home Chef Showdown," Pikus was pitted against Keller from Richmond, Va., and Tamar Poysner of Keasby, N.J. During the all-day taping, the show's host, chef Ryan Scott, had a few surprises for the trio — a common ingredient on reality cooking shows.

"Our first test involved

summer cocktails," Pikus said. "A bowl of ice was the mystery ingredient."

Pikus and his two competitors had eight minutes to develop an original, eye- and palate-pleasing drink using items in the set's stocked pantry. When the clock ran out, Pikus presented his creation, a Purple Berry Bomb made with fresh berries, blue curacao and ice, to Scott, a Bravo "Top Chef" contestant in 2008.

"Ryan couldn't taste the alcohol and eliminated from winning the initial challenge," Pikus said. "In retrospect, I wish I would've strained all the berries."

Keller won round one with her Berry Spicy drink, earning her the right to choose the ingredient hidden underneath three domes for the 60-minute main dish challenge. Declining the bass, Keller chose a rack of ribs and Poyser got chicken.

Despite Pikus' disappointment in being handed his least favorite grilling item, he quickly designed a game plan.

"At first I thought about filleting the fish, but one requirement for the challenge was family-style," Pikus said. "I smothered the fish with my sauce, kind of like a marinade."

Unlike other television cooking shows, each contestant was allowed to bring his or her own secret weapon from home. Pikus toted a bottle of Grill Side sauce

from Overland Park, which he slathered over the black bass prior to plopping it on the Weber grill.

"I was concerned I might overcook it, so I got one side crispy and flipped it," Pikus said, admitting that the final round was a stomach-churning hour.

Pikus created sides for his meal, including corn on the cob still in the husk; a vegetable salad drizzled with balsamic vinaigrette; and grilled bread with herbed butter and a sprinkling of cheese. He also concocted a fresh fruit salsa and spooned it atop the grilled bass.

Judges for the home chefs' culinary creations, Chris Koetke, a cooking instructor and TV show host, and Margo True, food editor of Sunset Magazine, scrutinized the contestants' dishes. They complimented Pikus' fish, but didn't like the mango salsa that overpowered the bass's crispy skin.

Following the judges' deliberation, the friendly competition had a surprising conclusion: Pikus and Poysner tied for first place.

"I didn't win hands down and I didn't lose," Pikus laughed. "I was proud to accomplish what I wanted to, and that was compete for my family."

Will Pikus prepare a whole grilled fish on his home grill this summer?

"Maybe, but I would have to cut the head off. I don't think my kids would like that."

REMEMBRANCES

DONALD "DON" JENKINS

Donald "Don" Jenkins, 75, Spring Hill, KS passed June 19, 2014. Service was June 24, Bruce Funeral Home, 913-592-2244. Visitation: 5pm before the service. Memorial cont: Deanna Rose Children's Farmstead.

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