

“Cooking in the West”

Guest blog written by Susan Metcalf of the Lower Deer Creek Ranch, Big Timber, MT.

Dated: Saturday, May 16, 2009, 10:10 AM,

As I write this, my fingers are shaking so badly I can barely type. I am more terrified than I have ever been in a car wreck or a horse wreck. Why? Because next Saturday, **Anthony Bourdain** is coming to our ranch!

OK--I admit I didn't know who Anthony Bourdain was until this morning or I never would have agreed to this lunacy. Just 24 short hours ago, we were scheduled to brand next Saturday. Into this mundane plan, entered our ranch vacation booking agent, Karen Searle of **Montana Bunkhouses**. Doing business with Karen is like living in a spontaneous tornado. She had booked Christine, a 38 year old German lady, and Brandon, an 18 year old boy from Tennessee, to come for branding. That arrangement seemed challenging enough, but then an opportunity for stardom knocked, and Karen answered.

Now, branding has been postponed a few days, because our ranch vacations are going to be filmed for airing on the Travel Channel's show "**No Reservations**" hosted by Anthony Bourdain. When I agreed to it, it sounded kind of harmless and fun!

You see, I never actually get to hold the remote, so I don't get to watch cooking shows unless they happen to be on ESPN or RFDTV. Therefore, my nervous breakdown was triggered when I Googled "Anthony Bourdain".

He is a celebrity chef who was recently featured in *Time* magazine, he has his own cooking show, he has traveled the world, and he of course writes books. (Which I will have to read this week in my spare time!) He seems to delight in mocking Rachel Ray. My heart began to pound and I couldn't feel my extremities as I read on. He has eaten seals in the Arctic and cobras in Viet Nam. The worst things he has eaten were fermented shark in Iceland and warthog rectum in Namibia. I wouldn't even be able to find Namibia on the map!

Apparently this is what happened in Namibia according to Google. "Anthony Bourdain suffered quietly as he dined on wart hog--encrusted with sand, fur and fecal bacteria--in the African country of Namibia. Bourdain, host of the Travel Channel's 'No Reservations,' finished the meal knowing he would become terribly ill. But who was he to complain as a VIP guest of the same arid landscape where Angelina Jolie delivered Brad Pitt's baby? Spitting out nasty bits of wart hog would be rude to the locals he was dining with. 'The chief is there in front of his whole tribe offering you his very best,' Bourdain said. 'Show respect. I'm lucky to be there. I'm lucky to see that. I'm lucky to have that experience. Chewing some antibiotics is a small price to pay'."

That actually made me feel a little better. I am sure some Rocky Mountain oysters, beef rib eyes, morel mushrooms, spuds, and raspberry pie will slide down easier than wart hog in fecal sauce. However, the antibiotics might still be a good idea just in case!

Not only do we have to feed Anthony breakfast and lunch--shall I call him Tony?--so many questions--but we have to take him riding through the cattle and let him try his hand at roping all between 8:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. according to his tight schedule.

I really don't know if my heart is strong enough to survive the anticipation of his visit. Maybe I should just have the food catered. Maybe we should buy a different house or at least new silverware. How can I lose 40 pounds or who should I get to play my part? All of these thoughts are reeling in my mind. I think I am having a stage 5 anxiety attack if there is such a thing!

If we all survive next Saturday, you will hear all about it in this column! If I don't survive, I am sure Karen will find someone to play my part and maybe even write this column! Wish us luck,

[Note: Susan's article will be featured this week in her regular column for the *Western Ag Reporter* entitled "**Cooking in the West.**" Be watching for the next installment!]