

## The Secret to Weight Loss: Fine Dining

By Claude Ducloux, Hill, DUCLoux, CARNES & DELA GARZA

*Editor's Note: In spring of this year, Claude Ducloux, who has written his award-winning "Entre Nous" column since 1992, traveled the State as a Candidate for State Bar President. Under State Bar rules, the Austin Lawyer was prohibited from publishing his normal Entre Nous column in our March issue. Here's what you missed:*

**E**very year, we all face the New Year with two questions: 1) What will the New Year bring? 2) Where did all these extra pounds come from?

Like all typically stressed-out lawyers, I seek refuge in the easy comfort of calories. Yes, I exercise and try to be smart, but nevertheless, in December, our offices and homes are overflowing with holiday goodies, candies, treats and temptations. So what's an m&m here and there? The occasional cookie? Half of a pie eaten with a spoon? Nothing, right? Surprisingly, though, a 4,000 calorie-a-day diet isn't good for you unless

you're like Brad Houston, or Andy Austin, who burn that up daily in their early morning bike rides. (Have I told you I hate them?)

But Ladies and Gentlemen, I have found the secret to weight loss. Now, it's not a diet just anyone can do. It requires fine taste, and a degree of financial success usually reserved for platinum cardholders during the good ol' days before the credit card companies took over management of the bankruptcy courts. Now, every subprime schlub gets force-fed 12 platinum card offers per week. Yet, when they can't pay (which was predictable as the crashworthiness of the Ford Pinto adorning their driveway), they're told to go get credit counseling and consolidation loans. "Discover the Power of Credit!" Yeah. And wear goggles. What a joke. But I digress.

Yes, to really lose weight, Americans love to spend lots and lots of money. Apparently, it's much easier to buy a diet plan than simply exercise self-control. And don't you just love the ads?

"Pay \$500 for 30 days of the LA County Weight Loss Plan! (Food not included)." Excuse me, just what am I buying? Air? Does an angry Ukrainian named Svetlana show up and say, "If you eat 'zat, I will keel you."? Is that where the money goes? No, this newest plan is for the super-wealthy, and apparently involves nothing more than constant, gourmet dining in our chi-chi-est restaurants. Allow me to explain.

In return for a legal favor I did for someone, we received a lovely gift certificate for a sizeable sum to dine at one of Austin's gourmet restaurants. I won't mention the name, but it might rhyme with "Snoot." So, Susan and I made reservations for Saturday night, and showed up, ready to be "amazed." (ugh. Talk about your overused adjective... As you know, everything today is "amazing" from movies to toilet tissue).

At any rate, while we looked over the menu, we chose a lovely Australian wine. Trying to keep it real, it was in the mid-thir-

ties in price. The waiter sniffed his acquiescence with a raised eyebrow, and disappeared, apparently to plant the grapes. When he finally re-appeared, my beard had visibly grown, and we unscrewed the metal cap on our chosen vintage, and ordered our salads and entrees. Okay, the wine was good. Really. By now, however, we had been there for a long time, and not having ordered an \$18 appetizer, were anxiously awaiting food. Ahh... finally. The waiter appears, carrying two platters the size of chariot wheels. On these, we quickly learned, was hidden our salads. I looked down at the two pieces of soft bib lettuce and one half of a caramelized pecan with the slice of mince in disbelief. I looked at Susan, back at my salad... back at Susan. We both started laughing. The two pieces of bib lettuce couldn't have fed an anorexic bunny. The pecan was good. "Could you bring us a little bread, please?" The waiter replied, "Certainly, sir," as he carefully placed a single nugget-sized roll on the plate. I'm feeling lighter already.

Have no fear, however. We've ordered steak, I reminded her, rubbing my hands together in anticipation. If we can last that long. By this time, the remainder of wine is sloshing around the bottoms of our out-sized glasses. Aha, I see the waiter approaching, this time with plates the size of giant woks. As he lays them down, and whispers the mandatory, "Enjoy!" I begin to panic. Where is the meat? It's under that poker-chip of béchamel-wine-

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reduction-curry-flave-o-flave sauce. It looks like a briquette. Susan gives me the stern look that reminds me why I fear her. "But," I protest, "we serve our cat more than this twice a day!" Truly, those tiny little cans of Fancy Feast easily could hold our entrees. I carefully cut my my steak 8 times, until each bite was the size of a cellular mitochondrion. I theorized that a good flossing would double my caloric intake.

Anyway, by time we paid the bill, which the ample and gracious gift certificate couldn't nearly cover, we imagined that we paid about a dollar per calorie. So, if that doesn't result in weight loss, I don't know what will. Try it yourself. And bring a Platinum card.

Keep the Faith! - AL

## LegalLine Logs 30 Calls

The Lawyer Referral Service and the Austin Young Lawyers Association thank the following volunteers for answering calls at the April LegalLine:

Linda Checura  
Lisa Richardson  
Ana Maria Schwartz  
David Walter  
Sylvia Williams

Staff on site was Jeannie Rollo.

Pizza was donated by Austin's Pizza.

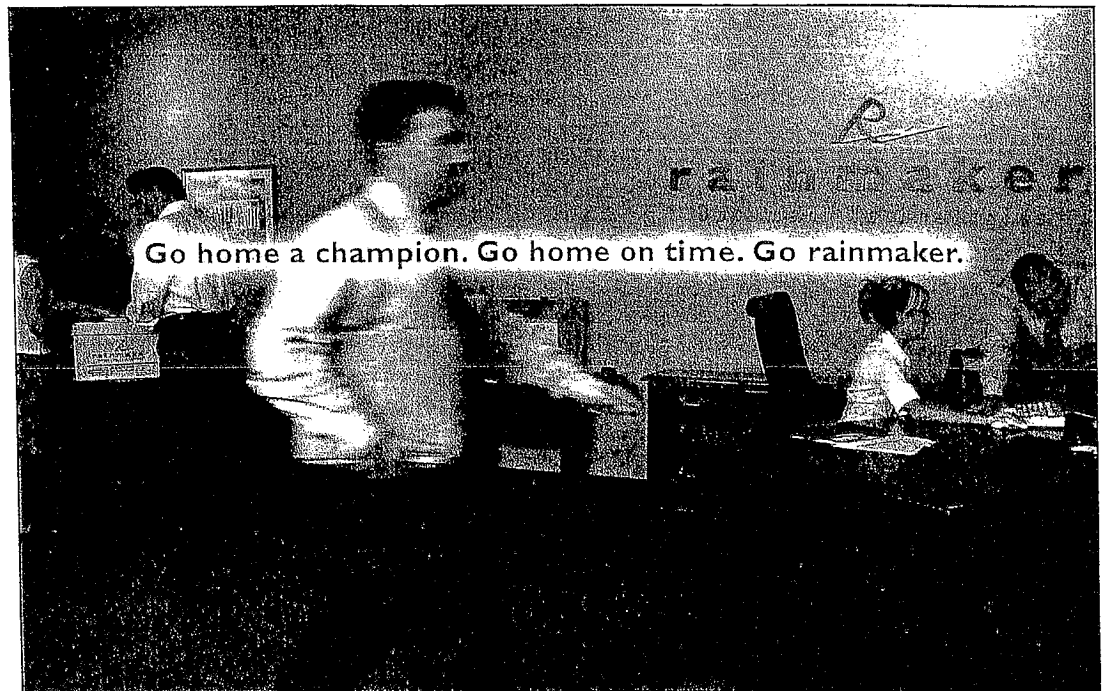
Volunteers answered about 30 calls, mostly concerning family law. Thanks to all who participated.

## Join Us As We Roast Claude Ducloux!

Saturday, Sept. 6, 2008, at 6:30 p.m.

The Renaissance Hotel

For more information, please contact Amanda Lynch at 512/483-3561 or  
alynch@familybar.org



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