

## Rancho Shares Thanksgiving Tips

By Ashleigh Oldland, Editor | Gazettes.com - Posted: Sunday, November 6, 2011 12:36 pm

	<p>—Photo by Ashleigh Oldland</p> <p>Pierre Barit works in a makeshift kitchen at Rancho Los Alamitos as Harvest Table and Culinary Workshop participants look on.</p>
	<p>—Photo by Ashleigh Oldland</p> <p>At one table, women are hard at work Saturday to create their Thanksgiving table centerpieces.</p>

Despite the chill in the weather, more than two-dozen ladies bundled in winter jackets gathered at Rancho Los Alamitos Saturday morning for the annual Harvest Table and Culinary Workshop.

The sold-out event, hosted in a large green tent adorned with evergreen garlands and hanging lights, brought together community members looking for a chance to socialize, learn some new holiday cooking recipes and create a table centerpiece appropriate for a Thanksgiving feast.

With hot coffee in their hands, and electric heaters pumping out warmth, there was constant and jovial chatter from the participants. Many were women who knew each other from their time volunteering at the rancho. Others sitting among the crowd were newcomers who said they decided to come to the event because it sounded like a good time. It didn't take long for both the former and the latter to become friends.

For Kathie Fry, who recently moved to Long Beach, the event was an opportunity to meet new friends.

"What a wonderful way to get to know your neighbors," she said.

The morning started with cooking demonstrations from Pierre Barit, executive chef at Newport-based Teak Productions. Teak Productions is a catering company that is present at many Rancho Los Alamitos special events.

Barit cooked - and shared samples - of Pear Cranberry Chutney, Herb Roasted Turkey Breast, Creamy Succotash, Pina Colada French Toast, Key Lime Bars, Stuffed Roasted Pork Loin and Wild Rice & Cranberry Salad. In addition to giving each participant a copy of the recipes, Barit shared tips of the cooking trade and answered questions from the audience.

"Turkey for breakfast," one woman said. "I'm so stuffed I won't have to eat for the rest of the day."

This is the second year Barit has given a cooking presentation at the Harvest Table and Culinary Workshop, and he said the menu is different every year. He and rancho staff members work together to create a list of recipes that could be used for a complete Thanksgiving meal or as holiday separates. Some of the recipes are available in the rancho's recipe book, "Favorite Foods Favorite Places."

After the cooking demonstration, attendees each had a chance to create their own holiday centerpiece. Using small pumpkins, squash, acorns, pine cones, ribbon, plastic flowers and plastic leaves, each participant created her own masterpiece to use on the table this Thanksgiving. The ladies compared notes, helped one another make adjustments, and each centerpiece ended up as something unique.

Next year, the Harvest Table and Culinary Workshop will take place the Saturday before Thanksgiving, and event organizers said next year's event will be bigger and better than ever because it will take place inside the rancho's new education center, which is currently under construction.

The historic Rancho Los Alamitos is open to the public from 1 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays. Admission and parking are free. For details about the site, tours or special events, visit [www.rancholosalamitos.org](http://www.rancholosalamitos.org).