

Lifestyles

Lifestyles

Sports

Classifieds

**INVESTMENT
PLANNING**
C.M. OLIVER FOR THE CONSERVATIVE
GROUP OF COMPANIES INVESTOR
Growing Client Wealth Since 1907
Richard B. (Rick) Hall
C.M. Oliver Financial Corporation
Securities Dealer
468 Trans Canada Highway
Duncan, B.C. V9L 3R6 Tel: (250) 746-4000
Fax: (250) 746-4034



Spanning cultures with authentic food

Robyn Swanson
staff reporter

It's about connections. A bridge. Uniting people over a meal. Perhaps most of us don't think about food as anything more than sustenance, but for Madhuri Anand it's that and much more.

For decades, the India-born, longtime Duncan resident has used her gift for cooking as a way to span cultures, a method of bridging generations and a tool to making new friends.

Now she's embracing a wider audience with the same goals by sharing her extensive culinary knowledge in *Authentic Indian Cooking*, a 220-page encyclopedia of recipes, nutritional tips and ingredients glossaries.

Published in December, the 3,000 copies are selling quickly in more than 28 bookstores across B.C. including local literary haunts like Volume One and Ulla's Bookshop. Even grocery stores like Duncan's Overwaitea are in on the rush, offering the comprehensive guide on its shelves. "The recipes are so simple and easy to follow,"

Anand says. "I deal with organic foods like lentils, beans, soups. There are no preservatives, no chemicals. As long as I have basic ingredients, I can whip up a storm."

And so can readers, she promises. Although some of us are about as familiar with a kitchen as a chemistry lab, Anand provides clear and concise directions that even neophytes can comprehend. She also includes descriptions and sketches of utensils, spices, herbs and condiments commonly used in Indian cooking that help demystify the art.

"I don't want my book to sit on a shelf. I want it to be used and enjoyed," Anand says. "It's my legacy for my family and my community."

Although writing a book is a new adventure for the 65-year-old grandmother even with her raft of post-secondary degrees, teaching people the secrets of Indian cuisine is not. She instructed cooking classes at Malaspina University College and the Cowichan Community Centre for 20 years, attracting a loyal following of students who returned session after session.

Like her book, the classes were a way to reach out to people and make connections. In the early years, those ties were a lifeline for the new Canadian who left nine siblings and a vibrant social lifestyle to emigrate to the Cowichan Valley.

"When I came over here, I had to have something to attract people. I would entertain them and they've never seen anything like it. They all wanted me to teach them," she says, smoothing her emerald silk sari. "I was lonely. I just wanted to be with people. Teaching was a way to do that."

It was at her students' urging that Anand first began considering condensing her lessons into a book. Her husband and four children added their voices to the call, prompting Anand to formally launch the project about two years ago.

The book soon became a family affair with Anand's husband of 44 years, Bhanu, teaching her how to use a computer to record her recipes and taking all the color photos of the final products. To the couple, the book represented the birth of a baby, reinforcing the strength of their relationship and love for one another.

"My husband is beautiful," Anand says. "This is his pride and joy too."

Completing the book last fall also brought a great feeling of achievement and a sense of fulfillment for the author.

"One day I said, 'If I'm not going to follow my dream, who will?'" she explains. "It was something I had to do."

Now Anand hopes others will grow to love and appreciate her offering, using it as our own implement to success in the kitchen.

Madhuri Anand gives grandchildren Jolisha, 6, and Celina, 7, a taste of her well-known cuisine. Anand's new book (above) is available at Volume One, Ulla's Bookshop and Overwaitea.

