

ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM

GOLFER, MOTHER, COOK

by RONA GINDIN

WHEN GOLFER **ANNIKA SÖRENSTAM** FOUND HERSELF IN CHINA, IN MEXICO, IN KOREA FOR A TOURNAMENT, SHE'D BE SURE TO SEEK OUT THE LOCAL FOODS. AROMATIC FISH FLAVORED WITH MIRIN AND SAKE, BRIGHT FISH TACOS, SMOKY ASIAN BARBECUE—THE EXOTIC FLAVORS WERE A JOYFUL DIVERSION FROM HER COMPETITION ON THE COURSE.

As the Hall of Famer wound down her globe-trotting and opened Annika Academy in the Reunion Resort five years ago, she thought, "Wouldn't it be fun to make recipes and share the stories of where they come from?"

The result is *Mat, Minnen & Golf*, a full-color cookbook about both entertaining at home and the golfer's career. Although the tome is available only in Swedish, Sörenstam's native language, the accomplished 42-year-old cook often posts recipes online at annikasorenstam.com/blog.

The cookbook reflects Sörenstam's own way of eating. "The recipes aren't complicated. There aren't any sauces that take three hours," she laughs. "Anybody can make them." They all use fresh ingredients and provide not-huge portions, as Sörenstam is committed to eating wholesome foods, in moderation. One example is Bolognese pasta, spaghetti with a meat sauce. "It has protein and carbs—all you need the night before a game," she says. "It's a good quick weeknight meal. On the weekend, when you have more time, you can spice it up with a little cream, a little wine."

It may seem odd for a woman who was on the road for 16 years straight to be a kitchen whiz, but as a child Sörenstam often held a wooden spoon in the same hand that would later clutch putters and irons. "Growing up, I was always in the kitchen with my mother, peeling potatoes, whipping or mixing something," she recalls. "I enjoyed being with my mom, and it became our routine. Over time, I developed a passion for food and for cooking." The golfer also studied nutrition at the University of Arizona.

During her Ladies Professional Golf Association and Ladies European Tour years,

Sörenstam escaped restaurants for home kitchens whenever she could. "Every time I stayed with friends, I'd volunteer to cook. It's fun for me. Plus, it's important to know what you put into your system. In restaurants, you know but you don't really know."

Today, in the East Orlando house she shares with her family, Sörenstam regularly hosts informal dinners. With children or adults only, the meals are generally served on a Sunday by the pool, usually with appetizers like a tomato salad or shrimp cocktail, entrées—probably shrimp or pasta ("Maybe steak, but we don't do that much"), and, perhaps, dessert, each course preplated for guests. She buys the ingredients at the Whole Foods Market in Dr. Phillips, "not just organic items, but the quality seems better there for some reason."

Sörenstam also has a vegetable and herb garden. She grows peppers and tomatoes as well as parsley, basil, thyme and more. One favorite use for the bright green sprigs: cocktails. "There is nothing better than a mojito made with fresh mint," she says. "Muddle it some with raspberry, pour in some rum, squeeze in some lime, and you have a great drink."

Another beverage of choice is wine, including one of the three varieties produced—two reds and a white chardonnay—under the Annika label. They're available at anikayvineyards.com.

Food and wine are central to the whole family's lifestyle. Sörenstam picks citrus fruit off her backyard trees and, many mornings, squeezes pink grapefruits into juice with her daughter, Ava. "There's nothing like fresh fruits," Sörenstam says. "I just love fruit salad, and often I'll put grapefruit into a salad, or just slice some oranges and eat them that way."

Sörenstam sits down to breakfast





and dinner frequently with her husband, Mike McGee, and their son and daughter. “We try to have meals together, to talk about the day. It’s important for the social aspect.” Although her toddler and preschooler sometimes get antsy, Sörenstam prolongs these encounters when possible. “We have conversations. We’re not in a hurry. We hang out together.”

At home and elsewhere, no soft drinks are served (Sörenstam is fond of water and tea), fried foods are “seldom” touched, and even juice is rare. The kids will be treated to ice cream a couple of times a week, but all-day snacking is discouraged. “We eat three meals a day, in reasonable portions, and we live active lifestyles. In the evening, we’ll grill a simple chicken or fish, steam broccoli to go with it, maybe sauté some mushrooms. We don’t buy any of it ready-made because you don’t know what salt and preservatives are in those foods.”

The children learn about eating in moderation by example. “I don’t believe in light diet foods,” she says. “My husband and I enjoy food very much. Often he’ll hang out while I cook, we’ll share a bottle of wine and dine at home. It’s more comfortable than going to a restaurant.” When she does venture out locally, it’s generally to Amura for sushi (“I can’t make that myself”) or to Capital Grille on International Drive.

So what does Sörenstam recommend before a busy day, perhaps one at Annika Academy? “A healthy granola with yogurt.” The recipe is at edibleorlando.com. **E**



PASTA BOLOGNESE

Adapted from *Mat, Minnen and Golf*

- 1 pound ground beef**
- 1 yellow onion, chopped**
- 1 carrot, chopped into small pieces**
- 1 (28-ounce) can stewed or crushed tomatoes**
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce**
- 3 tablespoons whole milk**
- 1 cup beef stock**
- 1 teaspoon oregano**
- 1 teaspoon basil**
- ¼ cup half-and-half**
- Pinch freshly ground black pepper**
- 1 pound cooked spaghetti**
- Parmesan cheese, for serving**

1 Start by browning the ground beef in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add a pinch of pepper. When finished browning, transfer beef to a plate lined with paper towels to absorb the grease.

2 In the same pot, slowly sauté the onions over medium heat until golden brown. Add the carrots and stir together until carrots are softened.

3 Add the browned beef and the milk to the pot, cooking until slightly thickened.

4 Add the beef stock and soy sauce.

5 Pour the canned tomatoes into the pot. If using dried oregano and basil, add them before simmering—if using fresh herbs, add them at the end. Simmer sauce for 1 hour.

6 When you are ready to serve, stir in the half-and-half and toss sauce with hot spaghetti.