

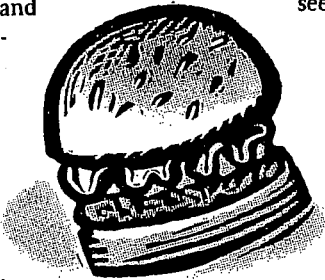
FAST FOOD

A bigger better burger?

The \$3.95 Six Dollar Burger at Carl's Jr. is advertised to have the quality and flavor of a restaurant burger. But does it?

In an informal tasting, the Food department found the meat tasted fast food-fried, despite the larger size of the thick meaty patty.

The plasticized American cheese was a dead giveaway



that this burger was not from a restaurant. Also, the sesame seed bun was a little limp and needed to be lightly toasted.

Overall, we felt there are other fast food burgers that taste fresher.

Six Dollar Burger is \$3.95 at Carl's Jr. outlets throughout Northern California.

— Gena Bell

Le Cordon Bleu whittles down classics

By Gena Bell

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

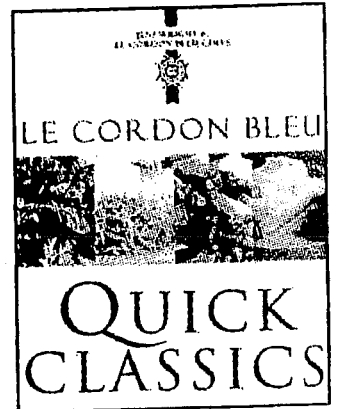
COOK'S BOOKS

Decisions, decisions. Most of us spend a lot of time trying to come up with quick, satisfying dishes for weeknight dinners. And what about those weekend get-togethers with family and friends where you want an impressive menu that doesn't take all day? "Le Cordon Bleu Quick Classics" just may offer the inspiration you need.

Jeni Wright, who has been associated with Le Cordon Bleu, the renowned culinary arts institute in Paris, for more than 30 years, has compiled a book of recipes from Le Cordon Bleu chefs. It features a variety of classic dishes that are sometimes overlooked in our fusion-obsessed culture — steak with green peppercorn sauce, lamb with peppers and tomatoes, beef stroganoff and lemon pie.

Each recipe has a chef's tip to help cut down on preparation time. The last section, called Basics, provides a list of herbs, spices and condiments to stock in your pantry and refrigerator to help cut down on last-minute shopping time.

Several recipes the Food department tested were inviting and fairly simple to prepare, such as fish with tomatoes and olives and *coq au vin*. The fish with tomatoes and olives uses canned peeled Italian tomatoes to create a light delicate sauce on the fish. It's a perfect recipe for a light meal after work.



However, *coq au vin* was slightly greasy and needed a proper skimming, which adds extra preparation time. Also, the sauce needed another good half hour or so to reduce enough to create a rich broth. We took those steps the next day, which made the stew a lot better.

Le Cordon Bleu has over a century of culinary experience and maintains a tradition of excellence through its appreciation of fine food. "Quick Classics" was created for those with a busy lifestyle who prefer simple classic cooking.

"Le Cordon Bleu Quick Classics" (Seven Dials, Cassell & Co., 2000; 192 pages softcover; \$19.95).

Gena Bell is a student at Tante Marie's Cooking School in San Francisco.