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# YOU CANNOT HAVE JUST ONE!

## CHAPTER III

# FOOD NETWORK COMES CALLING

BY SUSAN I. SHIBER

*Recap: In the July/August issue of Chester County Life, readers shared Rebecca Jordan's first day at the Artisan Exchange where her made-from-scratch dumplings delighted customers, setting a precedent for repeat sales and special orders. The hard work, commitment, and excitement enveloping the launch of Rebecca's Dumplings exemplifies family business with vigorous exactitude.*

After several weeks of success and patron acclaim, word of Rebecca's Dumplings reached some surprising sources. Surprise barely expresses the budding entrepreneur's astonished reaction when she received a phone call one day. It was from Brandywine Conference and Visitors Bureau (Brandywine CVB) extending what could become a life-changing request.

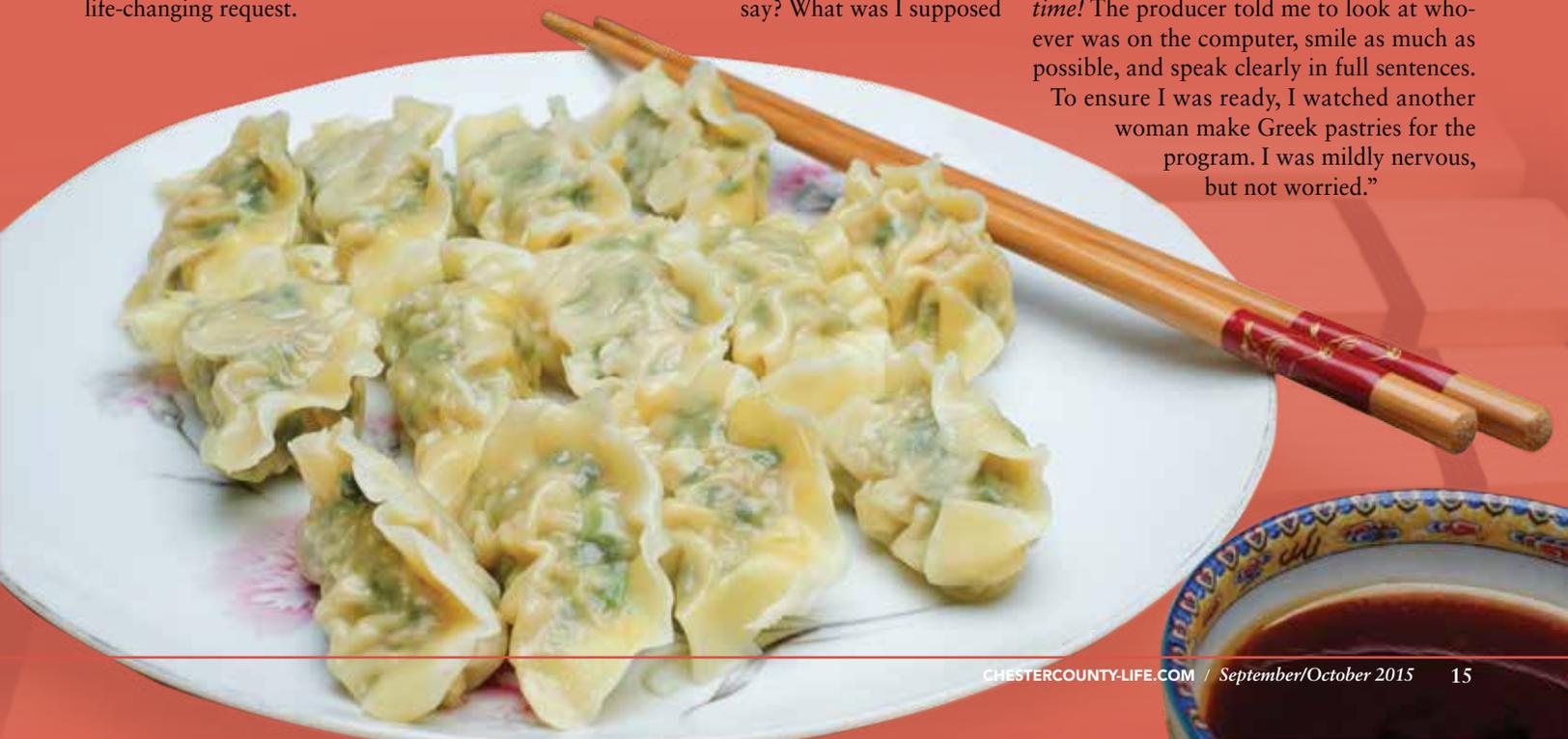
The Food Network plans to introduce a new show this year, and Rebecca's beyond-comparison dumplings were deemed a superb match for an *American Food Finders* theme. The next few hours catapulted into a flurry of happy hustle and bustle. "Program producers contacted the Visitors Bureau and the Artisan Exchange," explains Rebecca. "They needed samples within two hours! That day was lucky. I had frozen dumplings at the market's commercial kitchen, which isn't usually the case. My family and Frank Baldassarre (Artisan Exchange owner) leaped into action to pack products in dry ice and rush them to New York City. There were also 12 other vendors who were picked for the audition."

Rebecca soon learned she was selected for an audition. Her exhilaration met with inquisitive interest. "What was I supposed to say? What was I supposed

to do? We couldn't really prepare because at that point there was no clue about show format. The following week we found out a bit more and filled out information sheets. The first question asked why I liked Chester County. That was easy. It's a community-oriented location, which is close to big cities and the beach. It's quiet, green, and beautiful every season."

After reviewing Rebecca's personal and product background, she was notified a Skype audition was scheduled at Artisan Exchange's commercial kitchen. Here is where it gets more interesting. Packaged dumplings were required, but no products would be created during the interview. "I arrived early to prepare quantities of my pork, veggie, and gluten-free dumplings, placed them in our packaging, took a deep breath, and said to myself – *Oh, it's show time!* The producer told me to look at whoever was on the computer, smile as much as possible, and speak clearly in full sentences.

To ensure I was ready, I watched another woman make Greek pastries for the program. I was mildly nervous, but not worried."



Donned in a soft yellow outfit, Rebecca smiled broadly and relaxed. She talked about growing up in China and making dumplings by her mother's side. With a mischievous twinkle in her eye, she revealed the transition from family recipe to delectable dumplings acclaimed by all today. When asked why she thinks her product is superior, there was no hesitation. "My dumplings are one-of-a-kind. No one else makes anything like them. They are the best in the world, and it is impossible to eat just one. Trust me. It's true."

The confident Food Network applicant spoke from experience, not caprice. For years, she observed family and friends dine on her dumplings with unequivocal euphoria. Their pleasure was evident, their appetites stimulated. With customers added to the mix, she is convinced Rebecca's Dumplings are beyond special. Each Saturday, plates of samples disappear before her eyes, and customers come back for more mouth-watering bites. One patron tells another, and lines form. It is American enterprise with a Chinese flavor. That flavor, of course, is the dumpling's secret formula.

The Food Network is constantly seeking those elusive taste-tempting treasures. Its positioning message is *TV for everyone who loves to eat*. All food all the time appeals to close to 97MM viewers. Its visit to Chester County was one of many quests to enchant audiences. When Rebecca completed her audition, everyone at the Artisan Exchange and Brandywine CVB expressed she was positively that very enchantment personified.

"A glass of wine was waiting for me," remarks Rebecca. "Frank and the others told me I killed it. He said he didn't realize I had so much talent. There were cheers and thanks for being part of the audition process. Then we all hung out and had more wine. It was a marvelous day. And now we wait to hear who makes it."

As she waited, Rebecca concentrated on building her business. Each Saturday brings regular customers and new people who discover the dumplings and can't walk away without a package or two – or four. It's not unusual for pork or veggie dumplings to sell out, although pork does remain the most popular. A similar sales pattern transpires

at Pete's Produce Farm in Westtown. There, Rebecca's Dumplings are available in the frozen food section.

Wow, it's just like in the movies. As *Chester County Life* was preparing for press, Rebecca's phone rang with the news. She was selected to appear on the new *Great American Food Finds* show. The first question producers asked was: *What else do you have? Your dumplings are indeed delicious, but so many people make them. Is there something daringly different?* Always ready with a quick reply to almost any query, Rebecca announced, "Oh, I make Philly Cheesesteak and Breakfast dumplings!"

This is precisely what the producer wanted to hear. His mind running with content ideas, he told her a film crew would arrive at her home in seven days! "Our home," she gasped after hanging up. "We have to clean, organize, and be ready to face thousands of viewers. And – I have to reimagine cheesesteaks and breakfast fare as Chinese dumplings." Without hesitation, she persevered and the dumplings are incredible. Cheesesteak dumplings feature ribeye as a base and the authentic *Cheez Whiz* as dip. Breakfast versions pop with Canadian bacon, egg, and cheese; the dip is tabasco sauce.

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Without a doubt these plump little delicacies will reach vast worlds filled with eager dumpling aficionados. The show aired in August, and Rebecca and her creations are overnight hits. There is also a newly launched website filled with delicious tidbits. Now, if only, technology could devise a way to offer *tastevision!* You don't have to wait for such a scientific breakthrough, though. Rebecca's Dumplings are yours for the asking this Saturday. **CCL**

**Rebecca's Dumplings**  
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[ReccasDumplings.com](http://ReccasDumplings.com)

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