

# *Napa Valley Register*

## **Cooking show visits Connolly Ranch**



TUESDAY - AUGUST 17, 2010 - NAPA, CA - Camera operator David Hull, left, works on the set of the syndicated television show "Bringing it Home with Laura McIntosh" at the Connolly Ranch on Tuesday. The show was in Napa to tape an episode on heirloom tomatoes. The show, which will air in late September locally, featured an appearance by local celebrity chef Michael Chiarello.



Television host visits Connolly Ranch and prepares heirloom tomato recipes with celebrity chef Michael Chiarello.

Lights, camera, action ... a touch of Hollywood arrived at Napa's Connolly Ranch on Tuesday when the syndicated TV cooking show "Bringing it Home with Laura McIntosh" popped into town. The ranch was the backdrop for the traveling cooking show, featuring host Laura McIntosh and guest chef Michael Chiarello.

The crew for "Bringing it Home" arrived in town Monday night, and by Tuesday morning at 5:30, the upper campus of Connolly Ranch was a beehive of activity. A generator hummed, and a patio area was transformed into a TV set, including four cameras, three computer monitors, cranes with hanging lights, miles of extension cords, and enough baskets of decorative fruits and vegetables to start a small farmers market.

"We're talking about heirloom tomatoes," the host said. McIntosh, who grew up in the farming town of Lodi, said the goal of the program is to educate people about food and where it comes from.

“We’re the only show that goes where the food grows, and in a new place and with a new chef,” every episode, McIntosh said. “The beauty of agriculture in California is that there is always something growing 365 days a year.”

The “Bringing it Home” team also includes McIntosh’s brother, Daniel Moznnett, husband Tim McIntosh, a former Major League Baseball player, and a traveling crew of at least 20 people. Based out of Lodi, “We’ve been doing the show for seven years,” Moznnett said. “We’ve gone from everywhere from Napa to Tasmania, Costa Rica and Colombia.” Next week, the crew is headed to Mexico, he said. Sponsored by Save Mart Foods and Lucky Stores, “Bringing it Home” tapes between 26 and 30 episodes a year.

Arriving “on the set” at Connolly Ranch on Tuesday morning, guest chef Chiarello began with a run through of his cooking demonstration. Standing behind the portable kitchen set, the chef mimed the movements of preparing the three dishes he’d cook; mozzarella burrata cheese with heirloom tomatoes, basil oil and balsamic “caviar”; tomato bread soup; and ricotta gnocchi. All three recipes come from his new cookbook “Michael Chiarello’s Bottega.”

“This time of year it’s all about the tomatoes,” the chef said. “I always tell the chefs (at his restaurant), we can never have enough tomatoes.”

The tomatoes were represented by John Gibson of Golden Bear Ranches of Lodi. Gibson harvests 8,000 lbs. of tomatoes a week at his ranch and supplies more than 50 area restaurants with his organic produce, including Chiarello’s restaurant Bottega Napa Valley.

While waiting for his own close-up, the farmer gamely loaded his tomatoes from a plain cardboard produce shipping box into a rustic wooden basket.

“This is amazing,” said Gibson, of the shoot. On Friday, the production heads to Lodi to film more of his tomatoes. “I had a ton of fun, and I’m excited for them to come to my ranch and spend the day up there,” Gibson said.