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when she entered show business, to cram scores of friends into her duplex apartment for a feast of Yugoslavian delights.

At a party tossed by a friend she personally prepared a dinner for a throng of 80 that included such celebrities as Clint Eastwood and Peter Ustinov, whipping up such rare delicacies as her version of mousaka which she named Aurora Borealis after her hometown of Aurora, Minn. The dish consists of strips of sirloin steak, cheddar cheese, bacon chips and wild rice topped by apple, pineapple and pear rings.

"Naturally, I'm fantastic with Yugoslavian eatables such as sijive, ajar, pogacha, sarma, potica and suva pita," she boasted. "Don't try to pronounce — just eat."

She considers it unfair asking her to name just one single specialty, commenting: "That's like asking me to compare a Picasso to a Rembrandt. I have so many favorites. There's an excellent paella I make as a result of a visit to Spain, and I'm very much at home with Italian cuisine."

However, she couldn't resist telling of her "most startling innovation," turning out something involving chickens and prunes.

"It is really delicious," she raves. "What I do is put the chicken in with tomato sauce and prunes and a strange thing happens. The prunes coat the chicken as it cooks. Now I add pineapples, cashews and green peppers. I cook this entire concoction for four hours until the chicken becomes coated again, this time with tomato sauce. It is absolutely fabulous." And like she says, "Don't laugh!" — because she has affidavits from "hundreds of people" who rave over it.

Enough of her gourmet skills. Most of all, Francine wants stardom in moviedom.



"Becoming a so-called star via the casting couch route is a well-worn myth," she says. "In fact, I like to kid around when I go auditioning for a job by asking 'Where is your casting couch? I've never seen one before.'"

In recent months, this well-rounded young actress has displayed her versatility on TV, portraying an Auntie Mame character ("Courtship of Eddie's Father"); a pool shark ("Chicago Teddybears"); a Venus de Milo statue come to life ("Bewitched").

She's also had top roles in such TV shows as "Burke's Law," "It Takes a Thief," "Perry Mason," "Name of the Game," "Love, American Style," "The Odd Couple" and "Mannix."

On the movie front, Francine starred in "First Woman in Space," and next came "Cannon for Cordoba," made in Madrid, in which she played the role of a spy disguised as a belly dancer.

For the latter picture, the director asked if she could belly dance. "Of course!" she told him, and then went out and signed up for a three-day cram course in belly dancing.

"I must admit that I was darned competent when I did the stint," she said. "You must be prepared, that's all there is to it."

A photo from the "Cannon" movie depicting Francine and actor George Peppard in a racy nude embrace appeared in Playboy magazine.

"I did the scene only because I was convinced it was integral to the picture and would be in good taste," she explained. "After it was filmed, however, the episode was cut from the movie (probably since the producers wanted a more agreeable GP rating). They assured me that all still pictures would be destroyed. I guess you can't trust anyone."

