

March 26, 2009

Hi guys-

Here's the TV column for April 3. I'm talking to the Alter people and maybe I'll have an interview with Vasia Loi next week but nothing is certain. Hope yr all ok and we'll talk soon. Big P

In The Kitchen: Living Ornament Logomania!

Perri Pagonis

perripagonis@yahoo.com

March 26, 2009

I have a pretty good job at Athens News newspaper. I am paid to, essentially, go to rock shows, watch TV and occasionally interview pretty, pop-culture people. Then I report to you, the reader, what I think about the shows I've seen, programs I've watched and hair-intensive media-beings I've talked to. Some people might say I have a dream job. However, until you watch the morning program, *Sthn Kouzina* or *In the Kitchen*, you have no idea what a dream job really can be.

TV hostess Stamatina Tsimstilh presents the one-on-one talk/cooking program on the Alter channel weekday mornings at 9:15. She is a quite pretty, telegenic young woman with classic, dark Mediterranean facial features. She appears to have great interest in her work and is always fashionably dressed in smart sports wear or in a young, chic but relaxed style. Her figure is trim, and well maintained; her speaking voice is melodic and pleasant to the ear.

Each morning a visiting chef comes to her kitchen to prepare two recipes: a main course entree and an after-meal sweet. As far as I'm able to surmise, Tshimstilh's job is, basically, to talk to the chef as they prepare their meals. She hovers over their shoulders or flits next to them, going on about how delicious is a certain type of chocolate, how yummy is a specific type of cheese, etc. She will, occasionally, help transport a cooking vessel from the stovetop to the lower oven, or bring a specific cooking tool to the chef upon their request. She has, career-wise anyway, hit the perfect job-description ground between a televised living-ornament and an on-air animated tool.

Many years ago, televised cooking shows were solo-acts. The chefs had to have verbal skills, camera-intensive charisma, a knowledge of many subjects and know how to cook the day's recipe. The distribution of labor has been halved on *In the Kitchen* with Tsimstilh providing cute, visual distraction, running commentary and spoon relocation duties while the chef-du-jour does the dirty work with the recipe's ingredients and tries to keep up with the hostess's repartee.

The program is targeted towards late 20s/early 30s housewives. The dishes are never terribly difficult or byzantine in their preparation methods. And, at the end of each program, an analysis is made of the cost of the entire meal and the calorie content of the presented dishes. The meals, for the most part, tend to be quite economical to prepare. The calorie-count is in the low-to-mid range with heavy, fatty foods rarely being prepared.

Advertising-wise, the show contains a blitzkrieg of products aimed at the young-mom demographic group. Endless ads for Fischer-Price toys, Play-doh, KerryGold cheese, Dirollo cottage cheese, and Nou Nou calcium supplements for women are in heavy rotation during the commercial breaks.

In the Kitchen is a nice way to start the day before the barrage of mind-numbing morning show marathons. It's a 30-minute lite-snack containing a cute girl, some nice recipes which can actually be prepared by normal people, and has good advice on food budget, healthy diet and calorie watching. I have to believe that Stamatina Tsimtsilh is a clever girl and has parlayed that cleverness into possibly the best job in television. Who among us can say they have a better paying, less stressful job than she does? I ask you, who can argue with her savvy career positioning and the results which have come from it. I admire her to no end. I wish I had that kind of smarts.