

Danica Patrick

race-car driver

Not only has the 28-year-old race-car driver taken on the IndyCar and NASCAR circuits, but Scottsdale-based Patrick is undaunted when it comes to cooking, too. She's spent time studying at The Culinary Institute of America at Greystone in Napa Valley, where she proved that she's as skilled in the kitchen as she is on the racetrack.

INTERVIEW BY BEKAH WRIGHT



The racing star is happy to slow down for great pizza and a Napa Valley red.

Do you have any healthy eating tricks while you're on the road?

Education. It's really important to understand what the words mean on a menu. *Sautéed* means butter—lots of butter. Making smart choices on the road is key.

How did you decide to take cooking classes at The Culinary Institute of America?

I love cooking, so there is no better place to learn than the CIA. The whole experience taught me to use different ingredients and to be adventurous!

What's the most unusual thing you've ever eaten?

When I was racing in Formula Ford, we stayed at a hotel in Belgium that served a set menu each night. One evening they

served wild boar paired with a Chablis. It was the best white wine I've ever had.

Name three things that you always have in your refrigerator.

Eggs, eggs, and eggs. But you can also find Brummel & Brown spread and mixed greens on any given day.

Of all the places you've traveled, where's the best food?

I would have to say any restaurant in Napa Valley. The restaurants there are committed to serving the best food and best wine.

Do you have a comfort food?

Pizza.

What do you like to eat, even though you know you shouldn't?

Pizza!

What's your favorite restaurant?

The French Laundry. Whatever they are serving that night is fine by me.

Do you have a favorite food that you prepare at home?

Anything and everything breakfast.

Is there anything that people would be surprised to find in your kitchen?

A bread machine.

Tell us about your most memorable meal.

The first dinner I made with my now husband, Paul, when we were dating. We were making scallops, and while he was at the grill I decided to help him with the preparation of the scallops. I saw red pepper spice in the

spice drawer and since I love red peppers, I used a great deal of the spice. Same thing, right? Wrong. The scallops were so spicy-hot that a bottle of white wine was gone faster than we had planned.

What's the perfect snack?

Peanut butter on toast with honey and cinnamon.

And your drink of choice?

Wine—a big Napa Valley red!

Is there any food that reminds you of home?

Chili and chicken noodle soup. My mom makes the best.

What's for dinner tonight?

Fish with steamed veggies and sweet potatoes, and I can guarantee we'll pair it with a red wine. ■