

Miracle Mixer

Dear Tim:

I'm embarrassed to admit it, but I ruined my favorite dress recently when I dropped a perfectly good plate of pasta marinara in my lap during a nice romantic dinner with a guy I've been seeing. I was so mortified at the moment that I didn't ask the waiter for some club soda to put on the stain before it set. Now I'm not only out a dress, but I've freaked out in front the only man I've dated in the last three years who I could see myself getting serious with. I know hindsight is 20/20, but is there anything I could have done differently to avoid this whole mess?

—**Stained on Stonehaven**

Dear Stained:

I'd like to be able to tell you to stay away from Italian food, but who in their right mind would want to do that? The only thing I can suggest is the same thought that occurred to you after the fact – club soda. I asked a chemist friend of mine if it would have made a difference, and he told me that it might have, but he's not sure why. He said there's no particularly good chemical



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reason why club soda should remove stains. Some say the secret ingredient is the bubbles, but what's probably more important is how fast you can run to the sink. In your case, the club soda might have diluted the sauce and helped keep it from setting so your laundry detergent could finish the job later. But the club soda itself probably wouldn't have done much for the stain other than spread it around. Water probably would have worked just as well, but, let's face it, club soda is much more fun. Pick some up in aisle 4 for your next food-related fashion

emergency. And be ready to laugh at yourself next time rather than wig out. Guys like a girl with a sense of humor. Even when she's sitting in a plateful of pasta.

Dear Tim:

I just bought my first car two weeks ago. Unfortunately the whole experience has turned into a nightmare. It's been one problem after another. At this point the car won't even start. I keep taking it back to the dealer, and each time they tell me it's fixed. But then something else crops up. What can I do?

—**Stalled on Stratton**

Dear Stalled:

I don't know a lot about cars, but I know a lot about lemons and it sounds like you've got one. Us, we've got an orchard-fresh collection of the best around in aisle 1. Perfect for making ice-cold lemonade or whatever tart treat might suit your fancy this summer. A tall cold glass might be just the thing you need to cool down before you head back to see that dealer. And be sure to take your lawyer with you this time.

Dear Tim is presented as a public service by Tim Huffman, owner of Huffman's Market. Write to him in care of Huffman's Market, 2140 Tremont Center, Upper Arlington, Ohio, 43221 or www.huffmansmarket.com.