



Martha (with Donald Trump)—her *Apprentice* arrives September 21—has been enjoying working on her new shows. “It’s a big challenge and a lot of fun for me,” she tells *INSIDE TV*. “But it’s important to do new things and evolve.”

Exclusive interview! Martha makes an amazing comeback

Martha Stewart’s back—and she’s better than ever! After a nightmare of prison and house arrest, the loss of her job as head of the company she founded—not to mention having her show yanked off the air—she’s 20 pounds lighter and bursting back onto the small screen with two new TV projects.

But that’s not all. After being touched by the plight of her fellow inmates—with whom she bonded during her five-month stint behind bars—the tireless business titan is also committed to helping troubled women turn their lives around by becoming their mentor.

And there’s no looking back.

“The last three years were difficult, but I think that the next three years will be fantastic,” an upbeat Martha, 64, tells *INSIDE TV*. “I’m looking towards the future, not the past.”

That future includes her new, live, syndicated daily show, *Martha*, which debuts September 12, and her very own spin on *The Apprentice*, hitting NBC on September 21.

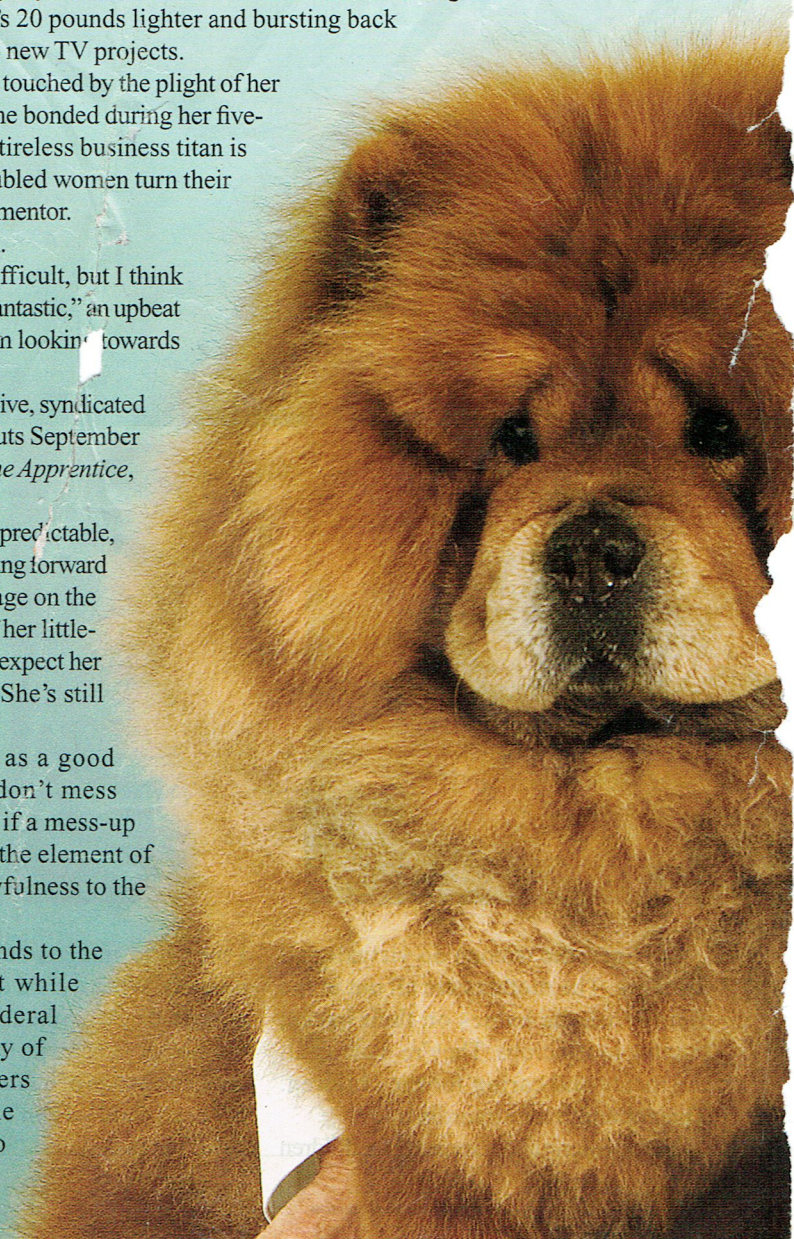
Because going live is often unpredictable, Martha tells *INSIDE TV* she’s looking forward to poking fun at her perfect image on the daytime show, and showing off her little-seen sense of humor. But don’t expect her to come off as *too* imperfect. She’s still Martha Stewart, after all!

“I still want to be known as a good teacher, and good teachers don’t mess up too much,” she says. “But if a mess-up happens, I think that will add the element of frivolity and a little bit of playfulness to the show that will make it fun.”

Being a good teacher extends to the kind of women Martha met while behind bars at Alderson Federal Prison in West Virginia, many of whom are first-time offenders serving long sentences. The inmates welcomed Martha (who



The domestic diva (in the attention-getting creation she wore out of prison) plans a Poncho Day for her live show. “We’ll be selling a poncho, and all the proceeds are going to an initiative I’ve started.”



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: VIRGINIA SHERWOOD/NBC UNIVERSAL/GETTY; COURTESY OF FERRECOMM; LARRY DOWNING/REUTERS/LANDOV

was convicted of lying to federal agents about a stock transaction) into their fold, throwing a protective shield around her. She, in turn, taught them yoga poses and a host of tasty recipes using the simplest of ingredients. Since she was released on March 4, Martha's kept up with a few of her unexpected friends, and has even named her new beloved French bulldog after one woman who left a lasting impression on her.

"Nobody cares, once you're there," is how Martha recently described the prison experience. "You have to care. Frances is an inmate of long standing. I nicknamed her Francesca, to make her stand out. My feisty little dog reminds me of her, so I named her Francesca, too. She worked in the cafeteria, and she would come and talk to me at breakfast. And she sang in the choir. I just want her to know that I think about her."

Another way Martha—who has talked about working on prison reform in the future—is letting her pals at Alderson know she still thinks about them is by reaching out to similarly challenged women on yet another upcoming TV show (yes, a third!).

Called *Women in Need*, it's a new, 13-part home-improvement series focusing on six women in transition—the participants are either coming off welfare, recovering from bankruptcy or getting out of rehab.

Martha says she hopes the show, which is slated to launch in 2006, "will inspire and inform, while mentoring and teaching valuable life skills." (She is also currently in the process of setting up a foundation or "an initiative" that would work in tandem with the uplifting project.)

So who does Martha look to for inspiration? Who's *her* Martha Stewart? When we asked her that question, she didn't hesitate with her answer: Her mentor is her mother, Martha Kostyra, who will celebrate her 91st birthday on the September 14 episode of *Martha*.

"She's gorgeous," Martha tells *INSIDE TV* about the woman who taught her how to cook, sew and make a house a home. "She's still my mom; she gives advice. I'll



One of Martha's most loyal supporters throughout her legal ordeal was billionaire mogul Charles Simonyi.

tell you one fact about mom: Mother's meat loaf recipe has broken all the records as my most requested recipe," boasts the proud daughter. "It's just delicious!"

What's also delicious is the fact that Martha and her empire have both bounced back from the brink of disaster. Her company's soaring stock price (which plummeted in 2004) has restored the elegant blonde—who finishes up her five-month sentence under house arrest on August 31—to billionaire status. At 64, she looks years younger—in fact, better than ever—and fans are eagerly awaiting her return to TV.

So how did she keep hope of a happy ending alive, even as she was under, as she calls it, "hideous lockdown" at her Bedford, New York estate?

"Without optimism, you're not going to make it," she said recently. "You're just not. I've always been optimistic."

● By Lauren Brown



From Martha's mom: Meat Loaf 101

Serves 8 to 10

- 4 slices white bread, torn into pieces
- 2 1/2 lbs. ground beef
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled and cut into eighths
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 celery stalks, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 2 carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup ketchup
- 3 teaspoons dry mustard
- 1 tablespoon coarse salt
- 2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar



1. Heat oven to 375°. Place bread in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the steel blade; pulse until fine crumbs form. Transfer to a medium bowl, and add ground beef.

2. Place onion, garlic, celery, carrots and parsley in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the steel blade; pulse until fine. Add to meat mixture, using hands to mix well. Add egg, 1/2 cup ketchup, 2 teaspoons dry mustard, salt, and pepper; use hands to

combine thoroughly. Place in an 8 1/2-by-4 1/2-by-2 1/2-inch loaf pan.

3. Combine remaining 1/2 cup ketchup, remaining teaspoon dry mustard, and brown sugar in a bowl; stir until smooth.

4. Brush mixture over meat loaf; place in the oven with a baking pan set on the rack below to catch drippings. Cook until a meat thermometer inserted in the center reads 160°, about 90 minutes. If top gets too dark, cover with foil and continue baking.