

Chowder (Cartoon Network) 7:30 p.m. Friday

I have no idea where or how C.H. Greenblatt comes up with this stuff (and I'm not sure I want to know), but his new series, "Chowder," is filled to the brim with fresh, zany characters in the most unlikely of settings — a professional kitchen.

While it undoubtedly will charm the young audience for which it is intended, grown-ups also will fill up on the wacky whimsy that permeates practically every corner of the storyboard.

Chowder, an overenthusiastic apprentice chef, might seem like an unusual name for a boy, but wait until you hear what the oth-



er characters are called. He is supervised by Mung Daal, who owns one of Marzipan City's two catering companies. The third set of hands in the kitchen belongs to veteran cook Shnitzel, who communicates quite well despite his inability to be understood.

Gordon Ramsay this isn't. Specialties include Froggy Apple Crumple Thumpkin, and the recipes use ingredients that at times are characters in their own right. Irrepressible Chowder (voiced by Nicky Jones) is the star but not the only reason to watch. Almost as fun and fascinating is Greenblatt's style of drawing, which features spectacular colors, a playful air and a slight sense of an exotic locale, almost as if the whole thing was a fairy tale.

Is "Chowder" an acquired taste? If so, it won't take long to acquire. Try it. You'll like it.

Barry Garron

