

MENU NOTES

BRAISED HAWAIIAN ABALONE

When I visited Sarah Nikitopoulos' ceramics studio, she was working on a piece for an exhibit that reminded me of the abalone we would see while diving on the reefs in Southern California. We commissioned her to do the pieces we are using for the dish in *Métier*. All pieces are handmade in porcelain and dark stoneware with a crystalline glaze.

ASPARAGUS, SMOKED SALMON AND CRÈME FRAÎCHE

This is such a classic pairing. Our smoked salmon broth is one of my favorite sauces and a great counterpoint to roasted asparagus. It provides smokiness and saltiness to season the asparagus, while retaining a lighter touch. The slices of cured salmon are seasoned with a bit of Swarnadwipa spice, allowing the flavors to come through without being too overpowering.

BUTTER BRAISED MAINE LOBSTER

In 2015, when I started to tend our herb and vegetable garden, L'Abeille Garden at RDV Vineyards, it was a very wet spring and we ended up with copious amounts of tarragon. Frequently I pair lobster and tarragon, so this is a natural pairing for the *Métier* Spring Lobster Boil. I use the tarragon in lieu of seaweed. Corn is not in season yet, but takenoko, a bamboo shoot is, and it provides notes of creamed corn.

QUAIL

I've never cooked as much quail as I did when I worked at The French Laundry, which is also where I learned how to make pierogis. To me it seems a natural progression to feature the two together. What better way to upgrade a pierogi than to fill it with foie gras? I love the way the melted foie fat runs out and floats across the consommé. As a nod to my The French Laundry days, we are serving this dish on a Raynaud porcelain plate from a collaborative line of service ware imagined by Chef Thomas Keller and Designer Adam Tihany.

KUROGE BEEF

I was at a shabu-shabu restaurant in Japan with a friend when I had the original rendition of this dish. The chefs came to our table with a hibachi, a chestnut leaf, miso, and a piece of Japanese beef. I watched mesmerized as they topped the leaf with the miso and the beef, then placed it on the hibachi. Naturally, the leaf started to burn except where the moisture of the miso protected it. The beef was cooked in the hot miso and it was delicious. A memory that 10 years later, I still carry with me.

MATCHA LATTE

This dish is a nod to my beginnings as a pastry chef. After graduating college, I moved to Japan. I didn't know it at the time, but my three years there planted the seed for my eventual career in pastry and restaurants. I lived in a small rural town and was exposed to and fascinated by a way of cooking that was intensely seasonal, local and precise. During trips into Okayama City, I loved exploring the hip café culture and indulging in a "cake set" of matcha latte paired with small sweets. The astringency and grassiness of matcha is the ideal foil for the sweetness of dessert.

SPRING LANDSCAPE

While visiting one of our ceramicists' studios, I saw a few pieces covered in a beautiful crystalline glaze. Having lived in Japan for several years, I immediately thought of cherry blossoms. I wanted to create a dessert landscape reflecting the colors and flavors of the season: mint for its cool freshness; white tea for its herbal, grassy notes; and cherry to reflect the color and brightness coming back into bloom. The dessert's centerpiece is a chocolate roulade, reminiscent of the branches on which all our first signs of spring bloom.

— ERIC ZIEBOLD, Chef

— ANNE SPECKER, Pastry Chef