

## MENU NOTES

### ROASTED BANANA BAVAROIS

I was working on a truffle dish around the holidays when we happened upon this combination. I wanted something lighter than the traditional garlic or potato that might get paired with the truffles and started thinking about other ingredients that had depth and which make work with the truffles' earthiness. Sea urchin is what came to mind with its unctuousness and that feeling of "breath of ocean". In order not to overpower the sea urchin, we needed a medium that wasn't too savory. I often get chocolate undertones with truffles, and had been joking with my pastry chef about doing a banana-truffle dessert and figured that would be the obvious choice.

### BOSTON MACKEREL

As we move into Fall, I wanted to make a fish course that, as the second course would be an early transition, much like summer to fall and lighter into richer. The richness and bigger flavor profile of mackerel is something I think of more in the fall and winter. Needing the garnish to have some intensity but also brightness of flavor, the South of France is used for inspiration. A little sweetness with the carrots and orange, a touch of brine from the olive, and cumin-spiced socca tie the dish together.

### GARBURE

Garbure, the classic cabbage and meat stew, is one of the first dishes I ordered when I went to France as a stagiaire in 1998. I always hesitate to explain garbure to people because it's a stew that is more of a knife and fork type dish. In the southwest of France where the duck is king, the more upscale versions generally include duck confit. In order to make our version a little lighter I use slices of duck breast with confit of cabbage and La Ratte potatoes which provide the stewiness, and of course foie gras emulsion for richness and depth.

### LOBSTER CASSOULET

I was once tasked with using Japanese adzuki beans to come up with a dish. The American in me said "Pork and Beans", the French in me said "Cassoulet". The fact that it is a Japanese bean drew me to Lobster Cassoulet. The lobster is poached in oil made with the roasted shells and herbs to give off a very savory depth in flavor. The beans are heated in stock flavored with bonito flakes, providing the depth and smokiness of a meat stock but much cleaner in flavor. It has all of the complexity of its western muse, but with a refinement and delicacy that is very Japanese to me.

### KUROGE BEEF

Kuroge beef is special. It is one of those foods that you can do so much with and simultaneously need to make sure you don't ruin it. Frequently, with Kuroge I think of the sense of taste - sweet, sour, salty, bitter-fresh (umami) - and decide which accents to use. Moving into Fall, the use of potato, sunchokes, butternut squash, kale and persimmon are highlights for the dish.

### VIN CHAUD GLACÉ

One of my favorite things about winter is mulled wine - I love the smell, I love the warmth and I certainly love the bright, spicy, fruity flavor. Clearly, I'm not alone - all over Europe you can find regional variations on this winter time beverage. In France, they call it 'Vin Chaud' - hot wine - and it was the drink of choice at Alsace's famed outdoor Christmas market, where we had it with spicy ginger cake. In Sweden, they call it 'Gløgg;' it was served with a small spoon, so we could fish out the raisins and almonds soaking at the bottom.

### ITAKUJA 55% CHOCOLATE CROUSTILLANT

I love chocolate. So I couldn't be happier about the recent focus on single origin chocolates that are harvested and roasted according to specifications designed to bring out their unique flavor profiles. Much like wine or coffee, the flavor of a chocolate bar is determined by bean varietal, soil, climate and processing methods. I wanted to highlight a single, distinctive chocolate and pair it with garnishes that complement the nuances of its flavor profile. For this dessert, I've chosen Valrhona's Itakuja 55%. This chocolate undergoes a second fermentation with passion fruit pulp, harvested near the plantation in Brazil. The tart, floral aromas from the passion fruit are markedly present in this chocolate and accented by the salty sweetness of pistachio.

— ERIC ZIEBOLD, Chef

— ANNE SPECKER, Pastry Chef