

MENU NOTES

BLUEFIN TORO SASHIMI

I ate at Matsuhisa in Los Angeles in 2002 and was served a course of Shrimp Sashimi on a slice of lemon with crushed ice. I loved the way the ice kept the sashimi cold as well as gave you a bit of crunch as it melted and yielded away to the texture of raw seafood. I've employed this technique various times throughout my career. Given it's the height of the season for bluefin toro, we wanted to compose a dish using Meyer lemon granité and pair that with the richness of avocado and the sweet-bitterness of grapefruit.

MÉTIER LINGUINE AND CLAMS

One of my wife's favorite pasta dishes is linguine and clams. Winter time is peak clam season, and it seemed like the ideal way to enjoy them. The traditional littleneck clam we're including is fried. We're shaving slices of the geoduck clam over the top of the linguine, tossed in garlic oil which is set in a bowl brushed with butter, herbs and fresh brioche crumbs hoping to create a bright and fresh pasta dish while still offering some of the richness needed for a winter dish.

GRILLED MAINE LOBSTER

We frequently participate in wine dinners, and because they tend to be protein-heavy, I am always looking for ways to provide a dish with some richness and yet lighten it up a bit. Cutting winter vegetables like noodles and curing them is something I started doing a couple years ago and a technique we're using for the celery root garnish in the lobster course. While I'll never forget the simplicity of a Lobster boil with fishmonger Ingrid Bengis on her birthday in Stonnington, ME, I love to serve spiced lobster in the wintertime. The spices combined with a grill give you a smokiness and depth of flavor that I welcome in the colder months.

HERB ROASTED SHOAT LOIN

There is a great tradition of pork in Chinese cuisine and that seemed to be the perfect place to look for inspiration. A steamed dumpling, Black Beans and Toasted Garlic make for a great foil for our Kanagy Farms Shoat.

KUROGE BEEF POT-AU-FEU

Pot-au-Feu is one of those classic French dishes that you can't help but love in the wintertime. Braised beef with root vegetables, cornichons and mustard seems so simple and decadent. Using Japanese Kuroge beef, we decided to take those components and lighten the dish up. The vegetables are pickled, the mustard is in the form of sorbet, and the "bone marrow" is made with Potato and Carmelized Sunchoke.

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.

WHITE CHOCOLATE AND SAFFRON SOFT CARAMEL

I love chocolate and I couldn't be happier about the recent focus on single origin and gourmet chocolates that are harvested, roasted and processed 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 tasting notes. For this dessert, I've chosen Valrhona's Dulcey 32%. This white chocolate is slowly cooked at a low temperature which caramelizes the milk sugars, much like you find in dulce de leche. The result is a rich, almost salty caramel flavor that I've chosen to enhance with elements of deeply toasted sesame and almond and counterbalance with sweet-tart mango and bright yuzu.

— ERIC ZIEBOLD, Chef

— ANNE SPECKER, Pastry Chef