

MENU NOTES

MÉTIER PICNIC

With winter now firmly behind, picnic season has arrived. Ours is rooted in tradition, but as you may imagine, has received some upgrades. Avocado toast is part of my Sunday repertoire; ours is topped with smoked salmon roe. Whipped cream on strawberry shortcake has been substituted with foie gras mousse. That traditional bar-b-que pork sandwich has been revisited in the form of a bar-b-que macchiato and coleslaw éclair.

SOFT-BOILED HEN EGG

When sous vide cooking became a thing in fine dining, almost everyone started doing the “60-degree egg.” For my 40th birthday, I had a soft-boiled egg with Périgord truffles and it reminded me why they are so superior. While the 60-degree egg is much easier and quite the novelty, the texture of actually cutting into the soft-boiled egg is, for me, much more inviting. We’re garnishing it with morel mushrooms, peas, Darden ham and French Toast.

WALLEYE PIKE NANTUA

Nantua is one of those classic dishes you learn in culinary school and then never see again. The traditional is prepared with crayfish and cucumber. Crayfish are just starting to come into season this time of year. Coming out of Louisiana, you most frequently see them used in a Cajun or Créole style dish. We turned to the classic for our inspiration.

TYPHOON SHELTER CRAB

Typhoon Shelter Crab is one of the most famous crab dishes in Hong Kong. We enjoyed large platters of the dish the last time we visited and thought it would be a fun way to interpret the dish using the most famous crab from our region: the soft shell. The crab in Hong Kong is fried or stir fried and then topped with fried garlic, fried shallots, and chilis and then the meat is picked out of the crab. Given we’re using softshells, we thought that wanted to cut down on the amount of fried textures so chose to garnish the fried crab with stir fried chive blossoms, shiitake mushrooms and then top the vegetable mixture with fried garlic and shallot.

GRILLED JAPANESE KUROGE BEEF

A couple of times in Métier, we brushed the Kuroge steak with some sort of purée and then grilled it on a leaf or piece of parchment paper. As we are using an onion soubise, I love how the soubise chars a bit and gets a sweet smokiness to it, yet it slows down the cooking process, so the beef comes out much more tender. Knowing we had the onion soubise, I thought of the type of flavors I wanted to pair with it. Being summer time, I always love to mix some of the heartier herbs I have in my garden with grilled onions. In this case I brought in marjoram and thought to cook that with some cherries and red wine to give you some mustiness, sweetness and richness to round out the Kuroge.

KEY LIME MERINGUE...CAKE

Almost every pastry chef eagerly awaits the arrival of rhubarb in the spring – it’s a welcome change from the chocolate and nut-heavy desserts of winter and an early harbinger of the summer fruits to come. I knew I wanted to use rhubarb in the main dessert; as a result, I opted for the fresh, slightly vegetal flavors of shiso, cucumber and granny smith in this course, which nicely bridge the savory and the tart-sweet of rhubarb while evoking the freshness of spring. Lime curd provides the appropriately bright boost to allow the flavors to shine.

MAURITIAN MUSCOVADO WHITE CHOCOLATE

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 Orellys 35%. This white chocolate is made with a muscovado sugar from the island of Mauritius, which gives it a dark beige color and a strong note of anise. I’ve been “saving” this new chocolate for the arrival of spring’s rhubarb, which I love paired with licorice and anise flavors. White chocolate is sweet, so I’ve balanced it with a touch of chicory and rounded out rhubarb’s brightness with vanilla.

— ERIC ZIEBOLD, Chef

— ANNE SPECKER, Pastry Chef