

COOKING AT REN

December 30, 2011

Sunchoke and Cauliflower Soup

2 tablespoons unsalted butter,
plus 2 teaspoons softened
butter

1 small celery rib, minced
1/2 small onion, minced
2 cups chicken stock or broth
3/4 cup whole milk
1 pound cauliflower, cut into
1-inch florets

6 ounces sunchoke, peeled
and cut into 1-inch pieces

1 thyme sprig

1 small garlic clove, minced

Salt

One baguette cut on the bias
in 1/4 inch slices

1 tablespoon freshly grated
Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
Freshly ground pepper

In a large saucepan, melt the
2 tablespoons of butter. Add
the celery and onion and cook
over low heat until softened,
about 6 minutes.

Add the stock and milk and
bring to a simmer over high
heat. Add the cauliflower,
sunchoke and thyme and
bring to a boil. Simmer over
low heat until the sunchoke
are very tender, about 30
minutes; discard the thyme
sprig.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven
to 350°. In a small bowl, mix
the 2 teaspoons of softened
butter with the garlic and
season with salt. Spread the
garlic butter on the baguette
slices and place on a baking
sheet. Sprinkle with the cheese
and bake for about 8 minutes,
until crisp.

Working in batches, puree the
soup in a blender until
smooth. Return the soup to
the saucepan; season with salt
and pepper. Ladle into bowls
Serve with the cheese toasts.

Roasted Pear Salad With Endive, Pistachios

3/4 cup hazelnuts
 1/4 cup plus 1 tea hazelnut oil
 1/2 cup plus 2 Tbl grapeseed oil
 5 Comice or Bartlett Pears
 (peeled, cored, cut into eighths)
 4 Tbl butter
 2 tea thyme leaves
 1 Tbl diced shallots
 2 Tbl thinly sliced shallots
 2 1/2 tbl sherry vinegar
 2 Tbl rice wine vinegar
 6 heads Belgin endive core
 removed and separated
 1 oz arugula
 1/4 lb blue cheese (St. Agur)
 Salt and Pepper

Preheat the oven to 375

Toast the hazelnuts on a baking sheet 8 to 10 mins until they smell nutty are a light brown. Remove from oven and toss with 1 tea hazelnut oil and pinch of salt. When cooled chop the nuts coarsely.

Heat saute pan over high heat until hot. Swirl 1 Tbl grapeseed into the pan and then place the pears in the pan, cut side down. Add 2 Tbl butter to the pan, and season with 1 teaspoon of salt and 1 teaspoon of thyme. Reduce the heat to medium-high and cook the pears about 6 mins, until they are golden brown on the first side. Turn the pears over and cook another 3-4 mins until the second side is golden brown and pears are tender not mushy.

Using a mortar and pestle, or the side of large knife, pound or mash six of the pear wedges to a chunky paste. Combine the diced shallots, sherry vinegar, rice vinegar, 3/4 tea salt in a bowl, and let sit for 5 mins.

Whisk in the remaining 1 /4 cup of hazelnut oil and 1/2 cup grapeseed oil. Stir in the pear puree and taste for seasoning.

Place the remaining roasted pear wedges, the endive, and the sliced shallots in a large bowl, and toss with some of the dressing. Season with salt and pepper, toss gently. Toss in the arugula and check for seasoning and add more dressing if needed.

Arrange the salad on a large plate and top with the blue cheese and nuts.

Pork Tenderloin With Pomegranate Sauce

3/4 tea ground cumin
 3/4 tea ground coriander
 3/4 tea black pepper
 1/2 tea ground cinnamon
 1/2 tea salt
 2 pork tenderloin (about 3/4 each)
 2 Tbl olive oil
 1 cup plain pomegranate juice
 3/4 tea cornstarch
 1 Tbl water
 1-2 tea sherry vinegar
 1 Tbl unsalted butter

Stir together cumin, coriander, pepper, cinnamon, and salt in a shallow bowl. Pat tenderloins dry and dredge in spice mixture until evenly coated.

Heat oil in a heavy skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking. Reduce heat to moderate and cook pork, turning occasionally, until meat is browned on all sides and thermometer inserted diagonally into center of each tenderloin registers 145°F, 20 to 25 minutes.

Transfer pork to a cutting board (reserve skillet) and let stand 10 minutes.

While pork rest, pour off and discard any fat from skillet, then add pomegranate juice to skillet and boil over moderately high heat until reduced to about 2/3 cup, about 3 minutes. Stir together cornstarch and water and whisk into juice, then boil sauce until thickened slightly, 1 to 2 minutes.

Remove from heat and add Sherry vinegar to taste, then swirl in butter until incorporated. Pour sauce through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl and skim off any fat. Season with salt. Slice pork and serve with sauce.

Parsnip Puree

1 1/2 lb russet potatoes (peeled and cut into chunks)
 1 1/2 lb parsnips (peeled and cut into chunks)
 1/4 cup heavy cream
 1/4 cup milk
 8 oz unsalted butter, cut into chunks
 Salt

Place the potatoes and parsnips in two medium pots. Fill the pots with cold water and add 1 Tbl of salt to the water.

Bring the pots to a boil over high heat, turn down the heat and simmer until tender.

When the potatoes and parsnips are cooked through, strain them and set aside to cool for a minute. In a small sauce pan, heat the cream and milk together. Pass the potatoes and parsnips through a food mill or potato ricer, and transfer back to the pot. Stir over medium heat with a spoon to dry them

out a bit. Then add the chunks of butter slowly stirring while adding the butter. Season with 2 tea of salt.

When all the butter has been incorporated, slowly stir on the warm cream mixture until you have a smooth puree. Taste for seasoning.

Balsamic Braised Brussels Sprouts

2 Tbl extra virgin olive oil
 2 Tbl unsalted butter
 1 lb brussels sprouts (washed and trimmed)
 1/4 lb pancetta or bacon finely diced
 2 Tbl shallots (finely diced)
 1 Tbl garlic (minced)
 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
 1 cup veal stock or chicken stock
 Salt and Pepper

Heat a large saute pan over high heat for 2 mins. Swirl in the olive oil and butter, wait a min. Add the brussels sprouts, and season them with 1 tea salt and some pepper. Shake the pan keep the sprouts moving, to help them brown. After a few mins turn the heat to medium, and cook another 3 -4 mins until the sprouts soften.

Add the diced pancetta to the pan and cook a min or two, until it starts to crisp. Stir in the shallots and garlic, and cook another minute or two, until translucent. Pour in the balsamic vinegar and reduce by half. Add the veal stock and reduce to about 1/4 cup shake the pan often to glaze the sprouts.

If running low on liquid before the sprouts are cooked, add a little water to the pan. Serve immediately.

Pumpkin Bread Pudding With Pomegranate Sauce

Pumpkin Bread Pudding

2 cups half and half
 1 15 oz can pure pumpkin
 1 cup (packed) plus 2 Tbls dark
 brown sugar
 2 large eggs
 1 1/2 tea pumpkin pie spice
 1 1/2 tea ground cinnamon
 1 1/2 tea vanilla extract
 10 cups 1/2 inch cubes egg
 bread (10 oz)
 1/2 cup golden raisins
 Powdered Sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F. Whisk
 half and half, pumpkin, dark
 brown sugar, eggs, pumpkin pie
 spice, cinnamon and vanilla
 extract in large bowl to blend.

Fold in bread cubes. Stir in
 golden raisins. Transfer mixture
 to 11x7-inch glass baking dish.
 Let stand 15 minutes.

Bake pumpkin bread pudding
 until tester inserted into center
 comes out clean, about 40
 minutes.

Serve warm with caramel sauce
 and powdered sugar over the
 bread pudding

Caramel Sauce

1 1/4 cups (packed) dark brown
 sugar
 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
 1/2 cup whipping cream

Whisk brown sugar and butter
 in heavy medium saucepan over
 medium heat until butter melts.
 Whisk in cream and stir until
 sugar dissolves and sauce is
 smooth, about 3 minutes.

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Cooking At Ren **Meet The Chef**

Chef Mark Wright dining restaurants cooking is an
has been cooking in the Chicago experience that
since his area. He combines anyone can enjoy
childhood. He his passion for given the right
received his formal food with his inspiration.
training from two desire to educate
renowned culinary and delight with
programs and has every meal he
worked at several prepares. His
restaurants fine philosophy is that