Featured Recipe

PAN SEARED DUCK BREAST WITH SWEET POTATO PUREE AND CHERRY PINOT NOIR REDUCTION TO PAIR WITH 2009 LONGORIA LOVELY RITA PINOT NOIR

From Executive Chef Budi Kazali Owner of the Ballard Inn Restaurant

The pan seared duck breast is a signature dish for Chef Budi Kazali, the Executive Chef and owner of the award winning Ballard Inn Restaurant. It has remained a customer favorite since he opened the restaurant in 2004. The duck itself is savory and rich with subtle earthy flavors and crispy skin that make it inherently delectable with Pinot Noir. This dish, combined with the delicate sweetness of the cherry reduction, is a perfect pairing with the dark fruit flavors and exotic spice components of the 2009 Lovely Rita. It's important to cook the duck to no more than medium to preserve its natural juices and create that mouthwatering texture.

Serves 4

DUCK BREAST

4 duck breast halves, 8-9 oz each
2 cloves garlic
4 sprigs thyme

Score the skin of the breasts in a cross hatch pattern. Trim excess fat. Rub with thyme and garlic then marinate overnight. Preheat oven to 400˚. Sear duck breasts in oven proof sauté pan over medium-high heat, skin side down, until some of the fat is rendered and the skin is golden brown. Turn and place in oven for 8 minutes for medium rare or until desired doneness. Remove from heat and allow resting for 5 minutes.

SWEET POTATO PUREE

1 lb sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 3" pieces
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ c heavy cream
2 tbsp unsalted butter

Boil sweet potatoes in salted water for 15-25 minutes until cooked (depends on the size). Strain then mash or puree. While potatoes are boiling, combine the cream and garlic in a heavy saucepan over medium heat, and simmer until reduced to ¼ cup. Add mixture to pureed sweet potatoes. Add butter and season with salt and pepper. Whip until all ingredients are well combined and texture is silky but firm.

CHERRY PINOT NOIR REDUCTION

2 shallots, minced
1 tbsp unsalted butter
1 tbsp raisins
1 c Pinot Noir
1 c chicken stock
1 tbsp butter
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 tbsp dried cherries
3 tbsp brandy
¼ c Balsamic Vinegar
1 c beef stock

Soak cherries and raisins in brandy until soft and plump. Strain and save the brandy for later. Sauté the shallots and garlic in butter until slightly browned- do not burn. Add the raisins and cherries. Deglaze pan with the remaining brandy and reduce until nearly dry. Add the Pinot Noir, again reduce until nearly dry. Add balsamic vinegar, reducing until syrupy. Add stocks and reduce until sauce thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon. Finish with butter and season with salt and pepper.