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Chef Russo's recipe for mourning dove

May 21, 2004

Chef Lenny Russo shares one of his recipes for preparing mourning dove, also known as squab. Russo runs the Heartland Restaurant in St. Paul.

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Pan-roasted Suprêmes of Squab with Peaches

Ingredients:

- 4 ea. squabs (dove or pigeon)
- 1/2 lb. whole unsalted butter
- 1 T. grapeseed oil
- 5 ea. peaches (white freestone if possible)
- 2 c. chicken stock (preferably homemade)
- 2 ea. shallots, peeled
- 2 ea. garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 ea. boquet garni (10 black peppercorns, 2 thyme sprigs, 2 bay leaves and 1 slice of fresh ginger)
- 2 t. fine sea salt
- 1 t. black pepper, freshly ground
- 1 t. superfine granulated sugar
- 2 T. cognac
- 2 T. Grand Marnier

Method:

For the peaches: Cut a small "X" on the bottom of each peach and plunge them into boiling water for 10 seconds. Transfer the peaches to an ice water bath and allow them to cool. Peel the peaches and cut them in half lengthwise to remove the stones. Be careful not to damage the peach halves. Place eight peach halves to the side and reserve the skins and stones along with the two remaining peach halves for the sauce.

For the squabs: Season the squab inside and outside with some salt and pepper. Brush two tablespoons of melted butter over them. Heat the oil in a skillet over high heat and lightly brown the squabs on all sides. Roast them in a 450° oven for 12 minutes. Remove them from the oven, and allow them to rest for 10 minutes. Separate the breasts from the carcasses, and pour off the fat from the pan.

For the sauce: Place the pan over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of butter, the shallots, the garlic, the squab carcasses, the reserved peach skins and stones and the two peach halves. Deglaze the pan with the cognac and Grand Marnier. Make sure to use a wooden spoon to scrape any bits from the bottom of the pan. Reduce the liquid by two thirds and add the stock and the bouquet.

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Simmer over gentle heat for 20 minutes, while making sure to skim the surface of fat and impurities as needed. Strain the sauce through a fine sieve, return it to the pan and reduce until it becomes slightly syrupy. Keep warm.

For the plate: Preheat the broiler to hot. Sprinkle some sugar over the peach halves and glaze them under the hot broiler (approximately 2 to 3 minutes). Set them aside. Bias-slice and fan four of the peach halves and place them at the bottom of each plate. Arrange two breasts in the middle of the plates so that the thicker parts are at the top. Place a peach half near the top of the plate. Heat the plates in a very slow oven (250°) for approximately 4 minutes.

Meanwhile, remove the sauce from the heat and whisk in 1 tablespoon of whole butter. Season it with salt and pepper to taste. Remove the hot plates from the oven and spoon the sauce over the squabs. Serve immediately with roasted potatoes and leeks.

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Yield: 4 servings

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