

Steak Dinner with Hearty Reds

May 2011

Menu:

Creamy Mushroom-Marsala Crostini

Perfectly Grilled Steak with
Lemon-Chive Butter

Roasted Fingerling-Watercress Salad with
Pancetta-Shallot Vinaigrette

Mini Cheesecakes with
Wine-Poached Fresh Cherries

Wine:

Maison Duhard Baron des Chartrons Bordeaux 2009

Tolosa Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

Taylor Fladgate 10 Year Old Tawny Port



Creamy Mushroom-Marsala Crostini

makes about 20-24 pieces

1 baguette, thinly sliced

2 tbl butter

olive oil

8 cups thinly sliced crimini mushrooms

1/4 cup finely chopped shallots

1 tbl finely chopped sage

1/4 cup marsala wine

salt and pepper, as needed

1/4 cup heavy cream

grated parmesan, for garnish

chopped basil, for garnish

***** Preparation ******

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Place the sliced bread on a baking sheet and bake until lightly toasted. Remove and let cool.

Heat a very large skillet over high heat. Add the butter and olive oil. When just melted, add the mushrooms, shallots and the sage. Cook over high heat until all of the mushrooms wilt down and the juices have evaporated -- the mushrooms should begin getting golden. Add the marsala and a pinch of salt and pepper. Simmer for a couple minutes until the wine is reduced by half. Add the cream and let bubble until thickened -- about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Top each bread slice with some of the warm mushroom mixture, a sprinkle of parmesan and fresh basil.



Perfectly Grilled Steak with Lemon-Chive Butter

serves 4

4 new york strip steaks OR rib eye steaks

olive oil

salt and pepper

1 stick unsalted butter, at room temperature

1/4 cup finely chopped chives

1 tsp lemon zest

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp ground black pepper

***** Preparation ******

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Heat a grill pan over high heat or an outdoor grill.

Let the steak sit out for 20-30 minutes before cooking.

Rub the steak with olive oil, salt and pepper.

Place the steak on the hot grill and leave in one place for 3-5 minutes -- until there are dark grill marks and the steak is nicely seared. Turn over and repeat on the other side. Once seared on both sides, place the steak on a baking sheet and into the oven for 5-10 minutes, depending on how well you like it cooked.

Remove from oven and let rest 10 minutes before slicing to serve.

Meanwhile, stir together the room temp butter, chives, lemon zest, salt and pepper. Place the mixture in the center a large piece of plastic wrap and roll up creating a log. Place in the freezer. When ready to serve, top the warm steak with a slice of the cold butter.



Roasted Fingerling-Watercress Salad with Pancetta-Shallot Vinaigrette

serves 4-6

3 lbs fingerlin potatoes

olive oil, as needed

salt and pepper

1 cup diced pancetta

1/2 cup thinly sliced shallots

1/4 cup red wine vinegar or sherry vinegar

1 tsp dijon mustard

1 bunch watercress

***** Preparation ******

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

If the potatoes are very small, simply toss in olive oil, salt and pepper and place on a baking sheet and roast for 15-20 minutes until golden and tender. If they are medium or large, cut into half or quarters. Rinse in cold water and pat dry before tossing in olive oil, salt and pepper and roasting.

Meanwhile, add a drizzle of olive oil to a skillet over high heat. Add the pancetta and cook for a few minutes -- when it starts to brown, add the shallots and cook until the mixture is golden. Remove from the heat and whisk in the vinegar and dijon and 1/4 cup olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.

When the potatoes come out of the oven, toss immediately with the pancetta mixture. JUST before serving, toss with watercress (watercress will wilt quickly). Season with more salt and pepper as needed. Serve immediately.



Mini Cheesecakes with Wine-Poached Fresh Cherries

Makes 32

for the cheesecakes:

1 1/2 cups finely ground graham crackers, about 12 sheets
3 tbl unsalted butter, melted
1 1/2 cups plus 3 tbl sugar
2 lbs cream cheese, room temperature
pinch salt
1 tsp vanilla extract
4 large eggs, room temperature

for the topping:

3 cups fresh or frozen cherries
1 cup port
1/2 cup honey
1 cinnamon stick
pinch salt

***** Preparation ******

for the cheesecakes:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Line standard muffin tins with paper liners. Stir together the ground graham crackers, butter and 3 tablespoons sugar. Press 1 tablespoon crust mixture firmly into the bottom of each lined cup. Bake until set, about 5 minutes. Transfer tins to a wire rack to cool.

With an electric mixer on medium-high speed, beat the cream cheese until fluffy, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. With mixer on low speed, add remaining 1 1/2 cups sugar in a steady stream. Add salt and vanilla, mix until well combined. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until just combined after each.

Spoon 3 tablespoons filling over crust in each cup. Place each tin in a roasting pan; pour enough hot water into pan to come three-quarters of the way up sides of cups. Bake, rotating pans halfway through, until filling is set, about 22 minutes. Carefully remove tins from water bath and transfer to wire racks to cool completely. Refrigerate at least 4 hours.

for the topping:

Combine all ingredients in a pot over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes.

Remove from heat and let cool slightly.

Serve cheesecakes chilled topped with warm fruit.