



VENISON STEW WITH SEASONAL VEGETABLES

From Simon King, chef/proprietor at restaurant 1861, near Abergavenny

Ingredients

- 1kg diced shoulder of venison
- 375mls red wine
- 1 litre beef stock
- 3 large carrots, diced
- 3 large onions, diced
- 4 cloves of garlic
- Tablespoon juniper berries, crushed

Method

Fry the venison and vegetables until golden brown on all sides, drain excess fat through a colander.
Boil the wine and reduce by half, add the stock and bring to the boil, then add your seared venison and vegetables and bring the whole mixture back to the boil and add your junipers.
Place in a medium oven 140C or gas mark 3 for two hours, or until tender. Drain the meat from the sauce, bring the sauce to the boil and reduce until you reach a rich consistency, return the meat to the sauce and season. Serve with savoy cabbage and mashed potato.

Make Bonfire Night go with a bang

Bonfire Night is just around the corner and there's nothing better than wrapping up warm and cosy and enjoying a firework display - then afterwards why not rustle up a tasty seasonal dish to make the occasion extra special? Here we look at three recipes from three local chefs...

VEGETARIAN BBQ PULLED CARROT HOT DOG

From Jim Dobson, head chef at Fox and Hounds, Llancafán

Ingredients

- 6 of your favourite vegetarian sausages
- 6 finger rolls
- 4 medium carrots - grated
- 2 shallots - finely sliced
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp onion powder
- 3 twists of black pepper
- BBQ sauce

Method

Pre heat oven to 210C. Mix together your grated carrot and sliced shallot in a bowl then mix in the spices and seasoning.
Spread on a baking tray and place in the oven for six minutes. Remove from oven, give a good mix around then back in the oven for another six minutes.
Remove from the oven then scrape in to a mixing bowl then wrap tightly with clingfilm to let it steam slightly. Once cool remove the cling film and mix in a couple of spoons of BBQ sauce. Cook your sausages as instructed on the packet.
Heat your BBQ carrots in the oven for a couple of minutes. Place your sausages into the sliced finger rolls and top with your BBQ carrots.



RICH, DARK COFFEE AND CHOCOLATE CAKE

From the Metropole Hotel & Spa, in Llandrindod Wells

Ingredients

- 200g unsalted butter (plus extra for greasing)
- 200g dark chocolate (70% cocoa)
- 6 large free range eggs
- 1 tablespoon strong coffee
- 250g golden caster sugar
- 70g cocoa powder
- Icing sugar for dusting

Method

Preheat the oven to 160 C/320 F/Gas 3. Grease a 20cm springform cake tin with a little butter and line with greaseproof paper.
Rest a medium heat-proof bowl over a pan of simmering water on a medium low heat. Break in the chocolate, roughly chop and add the butter, then allow to melt, stirring occasionally until smooth and glossy.
Carefully remove the bowl from the heat, stir in the coffee and set aside to cool slightly.
Separate the egg yolks and whites in two large bowls. Whisk the egg whites for one to two minutes or until soft peaks form.
Add the sugar to the yolks and beat for seven minutes or until pale. Sift in the cocoa powder and a pinch of sea salt, then gently fold through and combine. Stir in the melted chocolate mixture, then gently fold through the egg whites until smooth.
Transfer to the prepared tin and place in the hot oven for around an hour or until an inserted skewer comes out clean. Allow to cool completely on a wire cooling rack, then serve with a dusting of icing sugar and, if you like, fresh berries and vanilla ice cream.



STRAIGHT OFF THE VINE

Neil Cammies

WHEN doing my "research" I come across some wines that show off quite a bit of alcohol. This is a little rarer now as the market place demands more finesse and lighter wines, but there are still quite a few out there.
How does a wine attain higher percentage I hear you ask?
Well, some of the wines have been made using fruit that is left on the vine a little longer or the late summer - the time around harvest - has been particularly warm, resulting in riper fruit, therefore more sugar is produced and this creates more alcohol in fermentation.
One Californian zinfandel, at a tasting many moons back, was bordering on 17

“Some contain big numbers but deliver the knockout punch in a velvet glove”

degrees of alcohol and it singed the hairs up my nose - an ever-growing issue as the years roll by - when I went to take in its heady aromas. Tasted great though - lots of cola cube sweetness, I kid ye not!
The counterpoint to that is there are some which contain big numbers but deliver the knockout punch in a velvet glove.
Take Amarone, for instance. This wonderful Italian thoroughbred, made in Veneto from air drying corvina and rondinella grapes in great barns, the alcohol regularly drifts past the 15% mark yet has so much structure, acidity and purity of fruit that you hardly notice its weight.
I've listed a few warming reds that have a gentle attack on the palate and an elegant mouth feel.
It'll come as no surprise that the WAKEFIELD JARAMAN SHIRAZ (RRP £16.99 or £14.99 mix six, Majestic, Fareham Wine Cellar and Hennings Wine) also weighs in at 14.5% given that Aussie shiraz was most people's introduction to the



heftier style of vin rouge. With the trend for Australian wine makers to calm down their alcoholic content, there are some that want to retain the bolder style.
Even though more than 60% of the fruit comes from the cooler Clare Valley region the addition of grapes from the McLaren Vale certainly adds plenty of oomph.
The bouquet of deep plum fruit, blackberries and the darkest of cherry fruit has a spicy chocolate note. The two regions combine to show power and finesse in equal measure on the palate.
Lots of elegance through the mid palate with the silky tannins combining with a smidge of pepper and liquorice tones.
The finish is a mile long and this superb vintage with give pleasure for at least five or so years if you can hang onto to it for that long. I couldn't.
As mentioned, the Aussies were famous for their muscular reds that were unashamedly large and one such wine is the ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM, STUPENDOUS SHIRAZ, LANGHORNE CREEK 2017 (£13.99 or £10.99 mix six, Majestic).
Deep, inky fruit on the nose almost fills the room and is a clue of things to come. Hefty blackberry

fruit is ripe and expansive on the bouquet but as it develops in the glass a little later the wine shows a little floral lift.
Across the palate the fruit batters the tastebuds - but in a good way - coating them with wave upon wave of rich hedgerow notes and firm tannins.
A little zip of acidity comes through across the mid palate and as you'd expect the finish is long and generous.
This "throwback" shiraz harks back to the "good old days" when big wines were all the rage and there is certainly a place for them now.
Chile certainly has a reputation for bigger styles of wine but in the right hands the wines can have delicacy and balance.
The ERRAZURIZ MAX RESERVA CABERNET SAUVIGNON (RRP£12.99, Waitrose, Sainsbury's, Hailsham Cellars, www.winedirect.co.uk) is just such a fella. Planted more than two decades ago in the Max vineyards in the Aconcagua Valley, the cabernet produces the most pungent of blackcurrant aromas. As you'd expect, this translates directly on the palate with a



touch of pencil shavings in there as well.
The maturation in oak gives the wine some warm winter spices across the mid palate and the finish is fresh and crisp due to the bright acidity throughout.
For the bigger reds in Spain you normally look to the regions of Priorat or Toro but the BERONIA RESERVA RIOJA 2013 (RRP £14.49, Waitrose, Majestic, Tesco.com, Ocado) is a big chap at 14%. This throaty Rioja utilises tempranillo, graciano and mazuelo varieties which have had 18 months in French and American oak then 20 months in bottle, effectively doing the cellaring for you. The bouquet has juicy cherry fruits which have a touch of leather about them. In the mouth the fruit carries some cinnamon spice but instead of dulling the senses it has a velvety texture with sweet vanilla notes and elegant tannins.
This is a big, modern style winter Rioja.



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