

Innovative chefs create winning combinations

related story on Taste from MON JIN LAU THAI CHICKEN WITH PEANUT SAUCE AND RICE NOODLES

Noodle preparation:
12 ounces Thailand Rice Noodles (available in Asian markets)
8 ounces cold water
In a large bowl, soak noodles in cold water 45 minutes. Drain in a colander and set aside.

NOODLE MARINADE:

- 1 tablespoon finely grated fresh ginger root
- 1/2 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
- 1 teaspoon dried chili flakes
- 3 tablespoons sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons pure honey
- 3 tablespoons lite-brewed soy sauce
- 1/2 cup julienne red peppers
- 1/2 cup julienne cucumbers
- 1/2 cup shredded green onions
- 1/2 cup julienne carrots

Combine marinade ingredients in a medium bowl, then toss noodles and vegetables together.

CHICKEN PREPARATION:
3/4 pound sliced chicken breast
1 large egg white
1 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
1 1/2 teaspoons Chinese rice wine or quality dry sherry

- 2 tablespoons corn starch
- 4 to 6 tablespoons corn or peanut oil
- Garnish: ground peanuts

In a medium bowl, combine chicken with all ingredients except oil and marinate for 20 minutes. Heat wok or heavy skillet over high heat. Add oil and stir fry chicken (with marinade) until it turns white and is cooked thoroughly.

Four off excess oil. Combine chicken with peanut sauce (recipe follows). Place chicken with peanut sauce over rice noodles. Garnish with ground peanuts.

SPICY PEANUT SAUCE

- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1/4 cup rice wine vinegar
- 6 tablespoons cold water
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons minced peeled fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 6 tablespoons smooth peanut butter, at room temperature
- 3 tablespoons peanut oil
- 3 tablespoons Asian sesame oil
- 1/2 teaspoon chilli oil

Place the soy sauce, vinegar, water, sugar, salt, ginger, and garlic in a blender. Process on high speed until the ginger and garlic are smoothed into the liquid, about 1 minute. Add the peanut butter and process for 1 minute longer.

Combine the oils and drizzle into the sauce with the blender running on low speed. Store covered in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Bring to room temperature before serving. Makes 1 1/4 cups.

Recipe from "Sheila Lukins All Around the World Cookbook," (Workman Publishing, Inc. 1994)

OPUS ONE SEAFOOD QUENELLES WITH LOBSTER SAUCE

- For quenelles:**
1 cup peeled and deveined shrimp
1 cup bay scallops
1 egg white
1/4 teaspoon salt
pinch white pepper
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon heavy cream
2 quarts hot lobster stock for poaching
- For lobster sauce:**
6 cups lobster stock
1 tablespoon minced shallots
1 cup champagne or white wine
1 teaspoon clarified butter
1 1/2 teaspoons tomato paste
1 cup heavy cream
salt and white pepper to taste
1 tablespoon arrow root or cornstarch
1/4 cup dry sherry

In a sauce pan, reduce lobster stock to one cup. In a small saute pan, cook shallots in butter briefly. Add wine and reduce by 3/4. Add to reduced stock.

Dissolve arrow root in two tablespoons cold water. Bring stock mixture to a boil. Add arrow root mixture to stock, whisking briskly. Bring to simmer. Add tomato paste. Whisk in well. Add heavy cream and season to taste with salt and pepper. Add dry sherry and simmer five minutes longer. Reserve.

Disolve arrow root in two tablespoons cold water. Bring stock mixture to a boil. Add arrow root mixture to stock, whisking briskly. Bring to simmer. Add tomato paste. Whisk in well. Add heavy cream and season to taste with salt and pepper. Add dry sherry and simmer five minutes longer. Reserve.

For quenelles:
1 cup peeled and deveined shrimp
1 cup bay scallops
1 egg white
1/4 teaspoon salt
pinch white pepper
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon heavy cream
2 quarts hot lobster stock for poaching

Place shrimp and scallops in a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Pulse until fine. Add egg white, salt, pepper, garlic powder and cream to processor bowl. Blend until well mixed.

Drop teaspoon-size portions of mixture into simmering lobster stock until seafood is firm. Remove quenelles with a slotted spoon and reserve on wax paper.

Quenelles can be made in advance and refrigerated to be reheated in the finished lobster sauce before serving. Serves 4.

Wine suggestion: 1995 Robert Mondavi Napa Valley Chardonnay.

LUIGIS LAMB CHOPS

- 2 pound lamb chops
- For marinade:
1/2 cup olive oil
1 teaspoon minced fresh garlic
Juice of 1/2 lemon
Italian seasoning mix of choice, added to taste
salt and pepper to taste

- For topping lamb chops:
1/2 ounce olive oil
1 teaspoon freshly minced garlic
8 ounces washed spinach, stems removed
4 quartered and sliced Roma tomatoes.
Garnish:
2 ounces crumbled feta cheese

Marinate lamb chops a minimum of one hour and maximum of two days. Season and broil lamb chops to desired temperature.

Heat saute pan. When hot, add the olive oil, garlic, spinach and tomatoes. Saute one minute.

Top broiled lamb chops with spinach and tomato mixture, then top with crumbled feta cheese. Serves 2.

Wine suggestion: 1993 Grgich Hills Zinfandel.

SCALLOP AND PASTA SALAD WITH FRESH HERBS

- 4 ounces fettucine pasta
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped shallot
- 2 tablespoons chardonnay wine
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1/2 cup cream
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound fresh scallops
- 1 tablespoon fresh tarragon, chopped
- 1 tablespoon chives, chopped

- 1/2 pound mixed baby salad greens
- 1 cup seeded and diced tomato
- For dressing:
1/4 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1/2 teaspoon salt and freshly ground pepper, combined

Cook pasta in boiling, salted water. Drain and rinse under cold water. Place shallots, wine, lemon zest and cream in a saucepan. Cook until the mixture is slightly reduced and thickened. Add the pasta and lemon juice and season with salt and pepper. Set aside covered.

Heat olive oil in a non-stick saute pan and quickly sear scallops about 1 minute on each side until nicely browned.

Mix all ingredients for the dressing together and pour half of it over the hot scallops and sprinkle half the herbs over them also.

Place dressed greens on the center of each plate and divide the sauced pasta over the greens. Place the scallops on top and sprinkle with the diced tomato and remaining herbs. Serves 4.

Wine suggestion: 1995 Robert Mondavi Napa Valley Chardonnay.

Recipe by Annie Roberts, Executive Chef, Robert Mondavi Winery.

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Toque from page B1

the new release of California's Etude Pinot Blanc from the Carmers region.

"Pinot Blanc provides an exciting option to chardonnay," Kilano said. "It matches spiciness in dishes better than chardonnay or sauvignon blanc."

"We made some adjustments to our existing Thai chicken recipe for the competition because we used steam tables which are always a challenge," Chin said. "We're suggesting a

recipe to somewhat duplicate the experience, but our peanut sauce preparation is an ancient Chinese secret!"

Chin also remarked that the balanced acidity and creamy body of the wine held up to the special spices in the sauce. If you want to taste the real thing, visit Mon Jin Lau soon and try it with Etude Pinot Blanc, a wine in limited quantity, which is being served by the glass.

Opus One
Seafood Quenelles with Lobster Champagne Sauce were paired with 1995 Robert Mondavi Napa Valley Chardonnay and garnered the second place award for Detroit's Opus One executive chef Tim Ginzsky.

The preparation also took high marks for presentation. Each serving plate was given a garnish and design with a sweet balsamic glaze and a red pepper coulis applied from a squeeze

bottle. The quenelles were set atop the plate's garnish. Integration of these flavors enhanced the dish and its match with the wine.

"After trying several wines, the Mondavi Chardonnay was chosen to complement the richness and complexity of the seafood as well as the lobster sauce served with the quenelles," Ginzsky explained. It's interesting to note that when we inquired about a food harmony for this wine, winemaker Tim Mondavi's first suggestion was

seafood. Way to go, Opus One!

Luigis Downtown
"In some circles, there is a big deal made about the pairings of food and wine," Luigis Downtown general managing partner Jim Salazar said. His restaurant, in Mt. Clemens, took third place for chef Ron Hofer's Luigis Lamb Chops paired with 1993 Grgich Hills Zinfandel.

"I think simpler preparations are always best when a chef is trying to both show off the food and the wine," Hofer added.

There are proprietary spices in this recipe. As its replacement, Hofer is recommending a blend of Italian spices as a seasoning alternative.

"The key to matching food and wine is balance," Salazar continued. "Neither the food nor the wine should overpower the other. We had some interesting challenges facing us pairing our house specialty lamb chops with an appropriate wine. Lamb has a distinctive and strong flavor and the recipe calls for a fairly heavy marinade. The spinach and tomatoes lend an acidic character to the dish and feta is certainly among the bigger-flavored cheeses."

Decanter Imports had its second winning wine match. On-premise sales person Carl Boehm credits Salazar for making the final decision on the wine. "At first a Chianti Classico Riserva was considered," he said. "But something was missing and Jim was looking for the perfect match. He found it when Decanter's owner Judy Dunn changed the focus to zinfandel with lamb."

The true secret ingredient to matching a dish with wine is continual testing of the dish and adjusting spice ingredients along with salt and pepper until the right harmony is achieved. Chefs' house recipes should be taken as broad guidelines.

Their raw ingredients change with nearly every delivery of meat, poultry, seafood or produce. But recipes prepared in each chef's kitchen have consistency because they continually TASTE - that's the well-chosen name of this section you're reading!

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