

Game Plan

The protein is a little exotic, but the dishes can be comfortably familiar when you cook with game.

By Kay Orde



Cervena Venison

Soup? Osso Buco? They're well-known to most of your diners, but when you craft these comfort foods with game, they take on a whole new flavor. Combine these recipes with pasta, or serve with a zesty surprise, such as a fruit salsa. Get creative with venison medallions, or try a hearty soup that features elk. These flavorful dishes will have your customers coming back for more.

Cervena Venison Osso Buco, Farrotto and Dried-Plum Salsa Seca

Robbie Lewis, former Chef
Bacar
San Francisco

Yield: 6 servings

- 1 leek
- 1 white onion
- 1 carrot
- ½ bunch celery
- 6 Cervena Venison of New Zealand osso buco, wrapped in thinly sliced smoked bacon
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 garlic bulb, skin removed, cloves separated
- 1 bunch each thyme and sage
- ½ teaspoon black peppercorns

6 cups red wine
 3 T. butter, divided
 Salt and pepper
 Grapeseed oil
 4 cups veal or chicken stock
 Farrotto (recipe follows)
 Dried-Plum Salsa Seca (recipe follows)

1) Cut leek, onion, carrot and celery into ½-inch-dice mirepoix. Put osso buco in deep baking dish; cover with mirepoix vegetables, bay leaf, garlic, thyme, sage and peppercorns. Cover with red wine; refrigerate for 12 hours. **2)** Preheat oven to 250°F to 300°F. Remove osso buco from red wine; pat dry with paper towel. Pour wine through strainer; reserve vegetables. Put wine in pan; reduce by half. **3)** Season osso buco generously with salt and pepper. Put skillet over medium-high heat; when hot, add grapeseed oil. Sear osso buco on all sides. Put in roasting pan; add reserved vegetables. Pour reduced red wine on top. Cover with stock. Put roasting pan in oven; cook at low simmer until tender, 2 to 3 hours. (Do not allow osso buco to boil and become tough.) **4)** Cool; store in liquid up to 3 days. **5)** To serve: Reheat osso buco. Remove from cooking liquid; discard vegetables. Put cooking liquid in pan; reduce slightly. On one side of plate, put small mound of farrotto; top with osso buco. On other side, place two quenelles of plum salsa seca. Drizzle reduced sauce around meat. Garnish with whole plum and sautéed mushrooms, if desired.

Farrotto

¾ cup chopped onion
 2 garlic cloves, chopped

¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
 2½ cups farro
 ¾ cup white wine
 6 cups hot vegetable broth
 2 T. unsalted butter
 3 T. chopped Italian parsley

Method: In high-sided, heavy pan over medium heat, sauté onion and garlic in ½ cup olive oil, until soft. Add farro; stir to coat with oil. Add wine; cook until evaporated. Begin ladling in broth, stirring frequently. Let farro absorb broth before adding next ladle. Continue cooking for approximately 20 minutes, until grains are soft yet chewy inside. Remove farrotto from heat. Stir in butter, parsley and remaining olive oil.

Dried-Plum Salsa Seca

1 cup pitted dried plums (prunes)
 2 cups Madeira
 ½ cup toasted chopped walnuts
 2 t. red-wine vinegar
 2 t. extra-virgin olive oil
 Salt and pepper, to taste
 1 T. chopped parsley

Method: Put dried plums in saucepan; cover with Madeira. Gently simmer on very low heat for 30 minutes to reconstitute plums and reduce Madeira to syrup. Strain

plums from Madeira, reserving syrup. Chop plums. Put in mixing bowl. Add walnuts, Madeira syrup, vinegar and olive oil. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Mix in chopped parsley just before serving.

Wild Boar Ragu with Pappardelle

Jason Weiner, Chef/Proprietor
 Almoncello
 Wainscott, N.Y.

Yield: 4 servings

1 lb. boneless wild boar neck, small dice
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 1 oz. extra-virgin olive oil
 1 T. butter
 1 small Spanish onion, minced
 1 small carrot, minced
 1 T. minced garlic
 1 pinch red-pepper flakes
 2 fresh Roma tomatoes, medium dice
 1 T. high-quality tomato paste
 ½ cup veal stock
 4 portions fresh pasta, rolled thin, cut by hand 1½-inches wide.
 1 oz. heavy cream
 1 T. high-quality red-wine vinegar





1 t. chopped parsley
1 T. grated Reggiano Parmigiano

1) Heat medium saucepot on high heat. Season boar generously with salt and pepper. When pot is quite hot, add boar, oil and butter all at once. Allow meat to brown thoroughly. **2)** Add onion and carrot. Reduce heat; sweat vegetables until slightly caramelized. Add garlic. When garlic releases aroma, add red-pepper flakes, tomatoes and tomato paste. Cook for another few minutes. Add veal stock. Cover; barely simmer for 30 minutes. (After 30 minutes, boar should be tender, if not, continue to simmer.) **3)** Drop pasta in boiling salted water. While pasta is cooking, add cream and vinegar to ragu; turn up heat. When pasta is ready, add to ragu

with parsley and cheese. Adjust seasoning and consistency. If ragu is a bit thick, splash a little pasta water in it.

Bacon-wrapped Cervena Venison Medallions, Pear Allumette, Truffle Jus and Forest Mushrooms

Todd Gray, Executive Chef/Co-owner
Equinox
Washington, D.C.

Yield: 6 servings

2 lbs. Cervena Venison loin
24 slices applewood bacon, 1/8-inch thick
Salt and pepper, to taste
8 T. olive oil, divided
1 1/2 cups shiitake mushrooms
1 1/2 cups oyster mushrooms
1 1/2 cups morel mushrooms
1 cup shallots, sliced
3 garlic cloves, sliced
12 oz. truffle jus
2 pears, cut into allumette (thin matchstick) shapes
1 cup frisée lettuce
1/4 cup lemon dressing (50/50 lemon juice and olive oil)
12 chervil sprigs

1) Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut venison in rectangular log shapes, approx 6-inch by 2-inch. On flat surface, lay clear wrap film in 12-inch by 12-inch shape. Put bacon slices on film. Season venison with salt and pepper; put on bacon strips. Pull film up to assist in roll-up process. Wrap venison in cylindrical shapes; refrigerate. **2)** Heat large sauté pan to medium-high.

Add 6 T. olive oil and mushrooms; sweat mushrooms for 3 minutes. Add shallots, garlic and salt and pepper; cook an additional 5 minutes until mushrooms are well cooked. **3)** Sauté bacon wrapped venison in remaining olive oil to render bacon. Put venison in oven; roast to medium-rare, about 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from oven; allow venison to rest. **4)** In small saucepot, heat truffle jus over medium heat. **5)** In small bowl, toss together pear allumettes, frisée lettuce, lemon dressing, chervil and salt and pepper; mix well to combine. **6)** Heat six large plates. Mound mushrooms in center of plate. Slice venison into 1/2-inch medallions; place on mushrooms. Top with salad. Drizzle truffle jus around.

Elk Soup

John Gorham, Chef/Owner
Toro Bravo
Portland, Ore.

Yield: 6 servings

Homemade Pasta

12 egg yolks
1/2 cup milk
1 T. olive oil
19 oz. flour
1 T. salt
Fresh parsley

Blend egg yolks, milk and olive oil in blender. Using dough hook, mix with flour and salt until ball forms. Roll; cut thin noodles. Just before serving, cook pasta in salted water. Strain; toss with fresh parsley.