

FLAVOR

# In Praise of Pasta

This versatile product can be used in so many delicious ways.

By Ray Cris

In spite of a propensity for people to shun carbs these days, pasta is holding its own. This is due, in large part, to chefs' creative use of pasta's many versions in all menu parts. Pairing pasta with protein, whether meat or fish/shellfish, is a natural, and we offer several recipes here. Diners who prefer a vegetarian dish are not forgotten, however.



Cervena Venison of New Zealand

## Cervena Venison Loin with Spring Pea Ravioli, Fontina Fondue and Pea Tendrils

Steve Mannino, Executive Chef  
The Mayflower Inn  
Washington, Conn.

Yield: 4 servings

- 2 T. + 2 oz. vegetable oil
- 2 t. chopped rosemary
- 1 T. chopped garlic
- 2 T. chopped shallot
- 2 lbs. Cervena venison loin
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste
- 3 T. + 3 oz. butter
- 2 T. finely chopped shallot
- 2 oz. red wine
- 8 oz. veal jus
- 2 rosemary sprigs
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1½ t. salt
- 6 oz. water

4 oz. mascarpone cheese  
 1 t. sugar  
 2 oz. panko breadcrumbs  
 4 fresh mint leaves, chopped fine  
 1 T. + 1 oz. grated Parmesan cheese  
 32 wonton wrappers  
 Water in spray bottle  
 1 oz. grated fontina  
 6 oz. pea tendrils  
 1 squeeze half a lemon  
 Extra-virgin olive oil, as needed for service  
 Fresh-grated Parmesan, as needed for service

1) In bowl, mix 2 T. vegetable oil, rosemary, garlic and 1 T. chopped shallot. Rub over venison loin. Marinate at least 4 hours, covered, in refrigerator. 2) Preheat oven to 350°F. Remove half marinade from venison; season venison with salt and pepper. In cast-iron pan over medium-high heat, sear venison, bottom side down, in 2 oz. vegetable oil. Turn meat. Add butter; baste loin 3 minutes. Place pan in oven; roast venison until medium-rare. Remove from oven; rest venison 5 minutes. Slice into 2 oz. pieces. 3) Remove fat from

pan; put pan on medium heat. Add finely chopped shallot; sauté 1 minute. Deglaze with red wine; reduce until dry. Add veal jus and rosemary; stir sauce with wooden spoon 2-3 minutes. Pass sauce through fine-mesh strainer. Reserve. 4) For ravioli, put peas, salt and 3 oz. water in Robot Coupe or blender; pulse until thick paste forms, about 1 minute. Put pea mixture in medium bowl; whisk in mascarpone, sugar, breadcrumbs, mint and 1 T. Parmesan. Place an equal amount of filling (about ¼ oz.) in center of 16 wonton wrappers. Spray each wrapper with cool water; top with another wrapper. Press edges to seal; use 2-inch round cookie cutter to trim. Refrigerate. Bring large pot of salted water to a boil. Gently add ravioli; cook until they float, approximately 2 minutes. While cooking ravioli, prepare fondue. Heat together 3 oz. butter and remaining water until butter melts. Gently stir in remaining Parmesan and fontina; season with kosher salt. When ravioli are cooked, place in fondue; immediately remove from heat. 5) For pea tendrils, bring 2 oz. vegetable oil to smoke point over high heat. Add remaining chopped shallot;

immediately add pea tendrils. Stir quickly. Season with kosher salt and lemon juice. Remove from pan to dry paper towel. 6) For service: Put 4 raviolis on each plate with ¼ of fondue. Put 2-oz. slice venison loin on each ravioli. Put pinch of kosher salt on top of venison. Drizzle sauce on top; garnish with pea tendrils. Finish with drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil and fresh-grated Parmesan cheese.

