

# INDULGE

Miami Herald

DECEMBER 2014 / JANUARY 2015

*the life*

{ENTERTAINING}

## *the winter* Table

The international trio behind **Le Basque Catering** serves up carefully curated dishes that look and taste like works of art.





Each year during Art Basel week, Le Basque Catering's partners — a passionate Basque, a polished Englishman and a pragmatic American — and their global team produce up to 10 parties a day, each with its own feel, menu, guest list and needs.



“E very party is different,” says Jim Mozina, co-owner, chief operations officer and the pragmatic American who masterminds logistics. “We want each event to reflect the individual.”

Those individuals have included President Barack Obama, designer Carolina Herrera, the Fanjul sugar family and actor Sylvester Stallone. Corporate clients are equally stellar, from Yves St. Laurent to Dom Perignon.

“It’s all about being able to work with people,” Executive Vice President Ian Perris says with a mastery of understatement. He’s the polished Englishman and his clients’ gentle guide.

In Europe, a cocktail party means an hour of air kisses, drink and polite chat. In Miami, Perris explains, we may not be prompt or formal, but we come ready to party. And eat. Le Basque delivers with a fantasy look and feast.

In an oceanview penthouse at South Beach’s Continuum, Alejandro Muguerra, LeBasque’s passionate Basque and president, creates a windswept “wintery beach and sand look” for the ultimate holiday buffet. Bedecking the table are silvery Dusty Miller greens and field-fresh Queen Anne’s Lace. The designed-to-delight menu combines elegance and whimsy, starting luxe with foie canapes and caviar crêpes, then moving to “more humble ingredients like orzo and Eton Mess, a traditional school boy dessert favorite.”

Then Le Basque prepares for the next party.

As Art Basel Week closes and everyone else collapses, “we are already happily thinking of what we could do for the next year,” Muguerra says. “We never repeat the same event twice.”

#### **BUFFET DINNER**

Herb-Crusted Double Rack of Lamb, Port Reduction, Caramelized Rainbow Carrots\*

Lobster Caldereta with Licorice, Saffron and Fennel Orzo\*

Saffron and Prosecco Risotto with Bone Marrow Dessert

Eton Mess\*

Poached Pear, Humboldt Fog Goat Cheese Ice Cream

\* Recipe included







## Maine Lobster With Licorice Orzo

Makes 4 servings

### Lobster:

- 6 cups cold water
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup celery, chopped
- 1/2 cup leek, chopped
- 1/4 cup carrot, chopped
- 3 sprigs thyme
- 3 sprigs parsley
- 3 sprigs rosemary
- 2 lemons, halved
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 4 Maine lobsters (1 1/2 to 2 pounds each)
- 3 cups light olive oil for frying

### Lobster broth:

- 1 fennel bulb, coarsely chopped
- 2 tablespoons lobster base\*
- 2 quarts water
- 1 carrot, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 Spanish onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon saffron threads
- 4 ounces lobster scraps and shells

### Licorice caramel:

- 3 ounces hard black licorice candy
- 1 cup water

### Orzo:

- 12 ounces orzo
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup fennel, diced
- 1 cup leek, finely chopped
- 1 cup carrot, diced
- 1/4 cup Pernod\*\*
- 1 cup freshly chopped dill

1. Heat the water in a deep lobster pot over medium-high heat. Add chopped celery, leek and carrot and the thyme, parsley and rosemary, lemon halves and white wine. Let simmer 10 to 15 minutes, then raise heat and bring to a boil. Add lobster. Cook 8 minutes per pound. Remove lobsters, let cool, then chill.

2. Clean claws and tail, and remove meat from carcasses and separate heads, keeping the antennae.

3. Heat the oil in a deep medium saucepan over high heat. Fry lobster heads. When lobster heads turn a deep coral, about 1 to 2 minutes, remove from heat. Reserve for garnish.

4. For lobster broth, combine the chopped fennel, lobster base, water, chopped carrot, chopped onion, saffron and lobster scraps and shells in a deep pot. Heat over medium-high heat. Simmer for 20 to 25 minutes, or until fragrant. Strain and return pot to burner to keep warm.

5. For the licorice caramel, heat the water in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the hard licorice candy and stir occasionally, letting licorice dissolve. Continue cooking until mixture is reduced and is thick and syrupy, about 15 minutes. Set aside.

6. For the orzo, heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a deep saute pan over medium-high heat. Add the diced fennel, chopped leek and diced carrot. Saute, stirring occasionally, letting the vegetables soften, about 8 to 10 minutes. Deglaze the pan with the Pernod. Stir and let liquid reduce. Stir in orzo.

7. Add 1/2 cup of the heated lobster broth to the orzo. Stir and let liquid reduce, as with making risotto. Repeat with the remaining broth and continue until orzo is al dente, about 10 minutes.

8. Finish with the chopped dill and drizzle in remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil.

9. Place orzo in the center of 4 10" plates. Place lobster tail and claws as if forming the shape of the lobster. Garnish with lobster head and drizzle with the licorice caramel.

\* Available in gourmet markets such as Epicure.

\*\* Anise liqueur

## Halibut and Blood Orange Ceviche

Makes 2 to 4 servings

- 8 ounces halibut, diced
- 2 teaspoons Maldon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic paste (or 1 small garlic clove, minced)
- 1/4 cup shallot, chopped
- 1 cup yellow peppers, finely chopped
- 1 cup fresh lime juice
- 1 cup fresh blood orange juice\*
- 1/4 teaspoon aji amarillo powder\*\*
- 1/4 cup extra light virgin olive oil

### For garnish:

- 1/3 cup additional yellow pepper, finely chopped
- Micro amaranth flowers or other microgreens

1. In a large bowl, gently toss halibut with sea salt, garlic paste, shallot and yellow pepper. Let rest for 5 minutes.
2. Add lime and blood orange juices and mix gently. Let the mixture rest and "cook" in the liquid for 10 to 15 minutes. The fish will become firmer, whiter and more opaque. Drizzle in olive oil and sprinkle in aji amarillo (more if you enjoy spicy).
3. Place a spoonful of yellow pepper in each of 4 Asian spoons or, if using two 2-ounce ramekins, 2 spoonfuls each. Top with fish and decorate with a few amaranth flowers or microgreens.

\* Deep crimson and sweet, blood oranges are in season December through March.

\*\* A zesty Peruvian chili powder available at many ethnic market and gourmet stores.





the life

## Herb-Crusted Double Cut Rack of Lamb

Port Reduction, Caramelized Rainbow Carrots

Makes 4 servings

For lamb:

- 6 thyme sprigs
- 2 rosemary sprigs
- 6 sage leaves
- 2 teaspoons fresh oregano
- 4 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves
- 2 tablespoons prepared Dijon mustard
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 Colorado lamb racks, Frenched\* salt and pepper

For reduction:

- 2 cups port wine
- 2 cups veal broth
- 1 thyme sprig
- 2 cloves garlic

For caramelized carrots:

- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons butter, chilled
- 16 baby rainbow carrots (feathery green tops trimmed and blanched)

1. In a mini food processor, briefly chop the thyme, rosemary, sage, oregano, parsley and garlic. Add Dijon mustard and olive oil. Process again briefly until the mixture forms a soft paste.
2. Season lamb on both sides with salt and pepper. Rub marinade all over the meat, but keep the bones clean. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
4. Heat olive oil in a large skillet, over

high heat. Sear the lamb for 10 minutes, or until golden brown. Turn the racks over and repeat on the other side. Place lamb in a roasting pan and place in oven for 8 to 10 minutes for medium-rare lamb (for medium doneness, bake for another 5 minutes). Let meat rest 5 minutes before serving.

5. In a medium saucepan, heat the port and veal broth over high heat until it comes to a simmer. Add the thyme and garlic. Continue cooking and stirring occasionally, for about 25 minutes or until the port and broth become thick and syrupy and have reduced by two-thirds. Strain.

6. In a deep saute pan, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter over medium heat. Stir in the brown sugar until dissolved. Add carrots and saute for about 8 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until carrots become tender and caramelize. Add 1/2 cup of the wine and stock reduction, cooking down until most of the liquid evaporates. Add the additional 2 tablespoons of butter, stirring, until carrots are glossy and golden brown.

7. Serve four lamb chops and four carrots per serving, drizzling remaining port reduction over lamb.

\* Frenching means removing the fat, meat and membranes from the bones to create an elegant presentation.



## Eton Mess

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Macerated berries:

- 1 pint strawberries, cleaned and halved
- 1 pint blackberries
- 3 tablespoons vodka
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest, grated
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
- pinch kosher salt
- 1/4 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- 1 to 2 tablespoons sugar

Topping:

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 1/2 teaspoon powdered sugar
- 1/2 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- 2 small bags of crisp baked meringues (suspiritos)

1. Combine the strawberries, blackberries, vodka, lemon zest, lemon juice, balsamic vinegar and salt in a large bowl. Using a knife, scrape the seeds of the vanilla bean into the bowl. Add a tablespoon

of sugar. Stir gently but thoroughly and taste for sweetness, adding the additional tablespoon of sugar if necessary. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to 1 hour.

2. Pour cream into a large bowl. Sprinkle in powdered sugar. Using a knife, scrape the seeds out of the vanilla bean and into the bowl with the cream. Discard the pod. With a whisk or handheld electric mixer, whip the cream to semi-stiff peaks. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

3. To assemble, crumble the meringues into a large bowl. Pieces should be irregularly sized, from small crumbs to large chunks. Fold in sweetened whipped cream. Add three-fourths of the strawberries and their juices, stirring gently until the whipped cream has red streaks and the berries are evenly distributed. Carefully scoop the meringues into a large serving bowl. Scatter remaining berries on top and drizzle the rest of the berry juice. Serve immediately.