

COOKING & DINING

CHEFS AT HOME/Michael Paley

Sea Scallops — Kentucky Style



Looking ahead to next week's Derby, the chef who's shaking up Louisville's food scene shares recipes starring country ham and bourbon.

THE CHEF: Michael Paley, chosen by New York-based restaurateur Drew Nieporent to launch Proof on Main in Louisville, Ky. It's part of the 21C Hotel and Museum, owned by philanthropists and art collectors Steve Wilson and his wife, Brown-Forman heiress Laura Lee Brown.

BIOGRAPHY: A New Jersey native, Mr. Paley started out chopping vegetables at a bowling-alley restaurant, but he's cooked mostly in Florida. Mr. Nieporent and his partners at Myriad Restaurant Group (which includes Nobu and Tribeca Grill in New York) plucked the chef from Lucca in Boca Raton, Fla.

THE MEAL: A twist on the traditional Southern ham salad, sea scallops with caramelized spaghetti squash, plus a molten white chocolate cake.

THE HAM: For his salad, he uses double-smoked ham from small farmers in Kentucky. You can substitute country ham.

BOURBON: The chef and his team tasted most of the wheat-based and rye-based bourbons produced in Kentucky. The bar serves some 40 brands, including the Woodford Reserve he uses in his aioli.

KITCHEN TIP: To make aioli, use a blender instead of whisking by hand. Start with a cold egg yolk and add lemon juice, shallots, mustard and any other flavorings before you drizzle in the olive oil.

SHOPPING TIP: Don't pay less than \$6 a bottle for sherry vinegar or red-wine vinegar. Along with good olive oil, he says, "those are the basis for everything."

—Kathryn Kranhold

Double-Smoked-Ham Salad with Apples, Toasted Pecans, Blue Cheese and Bourbon Aioli



Yield: 6 servings
Active preparation time: 25 minutes

- 3 large heads bibb lettuce
- 1 pound double-smoked ham or country ham, shredded
- 2 Granny Smith apples, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 cup good quality, crumbled blue cheese, preferably Maytag blue
- ¾ cup toasted whole pecans
- ¼ cup tarragon leaves
- ¼ cup chopped chives
- ¼ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 large shallot, finely chopped
- ¾ cup Proof Bourbon Aioli
- Salt
- Freshly ground pepper

▪ Separate bibb lettuce into leaves, breaking largest ones in half.

▪ In a large mixing bowl, place lettuce, ham, apples, blue cheese, pecans, herbs, shallots and the aioli. Mix well.

Add salt and pepper to taste.

▪ Portion salad evenly among six cold serving plates. Serve immediately.

Note: One online source the chef recommends for double-smoked ham from Kentucky is www.newsomscountryham.com. Ask for smoky BBQ ham, or "preacher ham."

Proof Bourbon Aioli



Yield: 1 cup
Active preparation time: 10 minutes

- 1 tablespoon finely chopped shallot
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup champagne or white wine vinegar
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt
- ¾ cup virgin olive oil (or extra-virgin blended with an equal amount of any vegetable oil)
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Dash of bourbon (about 1 tablespoon)



Double-smoked-ham Salad with Apples, Toasted Pecans, Blue Cheese and Bourbon Aioli

▪ In the jar of a blender, combine the shallot, Dijon mustard, lemon juice, vinegar, egg yolk and salt. Blend on high speed and slowly drizzle in the oil to form an emulsified dressing. If the aioli becomes too thick, add a drop of hot water to thin it out.

▪ Season with pepper to taste and a dash of bourbon (a little goes a long way).

Sea Scallops 'Piccata' With Caramelized Spaghetti Squash, Capers and Raisins



Yield: Serves 6
Active preparation time: 45 minutes
Soaking time: 1 hour or overnight (for raisins)
Cooking time: 15 minutes

2 spaghetti squash, about 4 pounds, halved lengthwise
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1 stick unsalted butter, cut into tablespoon-sized pieces, plus 3 tablespoons
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons capers
6 caperberries, halved
2 tablespoons golden raisins soaked in ¼ cup white wine vinegar, drained (for best results, soak overnight)
2 tablespoons chopped chives
24 large sea scallops
10 fresh sage leaves

▪ To make the squash: Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Scrape out and discard the seeds from the squash halves. Season the squash with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place cut side down on a foil-lined baking sheet and bake until fork tender, about 30 minutes.

▪ When the squash is cool enough to handle, pull a fork lengthwise through the flesh to separate it into long strands. Set the squash aside.

▪ To make the piccata sauce: In a medium saucepan, bring 2 tablespoons of water to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, and whisking constantly, add 1 stick of the butter, in pieces, until it is all melted. (Add another piece only after the one before it is fully melted; don't let the sauce come to a boil or it will separate). The result should be a creamy, emulsified, melted butter sauce. Add the 1 tablespoon of the lemon juice, the capers, caperberries, raisins and chives to the butter and set aside.

▪ To finish the dish: Heat a large sauté pan over medium high heat and add the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Season the scallops with salt and pepper and add to the hot oil. Brown on the first side for three minutes. Turn over and cook another three minutes on the other side. Transfer the scallops to a plate and tent with foil while you make the squash.

▪ In the same pan, add the remaining 3 tablespoons of butter and the sage leaves. When the butter begins to brown, add the spaghetti squash and



toss in the browned butter until lightly golden, about 5 minutes.

▪ Season the squash with salt, pepper and the remaining tablespoon of lemon juice.

▪ Arrange the squash in a straight line on six serving plates. Place the scallops on top of the squash and sauce with the reserved piccata sauce. Serve immediately.

White-Chocolate Vanilla Cake With Bourbon Cherry Syrup



Yield: 6 servings
Active preparation time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 10 minutes

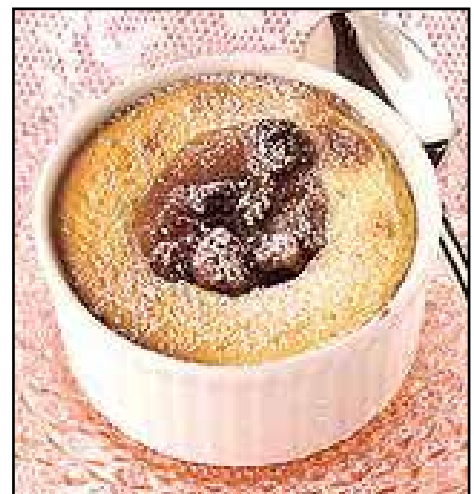
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
¾ cup white chocolate chips
2 eggs plus 1 egg yolk
½ vanilla bean, split and seeds reserved, or 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
3 tablespoons plus ½ cup granulated sugar
1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
½ cup bourbon
1/3 cup dried cherries
Powdered sugar for dusting

▪ Melt butter in a 4 cup glass measuring cup or medium microwavable bowl in the microwave on high heat for 1 minute in 20-second increments, as you want the butter to melt evenly and not to separate. The butter will be nearly melted with some soft bits; swirl cup or bowl until the bits melt.

▪ Add the white chocolate chips and microwave for 30 seconds more; remove and stir until chocolate and butter are completely melted. (Mixture should be thick, yet smooth in consistency; cooking time may vary depending on your microwave.) Let this chocolate-and-butter mixture rest and set up for at least 3 to 4 minutes. If it separates or looks broken, discard and start again.

▪ Meanwhile, in a stand mixer with the whisk attachment, whip eggs, egg yolk, vanilla seeds or extract, and 3 tablespoons of the sugar on high speed for 8 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the chocolate mixture and the flour. Whip on high for 4 to 6 minutes more; this is now a cake mixture and it can rest like this for up to two days. If storing, return to room temperature before baking.

▪ Butter or grease six 4-ounce ramekins. Divide cake mixture evenly between the ramekins (about ¼ cup in each), place on a baking tray and bake in a 425 degree oven until the



cake tops are light golden and puffy (the cakes will be runny in the center), about 10 minutes.

▪ While the cakes are baking, make the sauce. Put the remaining granulated sugar, bourbon, and cherries in a small saucepan over medium heat. Don't stir. Reduce by half or until syrupy, 5 to 6 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside. Syrup will thicken slightly as it sits.

▪ When cakes are done, immediately remove them from the oven and place each ramekin on a plate, or run a knife around the edge of the cakes, and carefully invert each cake onto a plate. Sauce with bourbon-soaked cherries and sprinkle with a little bit of powdered sugar. Serve warm.