

MAPLE LEAF FARMS CONFIT DUCK BREAST

2020 ICA CATIE AWARDS
BEST MAIN COURSE



First Course
LOBSTER BISQUE
TAGRAGON BUTTER PANCAKE
CHARRED ASPARAGUS
BRUSSEL SPROUTS
PILLOW

SYNOPSIS

Confit Maple Leaf Farms Duck Breast, Cardamom and Thyme Caramelized Carrot Puree, Sous Vide Fingerling Potato Coins, Rosemary Ash, Cherry Brandy Reduction

Succulent, sultry, and savory - this dish incorporated numerous culinary techniques that showcased our guests (event industry professionals) the higher level of creative culinary talent our team is able to offer to our market. Our guests, who are used to being served standard chicken entrees at local venues in our region, were shocked to be presented with a unique protein that had just as much attention put into its plate design and service as its complex flavor profile.



CONCEPT | PLATE DESIGN | OBJECTIVES

The objective of this main course was to surprise and impress our guests with every element. Our guests - event industry professionals in our market - are used to attending events at local venues where caterers serve standard chicken and beef options. Our task was to surprise them with a main entree that offered a unique protein option and showcase our elevated culinary creativity, paired with high-end service options that they didn't know anyone in our suburban locale was capable of producing.

The plate concept and presentation incorporated geometry, balance, and vibrant color. Our culinary professionals plate design sketches originated with a layout composed of straight lines and a half moon concept. The colorful dots of caramelized carrot puree created a half moon shape starting and ending with the duck placed on the right side of the plate in a crescent shape. This provided a visual line for guests' eyes to follow around the plate in a full circle - always bringing them back to the main component and hero of the plate - the crisp and savory duck.

While still in design concept phase and plate demos, our team felt there was too much negative space surrounding the circular layout of the meal. To help add more texture and fill negative space, a new culinary component of rosemary ash was included as a dusting to surround the entire composition. The colors of honeyed orange from the carrot puree, bold red from the cherry reduction, marigold and bright purple from the micro flower garnish, and deep eggplant purple, garnet red, and buttery gold from the fingerling potatoes all popped beautifully against the carefully selected matte black dinner plate.

Guests whipped their cell phones out at every moment to capture the sophisticated synchronized service and closeups of every element on the dish before they could even think about picking up their forks. We knew we had succeeded in our mission.

ORIGINALITY OF PRESENTATION

We know that guests eat with their eyes (and phones) first. With our Executive Chef's background in fine studio and graphic arts, this plate was treated as an artistic masterpiece to ensure originality. From the unique placement of the duck, to the careful addition of the rosemary ash dusting for extra texture, to the unique dotted crescent shape of the carrot puree to connect the main entree together, this plate was not only one of the most delectable dishes we ever created but the most visually appealing. When we witnessed guests' jaw-dropped and wide-eyed expressions as we placed each plate, we knew this was something they never feasted their eyes on before.



CULINARY COMPONENT OF THE PLATE

Each culinary component on the plate was meant to complement the meltingly tender confit duck breast. We chose to incorporate herbaceous flavors with a touch of berry to accompany the flavor profile of the duck. To enhance and distinguish the crispiness of the duck's skin, we chose to use softer profiles to create contrast. Using the sous-vide method for our tri-colored herb-flavored fingerling potato coins and incorporating the thyme and cardamom caramelized carrot puree proved to be successful in highlighting the crispness of the duck. The final cherry component was reduced to a glaze with brandy in order to create a sauce that would perfectly accompany the other earthy flavors.

Since presentation and quality of product was of the utmost importance, additional chefs were needed to execute each step and component on the plate - all within a cramped 12' x 20' prep space. The first step was to prepare the black matte plate canvas with the rosemary ash dusting. We used a sieve and wooden circle to create a crisp, clean ring around the main food items. Then, carrot puree dots needed to be carefully and evenly arranged in the half moon shape on the left side of the ring. From there, the duck was meticulously placed in a line on the right side of the inner circle. The sous vide potato coins were then positioned, microflowers were gingerly added and then finally, the tart cherry brandy reduction was delicately drizzled.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TECHNIQUE

From crispy confit cooking for the duck to slow sous-vide cooking for the tender fingerling potato coins, several culinary techniques were implemented on-location to ensure a flavorfully flawless plate. New sous-vide equipment was brought in specifically for this event's execution on-site.

Butane burners and saute pans were used to confit cook the duck by tilting the pan and constantly basting the hot duck fat and oil on top to guarantee a golden crisp skin. Spice grinders were used to create the rosemary ash and sieves allowed us to apply a light dusting onto the plate. Originally, PVC rings were to be used to create the inner circle on the plate for the rosemary ash, but they ended up being larger than we wanted, which wasn't discovered until our team was on-site at the event. We found a solution by using the circular wooden stands from our glass cloche domes that were being used for another course. They turned out to be the perfect size.

CHALLENGES + OBSTACLES

The tables are set, two full rounds of full-service run throughs have successfully been completed, staff is changed and ready, and hors d'oeuvres have been fired and started plating up to be ready for our guests that will arrive in 30 minutes. Then the phone call happened. Additional guests were surprisingly being added to our private full four-course seated meal with specialty wine pairings. After an initial moment of panic, our team calmly gathered together to rearrange custom-made table settings, source additional flatware and glassware to properly match the specialty product for this event, and adjust our “just in case something happens” back-up food quantities to now be prepared for our surprise guests. Just the right amount of back-up food quantity was sent to cover these additional guests. We supported each other through the last minute chaos and were able to still be poised, personable, and at attention with a smile for our guests’ arrival.



Menu

First Course



MAPLE LEAF FARMS

CONFIT DUCK BREAST

KEY RECIPES

CARAMELIZED CARROT PUREE RECIPE

MEASUREMENT	INGREDIENTS	COST PER INGREDIENT	PROCEDURE
8	Carrots, Large, peeled		Heat the oven to 400 degrees. Toss the carrots with 2 tbsp of olive oil, 1 tbsp of thyme and 1 tsp ground cardamom and season with salt and pepper blend. Bake until tender, about 40 to 45 minutes. In a medium sauce pan, heat 1/4 cup olive oil over medium heat. Add the shallots and garlic and cook until soft and translucent, about 6 to 8 minutes. Add carrots and white wine and cook until the wine has almost completely evaporated. Pour in carrot juice and 1 cup of water and bring to a simmer. Simmer carrots on medium low heat for about 25 minutes. Add carrots and juice from pan to a blender and blend slowly adding remaining olive oil until the puree is completely emulsified. Add lemon juice and season with salt and pepper if necessary.
2 cups	Shallots, sliced		
1/4 cup	Garlic, chopped		
1/2 cup	White Wine		
2 1/2 cups	Carrot Juice		
2 cups	Olive Oil		
2 tsp	Salt and Pepper Blend		
1 tbsp	Lemon juice		
1 tbsp	Thyme, Fresh		
1 tsp	Cardamom, ground		

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KEY RECIPES

CHERRY BRANDY REDUCTION RECIPE

MEASUREMENT	INGREDIENTS	COST PER INGREDIENT	PROCEDURE
2 tbsp	Olive Oil		<p>In a large saute pan over medium high heat add the olive oil. Once oil is heated, add the shallots, garlic and cherries. Cook until soft, about 2 to 3 minutes. Add brandy and flambe. Cook until the fire goes out about 1 minute. Add the vinegar to pan and continue to cook until almost reduced. Add the stock and rosemary and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for an additional 10 to 15 minutes or the sauce is thick enough to stick to the back of a spoon. Remove from heat and whisk in cold butter and season with salt and pepper</p>
2 tbsp	Shallots, minced		
1 1/2 tsp	Garlic, minced		
2 cups	Bada Bing Cherries		
3/4 cup	Brandy		
1/4 cup	Balsamic Vinegar		
4 cups	Chicken Stock		
1 tbsp	Rosemary, Fresh chopped		
3 tbsp	Butter, cold, cubed		
	Salt and Pepper blend to taste		

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DUCK MARINADE RECIPE

MEASUREMENT	INGREDIENTS	COST PER INGREDIENT	PROCEDURE
1 cup	Orange Juice		Score the fat on the duck breasts and season with salt and pepper. Put seasoned duck breasts in sealable bag and add garlic, orange juice and pineapple juice. Let marinade for 12 to 24 hours.
1 cup	Pineapple Juice		
1 tbsp	Garlic, Minced		
1 tsp	Thyme, Fresh		
1 tsp	Salt and Pepper Blend		
4	Duck Breasts		

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KEY RECIPES

SOUS VIDE FINGERLING POTATO COINS RECIPE

MEASUREMENT	INGREDIENTS	COST PER INGREDIENT	PROCEDURE
6lbs	Fingerling tri colored potatoes, cut 3/4 inch thick into coins		Heat Sous Vide to 192 degrees F. Place the potato coins, rosemary, garlic powder, kosher salt orange peel powder and galangal powder in a vac seal bag and toss potatoes around to distribute the seasonings. Lay bag flat and arrange potatoes in single layer and add in butter. Vacuum seal bag and place in water bath. Make sure you wiegh bag down so it is completely in water. Cook for 1 hour
2 tbsp	Rosemary, Fresh, chopped		
1 tsp	Garlic Powder		
1 tsp	Kosher Salt		
1/2 tsp	Orange Peel Powder		
1/2 tsp	Galangal Powder		
6 tbsp	Butter, Unsalted		