

CATIE 2020
BEST APPETIZER

CITRUS SCALLOP





CITRUS SCALLOP SYNOPSIS

Seasonality, color, culinary perfection and a deep family tradition - the concepts used to bring our citrus scallop plated appetizer to life. We are in the business of making culinary dreams come true, and we did just that for a client throwing a bash for her father's 65th birthday.

We were tasked to create a dish that embodied their family roots. Our culinary team delivered a perfectly cooked sea scallop with a beautiful and balanced mix of flavors that was both a feast for the eyes and the taste buds.

CITRUS SCALLOP CONCEPT

Goals & Objectives

When beginning menu development for an event, our goal is to bring the client's dreams to life in a creative, innovative manner. We have been working with this client for years, however this event proved to be different - a 65th birthday celebration for her dad. The party would take place in the Midwest with a beautiful fall backdrop, yet her father resided along the East Coast in her hometown. Bright, colorful florals and East Coast flair would take center stage - especially in the menu as she spent her childhood learning to cook alongside him. Obviously, seafood was a must with his favorite dish being scallops, but how could we please multiple palates and bring color to an otherwise neutral fish? After several brainstorming sessions keeping his favorite food, the importance of color and her favorite memories top of mind, we created an exquisite appetizer: The Citrus Scallop cooked two ways. This first course consisted of fresh scallops from Martha's Vineyard, ripe orange and grapefruit segments and fried mint, all topped with a sprinkle of red sea salt. Not only was this plate delicious, it was visually stunning and entwined our host's goals with her father's favorites. As a last minute but jaw-dropping detail, the host wanted individual place settings for each guest. Instead of using a computer or simply setting the cards on a table, her young daughter hand-lettered each one as an effort for all grandchildren to play a specific, important role in the event design.





Our intention to “wow” the guests with a variety of color stretched beyond the ingredients. We presented our host with a variety of different rental plates to use, but ultimately she opted to use two different pieces serving them at every other place setting. The aqua plate and white coupe dish created the perfect juxtaposition against the neutral scallop and warm toned fruit. The biggest variation of all was not the plate itself, yet how the scallop was cooked. All aqua plates had a seared scallop while all white had a grilled scallop. This gave guests something to chat about during their first course and created buzz around what was yet to come. Of course, a top concern was the ripeness of the fruit. With the event taking place mid-fall, the very start of citrus season, we worked alongside our suppliers to find the highest quality of fruit. Our chef brought in different fruit options including Cara Cara oranges and stone fruit to sample as a contingency plan. The culinary team did not want to sacrifice the quality of ingredients just for the look. After several days of searching and testing, our supplier found a small farm to source ripe, fresh citrus fruit full of flavor.



Relevance

Our team works endlessly to create contemporary and animated culinary experiences while bringing our client's dreams to life. Through this approach, we can ensure each menu written presents different than the last. For this East Coast inspired birthday celebration, our longtime client wanted our help taking a classic seafood dish and reinventing it into a modern, seasonal appetizer. At first, we planned to only use ruby grapefruit, however we quickly learned showcasing multiple colors was not an option, yet a requirement. The father of the client desired an appetizer that was as visually impactful as it was in flavor. This brought into play the use of different service plates, two citrus fruits and a dark finishing touch for contrast - saba vinegar drizzle. The final scallop plate proved to be perfectly original as it united both of their wishes in a unique yet classic way. The use of the aqua and white created a lovely first impression as our staff began service immediately after the guests were seated.



Production at Event

An overarching goal at all catered events is to serve guests fresh, warm food in a quick and calm manner. To execute the plate-up in a timely fashion, all grapefruits and oranges were supremed at our commissary. The small pieces were tossed with fresh mint and honey citrus vinaigrette immediately upon our arrival to begin marinating. The mint leaves were separated a few days before but required a fryer on site. Frying the mint leaf garnish just minutes before plate-up avoided any loss of texture. The crispy garnish carried the plate the extra mile as each bite had both a soft and crunchy element.

As the chef and his sous-chef began to cook the scallops during cocktail hour, one tackling each cooking method, the Function Director organized two teams of kitchen assistants who separated ingredients into two assembly lines. One line would handle the aqua plate with the seared scallop and one the white coupe with the grilled scallop. The designation of two teams allowed for execution with the utmost precision.



Challenges

Despite how hard a caterer works to plan, challenges continuously arise. The guest count spiked higher than planned, making it difficult to cook such a delicate dish two different ways for nearly 80 guests. The initial plate-up challenge was the combination of hot and cold ingredients. Serving a variety of temperatures on a plate takes practice. To combat a stark contrast, we tempered the citrus before fanning it alongside the scallop. With each bite, we intended to bring warmth from the scallop alongside a slightly chilled grapefruit or orange. We focused on this during testing so we knew how far in advance to remove the fruit from the cooler. However, our biggest challenge of all lied within the cooking methods. Whether grilling or searing, scallops must be cooked to perfection. Having two chefs onsite truly made a world of difference - it created ease for our client and ourselves. Our head chef solely dedicated himself to grilling while the sous-chef focused on searing. Their timing was impeccable - both finishing simultaneously to begin plate-up right on time.



CITRUS SCALLOP

RECIPE

Seared Sea Scallop with Honey Citrus Vinaigrette and Saba

Yield: 1 Serving

1 sea scallop, U10 size, grilled & roasted

1. Season both sides of scallop with salt and pepper
2. Heat a saute pan until smoking hot; add 1 tsp vegetable oil
3. Sear scallop for 10-15 seconds or until golden
4. Flip scallop and add 1tsp butter
5. Baste scallop with butter until cooked to desired doneness
6. Alternately, grill the scallop to desired doneness
7. Remove from pan and reserve

2 Navel orange supremes

2 Ruby red grapefruit supremes

.1oz fresh mint, chiffonade

.1oz micro greens

.25tsp saba vinegar

.01oz red sea salt

1.5tsp honey citrus vinaigrette

1 fried mint leaf

To assemble:

1. Toss together orange and grapefruit supremes, mint chiffonade, and honey citrus vinaigrette.
2. Place supremes on plate and top with microgreens
3. Place scallop next to citrus and drizzle with saba vinegar
4. Garnish with a sprinkle of red sea salt and a fried mint leaf

CITRUS SCALLOP

RECIPE

Honey Citrus Vinaigrette

Yield: 8floz

- 3floz orange juice
- 3floz lemon juice
- 1.5floz honey
- 3floz olive oil

Method

1. Combine orange juice, lemon juice and honey
2. Slowly stream in olive oil while whisking to emulsify
3. Reserve