

Nora

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2002 Petite Sirah by Vinum Cellars (PETS)

paired with

***ROASTED DOUBLE PORK CHOPS WITH APPLE-HORSERADISH STUFFING,
CALVADOS SAUCE, STEAMED BEETS & THEIR GREENS & BUTTERNUT
SQUASH PURÉE***

3 TBSP canola oil
2 TBSP shallots
1 apple, washed and grated
2-inch piece horseradish, about 4 TBSP grated
1 TBSP Dijon mustard
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

4 pork chops, about 2-inches thick

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Heat 2 TBSP of canola oil in a small sauté pan and sauté the shallots for 2 to 4 minutes. Add the apple and cook until softened, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat, add the horseradish and mustard and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Make a pocket in each pork chop with a paring knife by cutting a 2-inch incision in the side of the pork chop opposite the bone. Move the knife in an arc, back and forth, cutting a large interior pocket in the chop but keeping the opening small. This is where you will put the stuffing.

Push as much apple stuffing as you can into this pocket. The pork chop should look plump and rounded.

Brush the chops with the remaining oil and season to taste with salt and pepper. Put them on a sheet or roasting pan and roast them for about 30 minutes or until the chops and the stuffing are cooked through and a knife inserted next to the bone shows the meat to be pink.

NORA'S NOTE: Horseradish is very pungent. When you grate a lot of it you start to cry!

You want to keep the opening of the pocket in the pork chop small because this prevents the stuffing from oozing out. If you buy a pork chop that is completely split open for stuffing, close it with skewers or toothpicks before roasting. Stuffed pork chops or chicken breasts stay moist, even if you have to keep them warm for awhile in a slow oven. Other stuffings for the pork chops are sauerkraut or cooked cabbage or cornbread with sausage or wild rice with chestnuts. If you want your pork chops to be nice and brown, and you don't want to make a sauce, baste them with this all-purpose glaze after they have roasted for about 10 minutes.

Glaze:

1 TBSP tamari
1 TBSP balsamic
1 TBSP olive oil
freshly ground black pepper

We get our pork from Great Bend Organic Farm in Pennsylvania where Jody Sneider raises hogs and Ron Sneider raises vegetables. I really applaud a woman going into the business of raising hogs for market and appreciate the healthy and natural manner in which she treats her livestock and operates her business.

CALVADOS SAUCE

1 tsp canola oil
2 TBSP shallots
2 cups veal or chicken stock, or 1 chicken bouillon cube dissolved in 2 cups warm water
2 TBSP Calvados or applejack
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat the oil in a medium saucepan and sauté the shallots until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the veal or chicken stock or water and bouillon cube and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for about 30 minutes or until you reduce the sauce to about 1 cup. Add the Calvados or applejack, raise the heat and cook for about 1 more minute to boil off some of the alcohol. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

NORA'S NOTE: If you don't have any stock, substitute the bouillon cubes dissolved in water, as suggested, or make a sauce base by puréeing 2 whole roasted shallots in the blender with 1 cup of stock or water, the Calvados, salt and pepper. Cook this over high heat for 1 to 2 minutes to boil off the alcohol.

.Calvados is a distilled brandy made from apples. It comes from Normandy, France, where apples are plentiful and the locals like to indulge in the custom of a "trou

Normand," a sip of Calvados between courses to help them digest their rich, traditional cuisine.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH PURÉE * & STEAMED BEETS WITH THEIR GREENS

2 butternut squashes, about 1 1/2 pounds, peeled, seeded and cut into 1-inch cubes
pinch, mace or allspice
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 pounds steamed beets or 1 1/2 pounds steamed beets and 1/2 pound steamed beet greens.

Steam the squash for about 20 minutes or until tender using a collapsible steamer insert in a saucepan. Purée the squash in a food processor. Season to taste with the mace or allspice and salt and pepper. If the purée is too thick, add some water.

Assembly: Ladle some Calvados sauce on each of 4 warm dinner plates and top with a pork chop. Surround the chop with the beets and their greens and a big spoonful of butternut squash purée.

NORA'S NOTE: You can also roast the butternut squash before peeling it. Cut each squash in half, remove the seeds and bake it, face-side-down on a baking sheet at 350° F. for about 30 minutes. Scoop out the pulp with a large soup spoon and proceed with the above recipe. You can substitute yams, pumpkin or sweet potatoes for the squash.