

THE LITTLE GERANIUM RECIPES

Choc Play | Saddle of Venison with Chocolate juices & blackcurrants

Background Story

A few years ago we did a wedding for a man called Tom Chaplin who is the lead singer for a band called Keane. At the wedding there were a number of well-known guests including Denise Van Outen (who I knew when I had worked on The Big Breakfast) and Chris Martin from Cold Play. Now Chris Martin must be one of the biggest bands (along with U2) in the world and I was surprised when he walked in and shook my hand and said hi Steve. It turned out that he is a foody and he knew of me off Ready Steady Cook. I was very flattered as I love Cold Play.

Anyway one of the dishes on the menu was Venison with a bitter chocolate jus. This isn't a new idea; it originates back from Mexico when it was traditionally served with Turkey with the added spice of chili. (Turkey originates from Mexico) Modern day Michelin star chefs use chocolate (Cacao) and even white chocolate. My colleague Claude Bosi uses white chocolate with white asparagus for example in his two Michelin starred restaurant, Hibiscus, in London.

Hotel Chocolat's executive chef says "We even smoke meat and fish over burning cocoa-bean shells, fry chips in cocoa butter and make cacao gin." Chocolate is very much the ingredient of the moment if used wisely and not just as a gimmick. Just as coincidence would have it I currently have Venison with Chocolate and redcurrants on my October menu at The Little Geranium La Cala.

So back to Chris Martin, he chose the venison with dark chocolate juices and blackcurrants with slow cooked haunch. "Steve that dish really tingled my taste buds" he said. Chris your music tingles my emotions I replied and as I said that he sort of slipped and fell against the wall cracking the glass in the picture behind him. Are you Ok? Sure Chris said, I am sorry ill pay for the damage.

The combination of great food with chocolate and wine is playing with my brain and he laughed out loud. Chocolate has that effect on the brain I said, maybe you should rename your band choc play! Sounds like a gay band Chris replied and then Tom came over and pinched his bottom.

Chris left 20 quid in reception to pay for the broken picture, I renamed the picture on the wall "glass specially designed by Chris Martin & Gwyneth Paltrow and I never repaired it. I guess I owe Chris £20!

Ingredients

- 1 loin of venison fillet of 4 x 250g venison steaks (available in some good supermarkets, Campo and Corte Ingles)
- 50g of dark chocolate
- 1 tablespoon of cacao powder

Steven Saunders FMCGB

steven@thelittlegeranium.com

www.thelittlegeranium.com



- 500ml of red wine stock made from beef stock*
- 50 g of unsalted butter
- 1 glass of red wine for the sauce
- 1 small punnet of fresh blackcurrants or redcurrants
- Some fresh basil leaves to finish
- Maldon salt and black pepper

Method

- *At The Little Geranium we make a venison stock from the bones but you can use regular beef stock from a basic stock and then add the cooking juices of the venison for similar results.
- It is important to get the sauce right so make the stock well and add lots of red wine.
- Reduce the stock on a high heat and whilst reducing season the venison well with salt and pepper
- Seal the venison on all sides 2 mins, in a hot frying pan and then set aside
- Pour the juices from this pan into your red wine stock and add the butter and the red wine and whisk in
- Now add the chocolate in cubes and whisk in well. Taste and add the cacao powder little by little until you have a distinct chocolate flavor but not a sweet flavour, reduce the sauce vigorously
- Put the venison back in the pan or in a pre-heated oven and cook for approximately 15 mins for a whole 1 kilo piece or for approx. 4 mins per piece if you have the 250 g steaks
- Check the meat is cooked medium to rare and slice into 1 cm pieces
- Season it again well with Maldon salt and pepper
- Serve the venison medium rare with a little of the sauce sprinkled with the blackcurrants and a few leaves of fresh basil.