

Issue Four | Spring 1995

Thusúli Tlamásun!

Roz Morris knows the way to a man's heart

Tournedos Rossini

This classic dish of the 1920s is difficult to find nowadays. There are several versions; mine is based on a recipe from Louise Bertholle's book *Secrets of the Great French Restaurants*.

The madeira sauce is one of the most important elements of this dish. It is based on a brown sauce, which needs to simmer for three hours but can be prepared the day before. The rest of the dish is quite quick.

The quantities given here will serve two good appetites.

- 2 thick slices fillet of beef
- 3 tbs butter
- 1 tbs oil
- salt, freshly milled pepper
- 2 slices baguette (par-baked is best)
- two 40g slices of tinned foie gras
- 1 truffle, very thinly sliced, fresh if possible (if tinned, reserve the juice; shavings are cheaper than whole truffles and just as good)

madeira sauce:

- 100g button mushrooms, very thinly sliced
- 3 tbs unsalted butter
- 10 cl madeira
- 2 generous tbs double cream
- 1 tinned truffle, chopped, or truffle trimmings (plus juice from tin)
- 20 cl brown sauce (see below)

brown sauce:

- 1/2 tsp lard
- 25g bacon, cut into thin strips
- half an onion, cut into four
- 1/2 tsp flour
- 30 cl good dry white Burgundy, or red Burgundy or Beaujolais
- 30 cl good meat stock
- a very little salt
- 1/4 tsp tomato puree
- 1/4 of a carrot, sliced
- 1/2 a clove of garlic, crushed
- 1 bouquet garni

1. First make the brown sauce—the quantities may seem very small but I have given the amount needed just for this recipe. In a small cast-iron pan melt the lard, and add the bacon and onion. Allow them to take colour.
2. Remove the bacon and the onion, then stir the flour into the fat. Cook gently, allowing it to take a good all-over golden colour.
3. Add the wine and leave to boil for 2 minutes.
4. Add all the other ingredients and put back the bacon and onion. Cook for a minimum of 2 hours on a very low heat, skimming occasionally, but 3 hours will give a better result. The sauce will reduce greatly, but you may need to add more water before the end of the cooking time.
5. Strain through a sieve.

Just before you cook the steaks:

1. Make the madeira sauce. Stew the mushrooms gently in the butter in a thick saucepan, and deglaze with half the madeira. Add 1 tbs of the cream and leave to boil for about 3 minutes.
2. Meanwhile melt 1 tbs butter in a thick frying pan, and gently fry the bread on each side until golden brown. Sprinkle with salt and put aside in a warm place.
3. Back to the saucepan. Add the brown sauce, then the rest of the madeira, the chopped truffle and the truffle juice. Heat through to blend the flavours, then add the cream and keep warm.

To cook the steaks:

Heat the butter and oil in the frying pan, then fry both sides of the steaks quickly over a high heat. They should ideally be served rare.

To serve:

Place a piece of toasted bread on each plate. Spoon 1 tbs of the sauce over each. Place a steak on top, and on top of that a slice of foie gras, topped with a sliver of truffle. Cover with the rest of the sauce and serve very hot.

This dish goes well with the plainest of vegetables—peas, French beans, and plenty of mashed potatoes to mop up the sauce.

Suggested wine:

A very good red bordeaux.

(Editor's note: *I have to thank Dr Dusan Radojcic of Magdalen College, Oxford, for introducing me to this dish. I remember precious little of what he taught me of Bose-Einstein statistics or hadron interactions, but that one valuable lesson has remained with me to this day!*)

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