

ZEST

EAT ★ DRINK ★ LIVE ★ *Maine*

5 CHEFS share
AUTUMN FAVORITES

nicely naughty DESSERT

GAME FOOD!

mind your MANNERS

CATCHING fire

know your EATER



1,200 LOBSTERS


meet NATE

SPEAKING wine



Delicious autumn!
My very soul is wedded
to it, and if I were a
bird, I would fly about
the earth seeking the
successive autumns.

George Eliot



Autumn Gems

THE COLORS AND
TASTES OF FIVE AUTUMN FAVORITES FROM FIVE CHEFS

BY Nancy MacDonald
PHOTOGRAPHY BY J. Robert Photography



Aphrodite, Greek goddess of love, celebrated the beet for its unique ability to increase sex drive. It's not all myth, either. Beets contain large amounts of a trace mineral called boron, which increases the level of natural sex hormones in the body. Aside from oysters, they may be the tastiest aphrodisiac at the market.

Look towards the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East if you'd like to trace the origin of beets. Beetroot was first domesticated in this part of the world, prized only for its greens and not the root itself.

Slice open a chioggia, or "candy cane" beet, and its nickname instantly starts making sense. Pigmentation differences between its vascular system and storage tissues make this root look like it just stepped off of Willy Wonka's assembly line. Not surprisingly, sliced chioggia beets add distinct visual contrast to practically any dish they touch.

JOSH BERRY EXECUTIVE CHEF, UNION RESTAURANT AT THE PRESS HOTEL, PORTLAND

Roasted Crimson Beet Salad with Chèvre Flan, Frisee, Marcona Almonds, Honey Vinaigrette and Bee Pollen

Two of the three unusual ingredients in this recipe—frisee (a young curly endive) and Marcona almonds (a favorite nut in Spain)—are becoming regular items in the produce and fine cheese sections of Maine grocery stores. The bee pollen—well-known for its many health benefits—can be found refrigerated in most natural food stores.

Each component of this dish can easily be made in advance. The flans can be warmed in their molds (in a pan of warm water) just before serving.

Serves 8

Ingredients

For roasted beets

8 whole, small red beets, stems and greens removed
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

For goat cheese flan

4 ounces fresh goat cheese (chèvre), crumbled
2 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, grated
3 large eggs
1 cup heavy cream
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 teaspoon ground white pepper

For honey vinaigrette

1/2 cup olive oil
1/4 cup malt vinegar
2 tablespoons honey
1 pinch of ground cloves

To serve

2 small heads of frisee, trimmed and separated
2 tablespoons toasted Marcona almonds, chopped
1 tablespoon bee pollen
Salt and pepper

Directions

For the beets

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Rinse beets to remove dirt, and place them in a pot of water. Cover.

Over medium high heat, bring beets to a boil and reduce to a simmer. Cook until the beets are fork tender (about 30 to 35 minutes), and drain. When cool enough to handle, rub the beets with a paper towel or cloth to remove the skin (the towel will be permanently stained).

Cut each beet into six equal pieces and toss with olive oil, salt and pepper. Roast in a 375 degree oven until the beets start to caramelize (about 20 to 25 minutes). Cool, and chill.

For the flan

Reduce oven heat to 325 degrees. Line eight muffin tins with plastic wrap and spray with cooking spray. Divide

crumbled goat and grated cheddar cheeses between the tins. Set aside.

Whisk eggs in a medium bowl. Set aside.

Pour cream into a medium sauce pan and place over medium high heat. Bring cream to a simmer and remove from heat. Beat 1/4 cup of hot cream into the eggs. Continue to add remaining hot cream to eggs (1/4 cup at a time), whisking after each addition. Season with salt and white pepper. Divide cream and egg mixture among the prepared tins.

Place muffin tin into larger baking dish. Pour hot water 1/2 way up the side of the tin. Cover with foil, and bake until flans are set (about 30 minutes). Cool slightly before attempting to remove flan from the tins.

For the vinaigrette

In a small bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, honey and ground clove until fully combined.

For serving

Place a warm flan at one end of each serving plate. Dress endive and beets with vinaigrette. Add chopped almonds to salad, season with salt and pepper to taste. Place about 1 cup of salad next to each flan, and sprinkle with bee pollen.

ZESTY PAIRINGS

Main Course This dish already has a lot of flavors melding together. Round it out with a main course of grilled chicken or broiled white fish drizzled with a bit of the same vinaigrette used to dress the endive. —*CBR*

White Wine Odisea, "Petite Cochon Blanc," California White blend, 2012. A blend of Viognier, Grenache blanc, Marsanne and Roussanne, the bouquet and crispness of this wine will play off the earthiness of the beets and flan. —*CP*

Red Wine Talisman Pinot Noir, Wildcat Vineyard, Los Carneros, CA 2010: Notes of wild red fruits and hints of smoke make this wine a perfect companion to roasted beets. —*CP*

Beer Weihenstephaner Hefeweissbier—a classic, refreshing German wheat beer—is a nice complement here. It has the complexity needed to stand up to the dish while being subtle enough to allow the nuances to come through. —*TM*