



Grilled Venison Loin, Celery Root Purée, Morel Mushrooms, Cipollini Onions and Balsamic Reduction

Nickel & Nickel Copper Streak Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Stags Leap District, Napa Valley

by Executive Chef Trevor Eliason

Ingredients

4 cups celery root
(also known as celeriac), diced

4 cups chicken stock

½ teaspoon salt

½ cup olive oil

½ teaspoon truffle oil

12 cipollini onions, peeled

1 tablespoon olive oil

Salt and freshly ground pepper,
to taste

1 tablespoon white verjus
or white wine

1 tablespoon butter

2–3 ounces dried morel mushrooms

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons shallots, diced

½ teaspoon salt

1–1½ pounds venison loin

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon kosher salt

Freshly ground pepper, to taste

Balsamic reduction
or Saba dressing

METHOD

Celery Root Purée

After removing the thick outer layer, cut the celery root into large cubes. Place into a medium sized saucepot and cover with the chicken stock. If the chicken stock does not cover the celery root by an inch, add water. Bring to a simmer on medium-high heat, then lower to medium-low and cook for about 45 minutes until the celery root is very tender. Strain the chicken stock from the celery root and reserve the liquid. In a blender, purée the celery root with ¼ cup of the chicken stock and salt at medium speed. Slowly add in the olive oil and the truffle oil. Check seasoning and add salt if needed.

Cipollini Onions

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Heat a medium sized sauté pan on high heat, then add olive oil and cipollini onions. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and toss to coat. When the onion just starts to brown, place the whole pan in the oven and cook for six minutes. Add the white verjus (or white wine) and butter. Continue cooking the cipollinis for two more minutes, then remove from the oven. Set aside to cool.

Morel Mushrooms

Soak the dried morels in warm water for 20 minutes. Once they are rehydrated, drain the liquid, and cover the mushrooms with water. Remove the morels with a slotted spoon—any dirt should sink to the bottom. Repeat the process one more time with clean water. Place the mushrooms on a towel and blot of the excess water. Let air dry for 20 minutes.

In a large sauté pan on medium-high heat, add the olive oil and shallots. Sauté for 30 seconds then add the morels and salt. Sauté for approximately five minutes, until the edges begin to brown.

Grilled Venison Loin

Preheat the grill to medium-high heat. Remove the venison loin from the refrigerator 20 minutes before cooking. Rub with olive oil and sprinkle with kosher salt and freshly ground pepper. Venison is very lean, so there is a fine line between perfect and over-done. Place the venison loin on the grill and cook each side for four minutes or until medium rare (about 125 degrees internal temperature). To prevent venison juices from flooding your cutting board, let the loin rest for eight minutes. Cut the meat into eight slices.

Presentation

Slowly reheat the celery root purée on low, stirring occasionally in order to keep the bottom of the pot from scorching. Reheat the morel mushrooms on a low burner as well. Spoon the purée in the center of the plate, then flatten into a circle with the back of your spoon. Plate three cipollini onions with two slices of venison over the top. Garnish with a spoonful of morels, and drizzle Balsamic reduction (or Saba dressing) around the plate. Enjoy with a glass of Nickel & Nickel Copper Streak Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon!

Serves 4