

AutoMoto

Pan Fried Pork Chop with Goat Cheese and Pine Nut Stuffing, Parsnip Mash and Cherry Sauce

Serve with 2005 AutoMoto Merlot

Serves 6

For the Pan-Fried Pork Chop:

6 bone-in pork chops, $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 cups all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetable oil

For the Goat Cheese and Pine Nut Stuffing:

1 cup fresh chevre (goat cheese)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pine nuts, toasted
1 Tbsp. fresh sage leaves, chopped
1 Tbsp. fresh parsley leaves, chopped
1 tsp. dried thyme

Combine all ingredients for the stuffing and mix well. Place in refrigerator until firm. Cut a pocket in the side of each pork chop, approximately 1 inch long and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inches deep. Divide the mixture into 6 portions and stuff into each chop. Secure with a toothpick.

For the Parsnip Puree:

8 parsnips, peeled and diced
1 pint half & half
Kosher salt
2 Tbsp. unsalted butter

Place parsnips and half & half in a pot (if not covered completely, add water). Cook until tender, approximately 25 minutes. Strain and reserve the liquid. Place parsnips in a bowl and mash with a fork or potato masher, gradually adding the reserved liquid until creamy. Add butter & season with salt. *To keep warm: put the puree in a heat-proof bowl set over simmering water.*

For the Cherry Sauce:

1 cup fresh cherries, halved and pitted
1 cup Automoto Merlot
1 cup chicken stock
1 shallot, minced
1 Tbsp. dried thyme
1 Tbsp. unsalted butter



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Preheat oven to 350°F. Season pork chops with salt and pepper. Lightly flour the chops. Heat sauté pan over medium-high heat and add vegetable oil. Sear the chops until golden brown on each side, approximately 2 to 3 minutes per side. Transfer chops to a sheet pan and place in oven. The pork chops are done when the cheese begins to slightly ooze from the sides, approximately 3 minutes. In the sauté pan, add the shallot and cook over medium heat for 1 minute. Add cherries and cook for 2 minutes more. Add wine and cook until liquid has reduced by half. Add the chicken stock and reduce again by half. Add the thyme, butter and salt to taste.

To serve: Spoon ½ cup of parsnip puree onto each plate. Place chop on top of puree. Drizzle sauce on and around chop. Serve immediately.



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MERLOT 2005



VINEYARDS

This smooth-running Merlot began life in California's mellow North Coast American Viticultural Area (AVA), with some of its cool berries cruising up the Pacific Coast Highway from Monterey to make the blend thoroughly coastal. A hybrid of grapes from Sonoma, Mendocino, Lake, Monterey and San Benito counties, this finely-tuned Merlot runs on bright fruit, with an undercarriage of smooth, well-built tannins.

WINEMAKING

Traditional old-world assembly included fermentation in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks and extended maceration of the juice and skins to ensure a color and flavor-saturated chassis. Six months' aging in neutral French oak barrels burnished the veneer without making it too Woody, with the finished product rolling off the line ready to ramble.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES BY MELISSA "THE DRIVER" BATES

"Stick your nose in the front seat of this plush ride and you smell dark blackberry and black cherry fruit, pie spices, vanilla and sweet oak toast. Start it up and you realize that this baby boasts more cylinders than the standard Merlot and is constructed for maximum comfort and enjoyment, especially with pork roasts, marinated lamb chops and lasagna."

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VARIETAL 80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon
APPELLATION California
GROWING REGIONS 70% North Coast
(Sonoma, Mendocino, Lake counties)
 30% Central Coast
(Monterey, San Benito counties)

FERMENTATION 100% stainless steel
AGING Six months in neutral French oak barrels
ALCOHOL 13.5%
TOTAL ACIDITY 0.57 g/100 ml
PH 3.65