

Pan Roasted Breast of Pheasant with Vanilla and Pears

Recipe courtesy Jimmy Schmidt; The Rattlesnake Club

4 – 7 oz MacFarlane Pheasant Airline Breasts
6 tablespoons sugar
1/4 cup salt
1 quart cold water
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 cup diced shallots
1 large vanilla bean, split lengthwise in half and scraped to gather the vanilla seeds
1/2 cup dry white wine, preferably Chardonnay
1 cup pear cider
1 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons preserved ginger, minced
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 cups dry red wine
1/4 cup honey
1 tablespoon coriander seed, toasted and crushed fine
2 Anjou pears (reds preferably), halved, cored and sliced into 1/2-inch thick slices
2 cups rice pilaf, formed into a cylinder in a gelatin mold
2 tablespoons snipped fresh chives
4 chives blades, for garnish

To cure the pheasant: In a large bowl combine the water, 1/4 cup each of sugar and salt, mixing to dissolve. Add the pheasant breasts, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

To make sauces: In a large, non-stick skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of the butter over medium to medium-high heat. Add the shallots cooking until tender, about 3 minutes. Add the vanilla bean and seeds, white wine, cider, and cream. Bring to a simmer cooking until the liquids are reduced and thickened to sauce consistency, about 10 minutes. Add the ginger. Season with salt and pepper. Keep warm.

In another saucepan, combine the red wine and the honey. Bring to a simmer over high heat cooking until reduced to coat the back of a spoon, about 15 minutes. Reserve.

To cook the pheasants: Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

In a large non-stick ovenproof skillet, add 2 tablespoons butter and melt over high heat. Season the pheasant with salt, pepper, and coriander. Add the pheasant skin side down, cooking until browned and well-seared, about 5 minutes. Turn over and transfer the pan to the lower rack of the oven. Cook until just about medium, about 6 to 8 minutes depending on the size of the pheasant breast. Carefully remove the hot pan from the oven. Allow to rest a couple of minutes before cutting.

In another large, non-stick, skillet heat 1 tablespoon of the butter over high heat. Add the Anjou pears cooking until they just begin to soften slightly, about 2 minutes. Add two tablespoons of the sugar cooking while occasionally stirring until browned on the edges, about 4 minutes. Remove the pears and keep warm.

To Serve: Position the rice pilaf mixture in a cylinder form in the center of each hot serving plate. Position the pear slices around the rice cylinder. Slice the pheasant on a bias to yield 4 or 6 thin broad slices. Stack the slices on top of the rice cylinder. Spoon the vanilla-ginger and red wine sauce artistically over and around the pheasant and on the plate. Sprinkle the dish with freshly ground black pepper and chives. Garnish with the vanilla bean and sprigs of chive over the pheasant. Serve immediately.