



Blue Cheese Mousse with Vanilla Poached Pear Canapé

Dolce, Napa Valley

by Executive Chef Trevor Eliason

Ingredients

Blue Cheese Mousse

- 6 ounces blue cheese, Stilton or St. Agur
- 4 ounces cream cheese
- ½ teaspoon red wine vinegar
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- ⅓ cup heavy cream

Poached Pears

- 2 cups white wine
- 2 cups water
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 1 vanilla bean
- 1 star anise
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 Bosc pears, peeled
- 1 loaf brioche bread
- 1 bunch mâche, or lamb's lettuce, for garnish

Tools

- Apple Corer
- 2-inch round cutter

METHOD

Blue Cheese Mousse

In a mixer with the paddle attachment, combine the blue cheese, cream cheese, red wine vinegar, salt and pepper until smooth. Occasionally scrape down the sides of the bowl to make sure the ingredients are well incorporated. Add the heavy whipping cream to a medium sized bowl and whisk by hand or handheld electric mixer until stiff peaks form. Gently fold the blue cheese mixture to the whipped cream using a rubber spatula. Be sure to use circular strokes, folding from under to top.

Poached Pears

In a small saucepot on low heat, combine the white wine, water, sugar, vanilla bean, star anise and cinnamon stick. Whisk the mixture to dissolve the sugar. With your apple corer, pierce the bottom of the peeled pears and push in about two to three inches—about three-fourths through the pear. Do not remove the core.

Gently drop the pears in the poaching liquid and let simmer slowly for 10 minutes. With a toothpick or a small knife, test the pear for tenderness. It should go in with some ease. Keep in mind, the pears will finish cooking while cooling in its liquid. When the pears have cooled to room temperature, remove from liquid. (Note: If you plan to poach more pears, you can store the poaching liquid in the fridge for up to two weeks.) Slice the pears in half, then remove the core. Cut the halves into quarters, then slice five to six wedges from each quarter lengthwise.

Presentation

Preheat your oven to 325°F. Cut the brioche loaf into ½-inch slices of bread. Using a two-inch round cutter will yield two circles per slice. Place the brioche rounds on a sheet pan and toast until the edges just start to turn golden, about five minutes. Remove and let cool to room temperature.

With a teaspoon, scoop the blue cheese mousse onto one half of the brioche. Place the poached pear slice on the brioche round, opposite the mousse. Garnish with a little mâche and enjoy with a chilled glass of Dolce.

Serves 6