

Pepper venison with a cherry and wild thyme sauce

Serves four.

800gm of venison fillet– cut into 4 200gm portions

Sauce

1 packed cup of cherries, de-stoned and chopped into brunoise or salsa sized pieces.

125 ml of venison demi glace or beef stock can be used instead.

325ml good quality red wine (don't use cheap stuff you can taste it)

2 bay leaves

8 peppercorns

1 eschalot

3 sprigs of wild Central Otago thyme! (or just use thyme maybe a little more the wild thyme is so flavoursome)

10gms butter

12 smallish new potatoes

12 cloves of garlic

12 baby red onions (or shallots green tips removed)

Serve with pan fried potatoes with a confit of baby red onions and garlic

For the sauce

De-stone the cherries, chop, mix with the thyme leaves cover and refrigerate.

In a pan put the red wine, finely chopped eschalot, bay leaves, peppercorns and a sprig of thyme and reduce to down $\frac{1}{4}$ of its original size, strain and add demi glace. Once your meat is resting and everything else is ready to serve bring this to the boil, add the cherries take of the heat. Stir in the butter and pour over your meat.

For the potatoes

Firstly confit the onions and garlic – simply place in a small pot and cook either over a very low heat on the stove or in the oven on 170 for 15 minutes until soft to the touch. Remove from the oil immediately once done or they will keep cooking.

Scrub any dirt or mud off the potatoes, place in a pot of cold water and boil until potatoes are easy to pierce with a small knife. Drain and cool. Just before service slice potatoes in half and pan fry in 25gms of butter and 25ml of oil flat side down until golden. Toss with sea salt and the confit garlic and serve.

For the venison

Clean off any sinew or fat (if it's venison you won't find much fat) and portion into 200gm pieces. Rub with freshly ground pepper and lots of salt. In a searing hot pan add a dash of avocado oil, then cook off the venison. Brown the venison well on all sides in the searing hot pan, (don't worry about a little smoke). Do this only for long enough to really colour the meat then remove to the oven (set at 180) for 7 minutes. Once done remove from the oven and cover lightly with foil, rest in a warmish place for 10 minutes. Venison should be eaten rare or medium rare – this recipe assumes you have a fairly big cube like hunk of meat not a thin steak.

Now slice the meat into 4 or 5 slices against the grain of the meat and serve with the potatoes and cherry and wild thyme sauce.