

Online Exclusive

Belly warmers

Must-have soups for winter menus

by Robert J. Benes wine pairings by Marlene Rossman

Time for consommé, velouté, vegetable and bisque. Now that your customers are wrapped up in the cold arms of Old Man Winter, you should be offering them inviting, hot soups. Winter is the perfect time to introduce a new soup to your menu, and who knows? Perhaps it will be such a successful seller that you'll want to include it year-round. The ideal bowlful should have flavors that deviate slightly from the ordinary and expected, such as Elephants Delicatessen's citrusy spin on tomato soup—with the addition of orange juice.

Or, to keep costs down at the end of the year, consider using flavors that are in season (and of the season), like chestnut, apple and turkey, as chef Phillip Foss of Lockwood has done for his chestnut velouté.

Soup and wine? Indeed, says Chef Magazine's wine specialist Marlene Rossman, who has suggested complementary wine pairings.



Tomato Orange Soup

Elephants Delicatessen, Portland, Ore., www.elephantsdeli.com

Yield: 4 servings

1/2 c. unsalted butter
1/2 medium onion, diced
2 (14 1/2 oz.) cans diced tomatoes
1 t. salt
1/2 t. cracked black pepper
1/4 t. baking soda
1/2 t. dried thyme
1 c. fresh orange juice
1/2 c. heavy cream

Method (1) In a saucepan, melt butter. Add onion, and sauté until translucent. (2) Add tomatoes, salt, pepper, baking soda and thyme. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer uncovered about 15 minutes or until slightly thickened. (3) Purée in a food processor or blender; strain through a sieve or food mill. (4) Return to saucepan, and stir in orange juice. At this point, the soup can be refrigerated until ready to serve. (5) At serving time, add cream, and heat gently, stirring constantly. Bring to a simmer, and adjust seasonings if necessary. Extra cream may be drizzled on top of the soup immediately before serving.

Wine pairing: Fresh Flora Springs Soliloquy Sauvignon Blanc 2007 (California) is smooth and creamy, with melon and fig flavors.



Chestnut Velouté with Porcini Duxelles

Chef Phillip Foss, Lockwood at the Palmer House Hilton, Chicago

Yield: 4 8-oz. servings

2 oz. unsalted butter
1 turkey backbone and giblets
2 oz. shallots, peeled and coarse-cut
2 oz. celery root, peeled and coarse-cut
1 Golden Delicious apple, peeled, cored and coarse-cut
1/2 t. Asian five-spice powder (anise, fennel, cinnamon, clove, black pepper)
1 lb. chestnuts, roasted and peeled
Salt, to taste Water, if needed
1 oz. Armagnac
1 qt. chicken stock, heated
4 oz. heavy cream
2 oz. crème fraîche
2 oz. fresh porcini, trimmed, cleaned and finely dice
Olive oil, as needed
1/2 oz. sherry vinegar

Method (1) Brown the butter in a 4-qt. sauce pan over high heat. Add turkey backbone and giblets, and cook while stirring frequently until well-browned. (2) Add the shallots and celery root, and continue cooking over high heat until translucent. Add the apples. (3) Add the Asian five-spice powder, and stir to toast. Add chestnuts and a good pinch of salt, stir to incorporate. Lower heat to medium low, cover, but stir occasionally, and cook until chestnuts break down, about 30 minutes. If the ingredients begin to stick to the bottom of the pan, add a splash of water. (4) Once the chestnuts are tender and breaking down, add the Armagnac and hot chicken stock. Raise heat to high, bring to a boil, lower the heat to a simmer, and cook for 30 minutes. (5) Remove from the heat, and purée using a blender or immersion blender. Strain through a fine-meshed chinois (to be sure all the carcass is removed). (6) With the remainder, add cream and crème fraîche, return to a boil, then remove from the heat. Adjust seasoning and thin, if desired, with additional hot turkey jus or chicken stock or water. Keep warm. (7) Sauté porcini in a small amount of olive oil over high heat in a 10" sauté pan. Deglaze with sherry vinegar, and season, to taste. (8) Fill a small ring mold in center of a heated bowl with mushrooms. Ladle in soup, and serve.

Wine pairing: Macrostie Pinot Noir 2006 (California), with flavors of sweet baking spice, cherries and vanilla, will match not only the mushrooms, but also the five-spice powder and chestnuts.



Lobster Bisque

Chef Marcus Polycarpe, Christy's Restaurant, Coral Gables, Fla.,

www.christysrestaurant.com

Yield: 6-8 servings

1/2 c. white onion, diced
1/2 c. celery, diced
12 c. carrot, diced
1 c. tomato, diced
1/4 c. fennel, diced
2 t. garlic
2 lb. lobster shells
1/2 c. white wine
1/3 c. sherry wine
1 qt. lobster stock
1 qt. heavy cream
2 T. butter
1 T. flour
2 t. fresh basil
1/4 c. brandy
6-8 oz. steamed lobster meat
Salt and pepper, as needed

Method (1) In a large, cast-iron soup pot, sauté onion, celery, carrot, tomato, fennel and garlic until tender. Add the lobster shells to the vegetable mix, and sauté until the shells turn red, about 10 minutes. Add white wine and sherry wine, and let it come to a simmer for about 5 minutes. Add the lobster stock and fresh basil. Let it simmer, 45 minutes. (2) Remove the shells. Blend the mixture, and pour it through a fine strainer; do this in small batches. Return the strained mixture to the pot, and reduce, 10 minutes. Add the cream. (3) In a separate saucepan, mix the butter and flour together to form a roux. Then add the roux to the soup to thicken it. To finish the bisque, add the basil, brandy, lobster meat and salt and pepper, to taste.

Wine pairing: Well-balanced Camelot Highlands Chardonnay 2006 (California) with sweet fruit and cream plays off the richness of this bisque.

Wild Game Chili

Executive chef John Ayaleanos, Birch River Grill, Arlington Heights, Ill.,

www.birchrivergrill.com

Yield: About 20 lbs.

5 lb. ground wild boar
5 lb. ground buffalo
2 lb. andouille sausage
1/2 c. salt and pepper mix
5 lb. bison strip loin, cut and trimmed in 1/2" steaks
2 lb. peppered bacon, diced
5 onions, diced
1/2 c. chopped garlic
1/2 c. flour
1/2 gal. water
1/2 c. ground cumin
1/2 chili powder blend
1/2 c. oregano
1 #10 can chili sauce
1 #10 can tomato purée
1 #10 can diced San Marzano tomatoes
1 qt. dry measure rattlesnake beans, cooked
1 qt. dry measure appaloosa beans, cooked

Method (1) Sear ground meats and andouille sausage with salt and pepper mix. Drain in perforated pan. (2) Grill strip loin steaks; dice, and add to cooked ground meats. (3) Render bacon, and reserve. Sauté onions and garlic in bacon fat. While sautéing, add flour, and stir well. (4) Return meats to pan. Add water, cumin, chili powder, oregano, chili sauce, tomato purée and tomatoes. (5) Simmer for 1 1/2 hours, stirring every 15 minutes. (6) Add beans and reserved bacon during last 10 minutes of cooking. Cool in pans. Reheat for service.

Wine pairing: Vie Syrah 2006 (California) is hearty and smoky, able to stand up to the andouille, bacon and rich game.



Five-Onion Soup with Braised Short Ribs

Executive chef Roy D. Bruce, Rothmann's Steakhouse, East Norwich, N.Y., www.rothmannssteakhouse.com

Yield: 10-12 servings

Soup

1 c. shallots, cut into wedges
1 c. Vidalia onion, cut into 1/2" wedges
1 c. Spanish onion, cut into 1/2" wedges
1 c. red onion, cut into 1/2" wedges
3 T. garlic, peeled and sliced
8 oz. butter
1/2 t. salt
2 T. fresh thyme, chopped
3 c. Marsala wine
4 c. chicken stock
3 fresh (or 2 dry) bay leaves
Ground black pepper, as needed
Kosher salt, as needed
Braised Short Ribs (recipe follows)
1 c. sliced scallion

Method (1) Sweat shallot, onions and garlic in butter with salt in a heavy, medium-size pot over medium heat, covered, stirring occasionally, until deep golden, about 15 minutes. (2) Add thyme and wine; boil, reducing until almost dry. Add chicken stock and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 1/2 hour. Add black pepper and salt to taste. Add Braised Short Ribs with reserved marinade. Finish with scallions.

Braised Short Ribs

10 6" (8-9 lb. total) boneless beef short ribs
8 c. red wine, divided
1 bunch fresh thyme
1 bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley
5 sprigs fresh rosemary
2 fresh (or 1 dried) bay leaves
1 T. plus 2 t. fresh ground pepper
1 T. fennel seed

1 T. mustard seed
1 head garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped
2 T. kosher salt
3/4 c. olive oil
3 c. onions, peeled and cut into 1/2" pieces
2 1/2 c. carrots, peeled and cut into 1/2" pieces
2 1/2 c. celery, leaves removed and cut into 1/2" pieces
1/2 c. tomato paste
6 c. veal stock

Method (1) In resealable, 2-gal. plastic bag, place short ribs with 6 c. wine, thyme, parsley, rosemary, bay leaves, 1 T. pepper, fennel seed, mustard seed and garlic. Marinate in refrigerator for at least 8 hours or up to 24 hours. (2) Remove ribs from marinade; reserve liquid. Pat ribs dry, and sprinkle with kosher salt and remaining 2 t. pepper. (3) Put rack in middle position in oven, and preheat to 325°F. (4) In heavy, 12" skillet over moderately high heat, heat 1/4 c. oil just until smoking. Working in three batches, sear ribs, turning with tongs, until well-browned on all sides, about 8 minutes total. Wipe pan clean, and add 1/4 c. oil between batches. Transfer ribs into a 3"- to 4"-deep roasting pan (making only 1 layer). (5) Add onions, carrots, celery to skillet used to cook short ribs. Over moderately high heat, caramelize for about 10 minutes. Add tomato paste; continue cooking for another 5 minutes. (6) Add the remaining 2 c. red wine. Reduce until almost dry. (7) Transfer vegetables to a wide, 6-qt. sauce pot, making sure to scrape any brown bits from bottom and sides of skillet. Add reserved marinade, and reduce until pan is almost dry, about 1 hour. (8) Add stock and bring to boil. Pour stock mixture over ribs, and cover with foil. Transfer to oven, and braise until meat is tender about 2 1/2 hours. Let cool slightly. When ribs are cool enough to handle, remove any excess fat and shred.

Wine pairing: Duckhorn Vineyards Paraduxx 2005 (California) is an unusual blend of Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon, with jammy blackberry and spice that works with the rich short ribs and onion soup.



Warm Mango Soup with Grilled Coconut Prawns

The Perfect Purée of Napa Valley, Napa, Calif., www.perfectpuree.com

Yield: 8 servings

Soup

2 T. flour
1/2 t. turmeric, ground
1 1/2 t. cumin, ground
1 t. coriander, ground
1/2 c. plain Greek yogurt
32 oz. The Perfect Purée of Napa Valley Mango, thawed
1 1/4 c. water
1 1/4 t. salt
1/2 t. dried chile flakes
1/2 t. whole cumin seeds, toasted
Coconut Prawns (recipe follows)
Black sesame seeds, for garnish

Method (1) Place flour, turmeric, cumin and coriander in a medium bowl. Whisk in yogurt. (2) Add 1 cup Mango purée, water, salt and dried chile flakes. Mix well. (3) Heat mixture in a saucepan with toasted cumin seeds and remaining Mango purée. Bring to a simmer, and cook over low heat for 10 minutes, stirring frequently. (4) Strain and hold until ready to serve. (5) Place 3/4 c. warm soup into a shallow soup bowl. Place 2 oz. grilled Coconut Prawns in center of bowl. Garnish with black sesame seeds.

Coconut Prawns

1 1/2 T. canola oil
1/3 c. The Perfect Purée of Napa Valley Coconut, thawed
3 T. The Perfect Purée of Napa Valley Blood Orange Concentrate, thawed
1 1/2 T. The Perfect Purée of Napa Valley Orange Zest, thawed
3/4 t. salt
1/4 t. pepper
1 t. fresh thyme leaves
1 clove garlic, minced
1 lb. prawns, cleaned and deveined Oil, as needed

Method (1) Mix canola oil, coconut purée, blood orange concentrate, orange zest, salt, pepper, thyme and garlic in a medium bowl. (2) Add cleaned prawns, and toss to coat. Marinate for 1-2 hours. (3) Heat grill, and brush with oil. Grill prawns until done; do not over cook.

Wine pairing: The sweet-tart Ventana Riesling 2007 (California) with tropical fruit flavors beautifully complements the spicy mango soup and prawns.

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