



TAILORED TASTE TIDBITS

VOLUME V, ISSUE II SPRING 2010 FOOD NEWS FROM TAILORED TASTE PERSONAL CHEF SERVICE

Sweet

Ah – the one we’ve been waiting for!

In today’s lingo (I think it’s still in today’s lingo) “sweet” is used to indicate something positive. For most it evokes happy memories. Our desire for sweets seems to be hard-wired since our taste buds develop in utero. Mother’s milk has a sweetness to it that cow’s milk does not and so our earliest experiences link sweet to a state of satiety which translates as happiness.



We carry that memory throughout life. Our celebrations include sweets – wedding cakes, birthday cakes, Christmas cookies, and Thanksgiving apple pies! As a child were you rewarded with a trip to Dairy Queen for a good report card? “Finish your dinner and you’ll get dessert.” Sweet equals the prize to us.

As sugar became inexpensive it invaded most food in the form of high fructose corn syrup and overly processed simple sugars. As with anything, too much is not good. But the resulting backlash has been to demonize sweets. I believe this is extreme and ridiculous. Sweets have their place and in moderation, they bring a table of diners together to linger and enjoy bites, slices, scoops and each others’ company as the meal winds down. Sweets come in batches and dozens and thus are meant to be shared making them inherently social/communal. Beyond their delicious taste, this is the positive side of sweets.

Historically, our choice of sweeteners has shifted from pure sources (honey and sugar cane) to processed products (refined sugar and corn syrup) back to natural plant sugars (stevia and agave). Once again we are swinging full circle to more natural and less chemically-contrived sources. A registered dietitian told me that natural sugars like honey and agave are processed more slowly by our bodies, minimizing sugar-spiking versus the sugar rush of the refined products. So maybe my beloved gummi bears should be made with agave? I shall have to investigate further.

Pastry Chef Extraordinaire

Some of us prefer to create savory dishes and some prefer to bake sweet treats. I’m in the former camp and happily my colleague, Samantha Burdman is in the latter.

Sam owns and operates **Blackburd Pastries** and as some of you already know, she supplies desserts for many of the parties I produce.

Sam is a graduate of and a chef instructor at L’Academie de Cuisine. She’s also an active member of Women Chefs & Restaurateurs where our paths cross.

Some of her creations include carrot cake bites with cream cheese icing, salted brownie rounds with ganache rosettes, tres leches squares with meringue buttons,



Gerbet Macarons from Blackburd Pastries

opera cakes crowned with flakes of gold leaf, and milk chocolate mousse domes filled with salted caramel resting on dark chocolate cake medallions. Yum!

Check out the ganache recipe on the back of the newsletter – it’s one of Sam’s!

Chocolate Ganache

Courtesy of
Pastry Chef Samantha Burdman
Blackburd Pastries

This chocolate ganache is very versatile. Use to sandwich cookies, ice cupcakes, and serve as a flavor base for mousse and buttercream. Your favorite high-quality dark chocolate (semisweet or bittersweet) works well!

Ingredients:

4 oz semisweet chocolate
1 oz butter, soft
4 oz heavy cream

Procedure:

1. Chop chocolate and place in a heat-proof bowl with butter
2. Heat cream in a saucepan, bringing just to a boil
3. Add half hot cream mixture to the chocolate/butter - let sit 30 seconds
4. Add remaining cream gradually, stirring gently with a whisk to avoid incorporating air into the ganache
5. Continue stirring until the mixture is dark brown, shiny, and smooth
6. If any lumps remain, warm ganache in a heat-proof bowl over a pot with about 1-inch of barely boiling water, stirring constantly
7. Cool (uncovered) at room temperature until ganache is fudgy and able to be handled. This may take several hours to overnight (do not stir the ganache as it is cooling!)
8. If the ganache is too soft to handle after several hours, place in the refrigerator 15 minutes to harden

Storage: Store well-wrapped ganache at room temperature for 2-3 days or in the refrigerator for 2 weeks.

Note: This ganache is the filling for those gorgeous cookies on the front of this newsletter.

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Spring – How Sweet It Is!

At long last it has arrived! What a winter we've had, especially here in the DC area, setting records for snow with piles of the dirty stuff lingering for weeks after the last flake fell. As green shoots sprout and the bright yellow daffodils cover the sides of highways, we all begin to smile again.

I think there is great comfort in the change of seasons – Spring does follow Winter (like dessert follows dinner!) – and the hope that flip-flops will replace boots becomes a reality.

Our tastes shift as well at this time of year with the arrival of thin beautiful asparagus, fresh sweet green peas, baby artichokes, and tender young lettuce. My small garden is already producing peppery baby arugula as I let some plants go to seed last Fall. (Sometimes laziness pays off ☺)

Our taste in desserts also shifts from heavy, gooey cakes to lemon-scented soufflés, orange-glazed rhubarb tarts, or carrot cakes with mascarpone icing to finish a meal. Lighter and fluffier are the order of the Spring day. The chocolate ganache filling (recipe to the left) seals two lighter-than-air macarons made of egg whites and ground almonds forming a perfect two-bite end to a Spring dinner on the patio. Here's the menu:

Asparagus Spears wrapped in Prosciutto
with Lemon Aioli



Minted Sweet Pea Salad atop Spring Arugula
served in a Parmesan Tuille



Orange-Chive Glazed Salmon Fillets



Roasted Baby Artichokes tossed with fresh herbs and fruity
Australian olive oil



Carrot-Studded Orzo



Chef Samantha's Gerbet Macarons

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The first arugula of the season