

LAMB CHOPS WITH FRESH MINT CRUST AND PORT WINE CHERRY SAUCE

Yield: 14 to 16 Hors d'Oeuvres Portions or 4 Dinner Portions (14 to 16 chops)

Sauce:

3/4 cup port wine
1 shallot, peeled and diced
1 whole star anise
1 1/2 cups veal stock
1/4 cup whole cherry preserves
1 tbs. unsalted butter
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Lamb:

2 racks of lamb, trimmed of all fat down to the "eye," rib bones "Frenched," cleaned of all meat
kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tbs. canola oil
4 tbs. fresh mint leaves



METHOD:

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. In a saucepan, using medium high heat, add the port wine, shallots and star anise. Bring to a boil and reduce to 1/4 cup. Add the veal stock and continue to cook, reducing the sauce volume to 1 cup. Remove from the heat and strain through a sieve. Stir in the preserves, then slowly stir in butter. Do not whisk in butter. It will "muddy" the look of the sauce and destroy the sheen. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside and keep warm.
2. Season the lamb with salt and pepper. In an oven-proof sauté pan, using medium high heat, add the oil. When the oil is hot, place the lamb, meat side down, in the pan. Sear two minutes, then turn and sear another two minutes on the other side.
3. Transfer the pan directly to the oven and roast for about 15 minutes, or until medium rare. An instant read thermometer will register 130 degrees for medium rare. Allow the lamb to rest ten minutes before slicing. Slice the lamb, cutting between each rib bone, to completely separate each chop from the rack to form the "chops."
4. Finely chop the mint leaves and place them on a plate. Roll the round outer edge of each chop onto the chopped mint and place a dollop of sauce in the center of each chop.

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650 652-6500

www.cuisinestyle.com



events@cuisinestyle.com

1755 Rollins Road, Burlingame, CA 94010