



A wooden spoon and a silver spoon are positioned vertically on a dark teal, textured background. The wooden spoon is on the left, and the silver spoon is on the right. The silver spoon's bowl is filled with a dark liquid, possibly truffle oil, which reflects light. The silver spoon's handle has an ornate, engraved design at the bottom. The wooden spoon's handle is smooth and simple.

FOOD FROM AFAR

By Nateampai Sarakosass

TRUFFLE TEMPTATION

As any foodie worth their salt knows, truffles are the diamonds of the gourmet world. Our resident chef goes in search of this prized puff ball and pairs it with some other fine ingredients, perfect for those looking to eat in the lap of luxury.

Punnee Chaiyakul, Vice Chairman Management of Ogilvy & Mather, Thailand, met Willems Hans, Export Director of Heineken (Holland) in the United States, and the love blossomed almost immediately. In fact, they make such a great pair that time spent with them is always a joy, and I can't help wishing my parents weren't a little more like them. Each year they ritually retrace the steps of their honeymoon, travelling to Amsterdam and Venice. This year I made them promise to bring back some precious truffles from southern Europe.

Truffles, despite being a rather odd-looking fungi, are food from heaven. Their aroma is similar to a dark brown mushroom with a mild garlic flavour paired with musky, nutty sunflower seed. The elegance and depth of the flavour provides layers of taste that echo within your mouth. Owing to the fact they are both hard to find and cannot be cultivated, truffles are hugely expensive, with black truffles fetching around USD 950 per kilogram, and white truffles costing up to four times this price. Both can be eaten fresh as paper-thin slices, or they can be used to directly infuse dishes, or in general cooking.

Punnee and Hans have always been an inspiration for me and so, like them, I matched Thai ingredients with European delicacies: foie gras with pineapple; truffle bechamel with coconut milk mashed potatoes; and choux pastry with jasmine cream. Though I say it myself, the result was truly luxurious.





BRAISED PINEAPPLE & SAUTÉED FOIE GRAS

Pineapple

Heat 1 tbs of olive oil, add 100 gms of chopped onion and 20 gms of chopped ginger, then stir fry until translucent. Add 6 tbs of honey, 2 cups of white wine, a pinch of dried thyme and half a pineapple. Bring to boil, then simmer for 20-25 minutes or until the sauce has a syrupy consistency.

Foie Gras

Slice the foie gras and then sauté in brown butter for 40 seconds on each side. Serve with the braised pineapple and micro salad.

TRUFFLE BÉCHAMEL & COCONUT MILK MASHED POTATOES WITH SALMON

Truffle Béchamel

Stir fry 1 oz of butter with 1 oz of bread flour for a minute. Add 2 cups of milk and whisk to combine. Add 1 onion with 5 cloves, bring to boil, then simmer for 15 minutes. Whisk in 3 tbs of truffle oil.

Coconut Milk Mashed Potatoes with Turmeric Pear

Peel and cut 800 gms of potato, put into a pot, then add cold water. Bring to boil, simmer until soft, then drain. Heat 1/3 of a cup of coconut milk and 1/2 a tbs of butter. Blend the coconut milk mixture with the potato in a blender. Season with salt and pepper. Sauté 1 cup of diced pear with 1 tbs of olive oil, 1 tsp of lime juice, 1 tsp of chopped shallot, 1/2 a tsp of turmeric powder, 1 and 1/2 tsp of honey and 1 pinch of salt. Fold the pear into the potato.

Pan-Fried Salmon

Heat 1 tbs of olive oil in a pan and season a slice of skinned salmon with salt and pepper. Pan fry for 2 minutes each side (depends on the thickness of the fish). Place the mash in the centre of plate, then place the salmon upon this. Ladle the truffle béchamel on top and decorate with slices of black truffle.

JASMINE CROQUEBOUCHES

Croquebouche is a dessert for celebrations, and can be a decorative centrepiece for any ceremony. It is comprised of little choux pastries filled with cream, bound with hot caramel and stacked into a cone. They are perhaps best decorated with golden threads of caramel, giving them a shining latticework effect.

Choux

Boil 250 ml of water with 125 gms of butter and 2.5 gms of salt. Add 187.5 gms of bread flour and keep stirring for 3 minutes or until the mixture is worked into a ball. Put the dough in the mixer and let it cool for few minutes, blend in 312.5 gms of whole egg until it is fully combined. Put the mixture in a pastry bag. Pipe the dough onto a baking sheet making a round mould. Bake at 215°C for 15 minutes, then reduce the heat to 175°C. Bake until dry and then let it cool on a rag.

Jasmine Cream

Bring 10 oz of heavy cream almost to the boil, then pour over 19 oz of white chocolate and whisk to blend, then let cool. Put in the blender, whisk in 2 cups of cold heavy cream and 1/2 tsp of jasmine extract. Whisk until it is light, then put in the pastry bag and pipe in the choux.

Caramel

Boil 1 cup of sugar with 2 tbs of water until it reaches 170°C. Dip the bottom of cream-filled choux and start piling up the choux to form a cone shape. To finish, dip a fork into the hot caramel and drizzle the caramel around the pastry. Move very fast, so you can create a thin latticework effect with the caramel. Do not stir the caramel: you can reheat the mixture to prolong its usage.

