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FOREWORD BY JESSICA B. HARRIS

RIZZOLI
NEW YORK



Stuffed Leg of Lamb

A EMPIRE UNA SPALLA, O ALTRO MEMBRO

SERVES 8 TO 12 *This recipe from Anonimo Toscano, an anonymous source, is not “stuffed” in the sense we think of today but “forced,” meaning the meat is minced with other ingredients and reshaped around the bone and then encased in caul fat and grilled or roasted. It is a delicious showpiece at the center of a grand meal and pairs beautifully with the powerful sauces that follow. If you cannot source the caul fat, the recipe will still hold together but will lose some of its drama and unctuousness. All three sauces that follow match well with this dish; choose one or serve all three.*

1 (5- to 6-pound) leg of lamb

FOR EACH 1 POUND OF LAMB MEAT:

8 ounces skinless pork belly, cut into ½-inch cubes

¼ cup fresh parsley leaves

2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves

¼ cup fresh mint leaves

¼ cup fresh sage leaves

1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon ground ginger

1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon saffron

¼ cup ricotta

1 large egg

2 teaspoons kosher salt

2 to 3 pieces caul fat, to wrap completely

Canola oil for pan

FOR THE SAUCE

(CHOOSE ONE OR SERVE ALL THREE):

Lombard Sauce (page 139)

Verjus Garlic Sauce (page 139)

Black Grape Sauce (page 140)

PREHEAT the oven to 350°F.

FIRST, remove and save the central bone from the lamb leg. You are going to mince the meat, so you do not have to use any fancy techniques—just cut in straight to the bone, then peel the meat away with small cuts using the tip of your knife. Alternatively, you can go full swashbuckler and cut away the meat in large chunks. Regardless, reserve the bone and cut the meat into roughly 1-inch pieces. Weigh the meat and scale the ingredients accordingly.

TO prepare the lamb meat, put the lamb in a large bowl and mix in the pork belly,

herbs, spices, ricotta, egg, and salt. Working in batches, mince the mixture in a food processor fitted with the metal blade. Line a roasting pan with oiled parchment. If you have a roasting rack, place it in the pan. Spread the caul fat on a work surface. Spread about half of the meat mixture thickly on the caul fat, leaving 1 to 2 inch margins around the edge. Place the bone in the center, with a few inches projecting out one end of the caul fat. Spread the other half of the mixture over the bone and form the mixture into the original shape of the leg. Bring the caul fat up around the sides to encase the “leg.” Tie it in place with butcher’s twine.

TRANSFER to the rack, if using, or place on top of the parchment in the pan. Roast in the oven until the internal temperature at the

deepest part reaches 165°F on an instant-read thermometer, about 1½ hours. Serve with your choice of the sauces.

Lombard Sauce

SALSA LOMBARDA

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP *This is a sharp, vegetal sauce similar to a chimichurri or gremolata. It pairs well with rich meat dishes and is also a great counterpoint to grilled or roasted vegetables.*

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| ½ cup fresh parsley leaves | 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper |
| 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves | ¼ cup toasted breadcrumbs |
| 2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage leaves | ½ cup white wine vinegar |
| 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves | ¼ cup white grape juice |
| 1 leaf Swiss chard | 1 teaspoon kosher salt |
| 3 cloves garlic | |

ROUGHLY chop all the herbs and chard. Combine these and the remaining ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Let sit for 30 minutes to allow the flavors to

marry. Taste for salt and acidity. If it is too sharp, add a little more grape juice. The sauce should be herbaceous, bright, and lingering.

Verjus Garlic Sauce

AGRESTO CUM AGLIO

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS *Verjus is fresh and light, which makes it a wonderful change from vinegar in sauces and dressings. This quality is brought out further in this sauce by the licorice notes of the fennel and the wonder of fresh basil.*

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| 6 cloves garlic | 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper |
| ½ cup chopped fresh fennel bulb | 1½ cups white verjus |
| 1 cup fresh basil leaves | ½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste |

ADD all ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth. Refrigerate for 30 minutes and taste to adjust salt.

Black Grape Sauce

SAPORE DE UVA NEGRA

MAKES 1 TO 1½ CUPS *This is very much the flavor of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance. People are often surprised when I liken these flavors to those of Persian and Near Eastern cuisine, but the combination of sweet, sour, and aromatic spices makes this sauce a perfect example.*

1 pound seedless black grapes

⅓ cup breadcrumbs

½ cup grape juice

1 cup red verjus

**1½-inch-piece fresh ginger, peeled
and cut into planks**

1 cinnamon stick

5 whole cloves

¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

Small pinch of kosher salt

ADD the grapes and the breadcrumbs to the bowl of a food processor fitted with the metal blade and pulse until fairly smooth, working in batches if necessary. Transfer to a large bowl and refrigerate for 1 hour. Drain through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl, pressing out as much liquid as you can with the back of a large spoon or ladle. Combine this liquid, the grape juice, verjus, ginger,

cinnamon stick, cloves, and nutmeg in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil and add a small pinch of salt for balance.

LET the sauce reduce over medium-low heat until it coats the back of a spoon, about 25 minutes, then strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a storage container and discard the solids.