

# Gala's gifts



RECIPES  
INSIDE,  
D3

By Kylene Lloyd, The Courier-Journal

The Bibb lettuce salad with crumbled Benton's pecan brittle, boursin cheese mousse, fresh strawberries and bourbon berry vinaigrette makes use of Kentucky culinary treasures.

By Ron Mikulak  
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The Courier-Journal

**T**he great spring sporting event in Louisville is also the occasion for many charitable events, all of which require wonderful food.

The culinary talents of the chefs at the Seelbach Hilton, 500 S. Third St., will be on display

## Fare for Derby Eve party at Seelbach simple but elegant

chef, Matt Durham, has devised a simple but elegant menu for the formal dinner portion of the evening's festivities. Durham, who has been cooking for the

some of their recipes so other Derby party-givers might strive for a similar culinary elegance.

After hors d'oeuvres of tomato bruschetta and mini crab cakes at the cocktail reception, Gala-goers will sit down to a three-course dinner featuring several Kentucky culinary treasures. The salad will feature three such treasures — Bibb lettuce garnished with a bacon pecan brittle made with Benton's

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wine sauce and potatoes au gratin. For those who have forsaken eating meat, a vegetarian strudel will be the meatless option. Dessert will be chocolate, of course, in the form of pyramids of mousse hiding a cherry surprise.

While Durham will be serving these dishes as a sit-down dinner, the tenderloin and vegetable strudel adapt very nicely to a buffet. Adding the boursin mousse rosette to the salad requires the greens to be composed beforehand, but if left out — or if the mousse were to be well chilled, rolled into a log and sliced — the salad could be tossed in a large bowl for buffet service as well.

**Bibb lettuce salad with crumbled Benton's pecan brittle, boursin cheese mousse, fresh strawberries and bourbon berry vinaigrette**

**Bacon pecan brittle**

Durham likes the small-batch bacon made by Benton's, of Madisonville, Tenn., but availability of that brand is limited. He also likes Broadbent bacon, more easily available locally. I found a choice of Broadbent bacons at Burger's Supermarket, 1005 Ray Ave. in the Highlands.

- ▶ 2 cups sugar
- ▶ 2 cups water
- ▶ ¼ cup chopped toasted pecans
- ▶ ¼ cup chopped cooked Benton's bacon
- ▶ Pinch of kosher salt

Heat oven to 325 degrees. In a pan, combine sugar and water, bring to a boil, and boil vigorously

crack stage, 300 degrees on a candy thermometer.

Line sheet pan with a silicone mat or parchment paper. Sprinkle pecans and chopped bacon evenly over entire pan. Carefully pour over the hot sugar mixture. Sprinkle with a little kosher salt. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool for 30 minutes. When firm and brittle, break into bite-sized pieces.

**Bourbon berry vinaigrette**

- ▶ ½ cup blueberries
- ▶ ½ cup raspberries
- ▶ ½ cup blackberries
- ▶ 1 cup strawberries (hulled and cut in half)
- ▶ ¼ cup sugar
- ▶ 2 tablespoons good bourbon
- ▶ Juice of ½ lemon
- ▶ 1 minced shallot
- ▶ 1 tablespoon raspberry vinegar
- ▶ ½ tablespoon Dijon mustard
- ▶ Salt and pepper to taste
- ▶ ½ cup blended olive oil (½ olive oil and ½ neutral vegetable oil)

Rinse and shake-dry all the berries, and combine in a bowl. Toss berries with the sugar, bourbon and lemon juice. Marinate at least 24 hours.

Purée fruit mix in blender with the shallot, vinegar, Dijon mustard and salt and pepper. With the blender running, slowly add the oil to the fruit mix until completely incorporated. Taste, and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.

Makes about 1 cup of dressing.

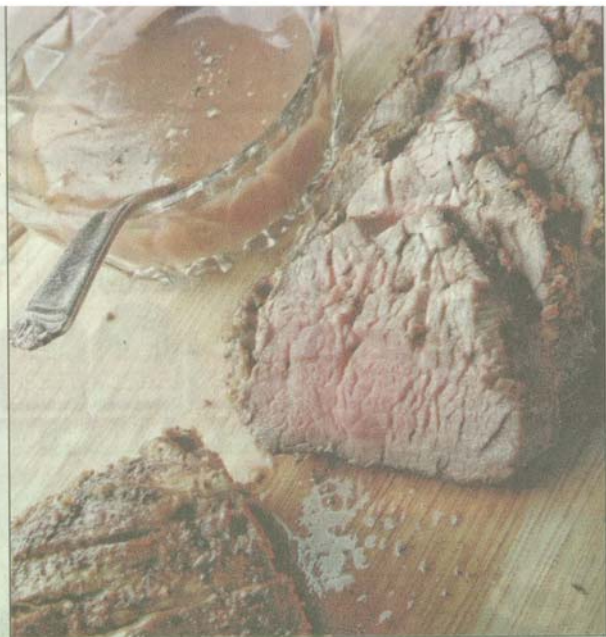
**Boursin cheese mousse**

Combine two 4-ounce blocks of garlic herbed boursin cheese with ½ cup heavy cream in a food processor, and purée until smooth. Season to taste with white pepper.

**Salad**

- ▶ 2 to 4 heads Bibb lettuce, depending on the size of the heads
- ▶ Bacon pecan brittle
- ▶ Boursin cheese mousse (see recipe)
- ▶ 1 cup strawberries, hulled and sliced in half

Separate lettuce leaves, rinse well



By Kylene Lloyd, The Courier-Journal

**Beef tenderloin, a Kentucky Derby party staple, is served here with a port wine sauce. The dish will adapt nicely to a buffet.**

a salad plate. Arrange several leaves of lettuce on the plate, and pipe a rosette of boursin mousse in the center. Sprinkle with some of the pecan brittle, and garnish with two or three sliced strawberries. Dress with several tablespoons of the dressing.

Serves 4 to 6.

**Beef tenderloin with port wine sauce**

- ▶ 2-pound beef tenderloin
- ▶ 1 tablespoon garlic, peeled and minced
- ▶ Salt and pepper

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

Bring tenderloin to room temperature. Rub outside well with minced garlic, salt and pepper. Sear on all sides in a hot oven-proof skillet or sauté pan. Place tenderloin and skillet in oven, and roast to desired doneness, 15 to 20 minutes for medium rare. Let beef rest before slicing and serving. Serve with port wine sauce.

**Port wine sauce**

Use an inexpensive bottle of California ruby port for this sauce.

- ▶ 1 medium shallot, peeled and chopped
- ▶ ½ tablespoon fresh thyme
- ▶ 1 small carrot, peeled and chopped
- ▶ 1½ cups ruby port wine
- ▶ 1 quart good veal stock, or 4 tablespoons veal demi-glace whisked into 1 quart simmering water
- ▶ 2 tablespoons cornstarch whisked with 2 tablespoons water

Put shallot, thyme, carrot and port in saucepan, and reduce by half. Add veal stock, and reduce by half again. Strain, and thicken with cornstarch slurry, if desired, adding a teaspoon at a time until desired consistency is reached.

Makes about 3 cups.

**Vegetable strudel**

This vegetarian option is a bit of work to construct, but is handsome, tasty and filling. With these proportions, I made three strudels about 7 inches long and 4 inches wide, enough for 6 to 8 servings.



By Bill Luster, The Courier-Journal

**Derby Eve Gala guests who shun meat will have a rich alternative in a buttery vegetable strudel.**

- more) for brushing phyllo dough
- ▶ 1 zucchini, trimmed and cut into julienne
- ▶ 2 yellow squash, trimmed and cut into julienne
- ▶ 1 large carrot, scraped and cut into julienne
- ▶ 1 red pepper, seeded and cut into julienne
- ▶ 1½ cups shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- ▶ 1½ cups oyster mushrooms, sliced
- ▶ ½ cup shallots, peeled and minced
- ▶ 1 tablespoon garlic, peeled and minced
- ▶ ½ cup white wine
- ▶ 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- ▶ 1 tablespoon basil, cut into narrow strips
- ▶ Salt and pepper to taste
- ▶ Cayenne pepper to taste
- ▶ ½ cup or so of breadcrumbs
- ▶ Phyllo dough

Melt the 2 ounces butter in a large sauté pan or shallow roasting pan, and when sizzly, add the zucchini and squash, carrot and red pepper, mushrooms, shallots and garlic, and sauté, stirring now and then, until vegetables are just tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Deglaze pan with the wine; that is, add the wine and with a wooden spoon scrape up any browned bits on the bottom. Let the wine reduce until almost all boiled away. Add the balsamic vinegar and basil, and cook 1 minute more. Taste, and season well

Remove from heat, and fold in the breadcrumbs. Spread the vegetable mixture on a large baking pan, and refrigerate until cool to the touch. If any liquid remains, stir in more breadcrumbs to absorb it.

Melt the stick of butter in a microwave. On a clean, dry work surface, lay out one sheet of phyllo dough, covering the rest of the sheets with a damp towel to prevent them from drying out. Brush first sheet with melted butter. Place another sheet directly over first one, and butter that one. Repeat until you have seven layers of phyllo sheets.

Visually divide the phyllo sheets into thirds. Spread about one-third of the cooled vegetable mixture on the middle third of the dough, leaving 1 inch clear on both sides. Fold over the bottom third of the sheets to cover the vegetable mixture. Then fold in the sides, to enclose the dough. Carefully continue to roll the filled dough into a log. Repeat, making two more strudels, using the rest of the vegetables.

Heat oven to 425 degrees.

Carefully lift the strudels onto a baking sheet. Brush the strudel with melted butter, and sprinkle with breadcrumbs. If you wish, slash the top with a razor blade or sharp knife. Bake 12-15 minutes, until nicely browned. Let rest 5 minutes before slicing.

Serves 6 to 8.

Reporter Ron Mikulak can be