

RECIPES ELISE PASCOE  
STYLING BROUGHTON MILL FARM GUESTHOUSE BERRY

# BISTRO FOOD

Flavourful, textured and colourful, bistro food is best cooked with fresh seasonal ingredients. This is a lovely autumn/early winter menu for four people, finished with a rich, seductive dessert.



## Roast Lamb Fillet on Ratatouille

Serves 4 - 5

800 g lamb backstrap (from the loin), silver skin removed  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
Olive oil

### Ratatouille:

250 g firm eggplant  
3 medium zucchini  
1 medium green capsicum  
1 small brown onion  
1 large garlic clove, crushed  
2 large firm ripe tomatoes  
2½ tablespoons fruity green olive oil  
1 bay leaf, torn  
Pinch cayenne pepper and salt flakes  
½ teaspoon fresh thyme leaves  
1 tablespoon chopped flat leaf parsley  
½ tablespoon shredded basil leaves

## Beetroot Risotto

Serves 4 entrees

1 red onion chopped  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
200 g arborio rice  
1.25 litres chicken stock brought to the boil  
3 small beets peeled, finely diced  
30 g butter  
½ cup finely grated parmesan  
5 thin slices prosciutto  
30 g parmesan shaved

Lightly caramelize the red onion in olive oil in a heavy-based pot. Add arborio rice to 'toast' in the oil with the onion, stirring for a couple of minutes, then ladle in enough of simmering chicken stock to just cover the rice. Stirring constantly, continue adding just enough stock each time to come below the surface of the rice. Only add more stock when it is almost absorbed by the rice. Time the cooking from the moment the first stock is added for around 20 minutes.

Microwave the finely diced beets with 2 tablespoons of water on high for 4 minutes or until almost tender.

Add the beets at the 15-minute rice cooking mark and stir into the risotto to finish cooking. Add the butter and the parmesan, stir and leave to stand off the heat, covered with a tight fitting lid for 5 minutes. Serve with tissue thin slices of prosciutto and shaved Italian parmesan on top.

Trim the lamb of any excess fat. Season generously on both sides, cover with plastic wrap and leave at room temperature while the ratatouille cooks.

To make the ratatouille, cut eggplant and zucchini into 2.5 cm pieces. Cut the cheeks off the capsicum discarding the core and seeds and cut in 2.5 cm dice. Cut the onion into eighths. Peel, seed and roughly chop the tomatoes. Heat a large, heavy frying pan, add 1½ tablespoons of olive oil and fry the eggplant in batches until golden and then do the same with the zucchini. Transfer vegetables to a large heavy casserole.

Adding more oil to the frying pan as needed, lightly sauté the capsicum and add to the casserole. Add the onion, garlic, tomatoes, bay leaf and any remaining oil to the casserole. Add seasonings, cover and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring halfway during the cooking. Add the thyme and cook a further 20 minutes on very low, or until vegetables are tender. Remove from the heat and keep warm.

Heat a heavy-based frying pan, griddle or barbecue. Rub the lamb with olive oil. Cook for 8 minutes on the first side (depending on thickness, possibly less) turn it over and cook half the time the first side took to cook or until the way you like it. Remember, it will continue to cook while resting so don't overcook it. Remove lamb to a serving platter, put a sheet of foil on top without tucking it down and leave lamb to rest for 10 minutes.

When ready to serve, slice the lamb. Spoon the ratatouille into the centre of the plates and scatter with freshly chopped herbs. Arrange the lamb slices on top, drizzle with the lamb juices and serve at once.



## The Wine

Manchester Square vineyard in the cool climate region of the Southern Highlands in New South Wales specialises in growing rhine riesling, one of the more versatile grapes for matching with food.

The 2004 Riesling is full bodied, well balanced and has strong, fruit driven flavour, developed slowly over a long growing season at 670 metres. Lovely citrus flavours predominate making this ideal for the richness of a risotto with the natural sweetness of beetroot and the saltiness of the parmesan and prosciutto.

This wine has won a swag of awards at regional wine shows, predominantly Kiama, Milton and the Southern Highlands. Buy it now while it is still available. It will cellar well in correct storage for some years though it is drinking well now. Rrp \$17 per bottle or \$180 by the case a saving of \$2 per bottle. There is no cellar door at this small vineyard but you can purchase the wine by phoning 02 4869 1599.

## French Toast with Fresh Fruit

Serves 4

### Batter:

100 ml regular milk  
100 ml thickened cream  
1 tablespoon brandy  
50 g caster sugar  
2 eggs  
4 x 2 cm thick slices brioche (for the bread)  
100 g unsalted butter  
Icing sugar, for dusting

### Fruit:

Raspberries and/or blueberries, sliced ripe figs, segmented tangelos or mandarines.

Mix the batter ingredients in a shallow dish large enough to take the bread in a single layer. Soak the bread in the batter for 30 minutes.

To cook the bread; drain the bread in a colander. Heat a large heavy frying pan, add half the butter and the moment it sizzles add 2 slices of bread. Cook until golden underneath, very carefully turn the slices over using two egg lifters. When golden, lift onto warm plates and keep warm while repeating the cooking with the remaining bread.

Immediately pile the fruit on top of the French toast and dust with icing sugar. Serve with vanilla ice cream.

