

Eric Guido's Risotto al Barolo con Uva Arrostita

Where the traditional Risotto al Barolo seduces you with subtly, this dish is all about exciting flavors that come together in perfect unity to please the senses. Sweet meets salty, meets acidity on the palate and leaves you wanting for another bite. This is the crowd pleaser and the showstopper.

7 Tbls. butter
1-½ quarts of chicken stock
2 cups risotto rice (Arborio, Cannaroli or Vialone nano)
½ red onion (small dice)
1 ¼ cups Barolo (Not a modern style. Stay away from bottles aged in new oak.)
3 Tbls of pancetta or prosciutto (small dice)
½ cup of carrot (fine dice)
1 cup of grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
2 tsp fresh chopped parsley
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup of red seedless grapes (for garnish)

Preheat your oven to 250 degrees. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper and spread out one cup of small, red seedless grapes. Place them in the oven and allow to roast for one hour. When they are done, move to an area to cool completely.

Place the stock in a pot over a low flame and allow it to come to a simmer.

In a sauté pan, add five tbs of butter and place over a medium flame. Once the butter has melted, add the small dice of pancetta. Allow the pancetta to cook for five minutes and add the carrots. After about two minutes, add the onions. Allow the mixture to sweat in the butter until the onions become translucent. Next, add the rice. Stir to assure that the rice is coated in the butter and allow it to toast slightly, but do not allow it to take on any color.

Add the Barolo to the pan and increase the flame to medium high. Set a timer for 20 minutes as a guide. Stirring constantly, allow the Barolo to cook until it has cooked down by half.

Next, reduce the heat back to medium and add a ladle of stock while constantly stirring. Each time the stock cooks down to the point where the rice begins to form trails in the pan as the spoon stirs it, add another ladle of stock. When there is about 10 minutes left on the timer, sprinkle a small pinch of salt into the risotto (remember that the pancetta adds saltiness).

Continue stirring and adding stock as needed until the timer reads three minutes remaining. It is at this time that you should taste for seasoning and doneness. A proper al dente should have a very slight crunch to it at its core. Be careful, at this

time, that you don't add too much stock, but also keep in mind that the 20-minute timer is only a guide and that its taste that will really tell you when it's done.

When the risotto is al dente, remove it from the heat. Add the last two tbs of butter and the Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, a few cracks of fresh pepper, and stir to combine. Cover for one minute to allow the rice settle.

You are ready to plate. If the rice is too thick, you can add a small ladle of stock, to liven it up. Plate the risotto into small heated bowls, sprinkle with parsley and spread out some of the roasted grapes on top. Serve.