



WINTER NEWSLETTER 2007

From Chef John Sharpe:

Fall is here and the squash blossoms have gone, given way to the pomegranates and the pumpkins. The food supply changes as the weather cools and my memories of autumn start to inspire me to create new dishes for what is my favorite time of the year. One good piece of news is that Bob McClendon is growing squash blossoms on his organic farm in Glendale. I have now been serving them during October and they are beautiful.

For the fall season I love to use the pomegranate seeds and the sun chokes to make a salsa for my fish selection. I have been serving two new species of fresh fish that I are both quite different and at the same time delicious. One wild and one tame, one from the sea and one from the river. The wild one is called Monchong, a member of the pomfret family caught by line fisherman off the shores of Hawaii. It is firm and at the same time flaky with a nice sweet flavor. The freshwater farm raised fish is called Barramundi. Considered by the Australians to be one of their best fresh water species. A member of the perch family. It is a very big perch weighing in at 5 to 10 lbs farm raised and growing to 20 lbs in the wilds of Northern Australia it is now being farmed in California.

Churro Lamb Arrived in early November. The good news is that on November 9th it will be on the menu. I have secured 16 lambs from Roy Kady Jr. I serve it as a three-way sampler so you can experience its flavors and texture in different ways. The neck bones, shanks and ribs I cook in a posole with red chile broth, hominy corn and spices. The leg and shoulder are braised with green chilies, green onion, tomatillo and cilantro then served over sweet corn tamale. Last but not least the chops are grilled and served on a salad of arugula then topped with a fresh tomato pico de gallo. It is a robust dish as the nights cool off up here in the high desert. One you should not miss.

I have just started selling the 2005 Sutcliffe wines. Merlot, Syrah, Petit Verdot and a Claret Blend. While they are a little on the young side they are very palatable. They are big wines that go well with some of my robust dishes.

As the Community Farmers Market in Flagstaff comes to a close, a new door opens in the Valley of the Sun. Bob McClendon's farm comes on line for the winter season. Certified organic he has a remarkable range of fresh produce for us throughout the winter months. We will start out with assorted baby lettuce, herbs, arugula, baby carrots, turnips and squash blossoms in the fall to remind us that while we are up here at 5000 feet just 160 miles to the south they can grow summer crops for a part of the winter. He will also pick the first of his Medjool dates for our enjoyment. They are organic and delicious. I will use them for the first time this year.

Given the history of La Posada and its mythical Don, he would most likely have served dates as a special treat to remind him of his days back in Spain. Dates were brought there by the Moors and are still a favorite delicacy when in season. Right here on property I will start to harvest the quince fruits from our own trees that were planted by Ms. Colter some 70 years ago. >>>

I will make pies, compotes and spicy chutney for Christmas Day.

Quince is originally from an area called the Caucasus that lie between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in an area that is Northern Turkey and part Iraq. The fruit was carried to many parts of the world over the past two thousand years. It is very popular in the Middle East as well as North Africa and parts of Europe. In England we have cherished its aroma to use as a room freshener. When left whole as it ripens it gives off a most peasant sweet aroma that will hide mildew and other nasty smells. This was a common problem two hundred years ago in the damp buildings of the English nobleman. The Spanish make a paste from it and serve it with cheese. It is still found all over Mexico and parts of the Americas in the same form. A treat at Christmas for all to enjoy. Sweet, fragrant and a little tart it embodies many of the symbolic rites of the Catholic Church.

Thanksgiving Day Celebration

This will be our last holiday buffet. In the future all holiday menus will be fully served sit down affairs where we will still offer you all of the dishes you have enjoyed on the buffets of the past except we will now serve them to you. The reason for the change is quite simple. We have a limited number of staff and the running of the buffets are very labor intensive and they literally stretch us too far. The cost of food has increased so much over the last two years making the volume of the foods we have to prepare very expensive. As you can imagine calculating how much food needed for a buffet will always result in huge overages of foodstuffs. One of the most disturbing realities when serving a buffet is the sheer waste of food left on guests' plates. I can no longer allow this amount of food to be wasted. Being a member of Slow Food and The Chef's Collaborative it would be hypocritical of me to espouse my beliefs in local foods, the environment and the feeding of those less fortunate and then continue serving a buffet.

The holiday diners will be prix fix menus. Each guest will be served as appetizer platter with a seasonal selection of small bites. Followed by your entrée selection that will always include a choice of two meats as one dinner. There will be all the seasonal dishes with appropriate sides. We will then offer a lovely selection of plated desserts, coffee and cookies. On Christmas Day Mince Pies are served with coffee or tea along with the dessert.

While I know many of you have loved the buffets over the past seven years I hope you will join us for the sit down dinner experience. Speaking from past experience, guests that have continued to dine with us on Christmas Day have not missed the buffet at all. In fact many of them have welcomed the menu selection, relaxed pace and the overall experience as a positive change. We switched the buffet to sit down three years ago for Christmas day.

This Christmas we will start with our Candlelight Dinner on Christmas Eve with Flavors of Sante Fe. You will be treated to a fabulous selection of delicious appetizers and entrees to celebrate Christmas, Sante Fe Style. Foods with a touch of Spain, the Americas and what we now call New Mexican cuisine. Special tamales, chilies, moles and complex spiced salsas will bring magic to the night.

Christmas Day will be my Dickens Christmas Dinner complete with Scotch Eggs, Goose, Suckling Pig, Christmas pudding, Christmas cake and mince pies. Being English this is obviously a nostalgic experience, one I relish sharing with our guests. Fred Harvey was born in London, arriving in New York as a young man and finally starting the Fred Harvey Company many years later. I am sure he celebrated Christmas with all of the foods he wished he had when he was a child in England. You will have a meal to remember. Merry Christmas to all of you and your families.

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New Years Eve 2007-2008 will be another wonderful evening to spend with us. Serving a special a la carte menu for the first sitting and a prix fix for the late seating. 5.00 to 6.30 for the early and the late seating will start at 9.00pm. Dinner dance to pre recorded big band music, champagne and party favors at midnight. All of the details and menus are posted on this site.

From Our Churro Lamb Source:

Diné Woven

Navajo-Churro Sheep Ranch

Textiles & Art

Their faces will be Dawn
The sun put down all the wild animals,
and when the sheep were placed,
this is what was said:
"Their faces will be dawn,
their eyes will be rock crystal,
their ears will be plants,
their wool be white fog."

From the Navajo Blessingway ceremony

About Our Animals

Diné Woven lambs and sheep are produced under carefully applied holistic Navajo traditional standards. Our production methods are modeled after the Navajo natural cycles found in nature, resulting in a natural and comfortable life cycle for our land, animals and self. Diné Woven Ranch pastures are a mixture of medicinal herbs, sage and perennial grasses growing at four majestic elevations starting in the desert at 3,000 feet above sea level to 9,000+ feet high on the Carrizo mountain. Where the true pastures of salad for sheep grows and the flavor of these pastures flavor the meat and keep them healthy.

Diné Woven's scared animals are rangeherded on the land, no antibiotics,steroids, or western medicine are administered to them, they are all holistically raised, using only what nature has to offer.

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