



THE SECRET

high-wire balance

Sweet, salty, earthy, smoky, tangy: Juggling such contrasting flavors is a balancing act that separates masterful cooks from good ones. "It's what makes for a finished dish," says chef Deborah Snow of Blue Heron Restaurant. "'Where's the balance?' is the question I'm always telling my chefs to ask themselves." Pan-Seared Sea Scallops with Lentils, Bacon, and Cider Reduction is delicious proof that the question has been asked, indeed—and answered.

THE RESTAURANT

Blue Heron Restaurant
Sunderland, MA

THE DISH
 Pan-Seared Sea Scallops
 with Lentils, Bacon,
 and Cider Reduction

Lentilles du Puy are lighter than other lentils and hold their shape especially well during cooking.

6 SERVINGS

MASCARPONE CREAM

- ½ cup dry white wine
- 2 tablespoons chopped shallots
- ¼ cup whipping cream
- ¼ cup mascarpone cheese
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon peel
- ½ teaspoon chopped fresh chives

CIDER REDUCTION

- 2 cups apple cider
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup chopped shallots

LENTILS

- 6 whole cloves
- 1 medium onion, peeled
- 6 cups water
- 1½ cups French green lentils (*lentilles du Puy*; about 12 ounces)
- 2 bay leaves
- 6 slices thick-cut applewood-smoked bacon, cut crosswise ¼ inch thick
- ¼ cup chopped shallots
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme

SCALLOPS

- 6 tablespoons butter, divided
- 18 sea scallops, patted dry
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

FOR MASCARPONE CREAM: Place wine and shallots in heavy small saucepan. Boil until almost dry, about 6 minutes. Add cream. Boil until reduced by half,

about 2 minutes. Stir in mascarpone, lemon peel, and chives. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Transfer to small bowl; cover and chill. Rewarm before serving.

FOR CIDER REDUCTION: Place cider, vinegar, and shallots in heavy medium saucepan. Boil until reduced to ¾ cup, about 15 minutes. Strain; discard solids in strainer. Return cider mixture to pan. **DO AHEAD** Cider reduction can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate.

FOR LENTILS: Press thin end of cloves into peeled onion. Place onion in heavy large saucepan. Add 6 cups water, lentils, and bay leaves. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until lentils are tender, stirring occasionally, about 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook bacon in heavy large skillet over medium heat until crisp. Using slotted spoon, transfer bacon to paper towels. Pour all but 3 tablespoons fat from skillet. Add shallots to skillet and sauté over medium heat until golden, about 2 minutes.

Drain lentils, discarding onion and bay leaves. Add reserved bacon, lentils, and thyme to shallots. **DO AHEAD** Lentils can be made 2 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature. Rewarm over medium heat, stirring often.

FOR SCALLOPS: Bring cider reduction to simmer. Whisk in 5 tablespoons butter, 1 tablespoon at a time. Keep warm.

Season scallops with salt and pepper. Melt 1 tablespoon butter with oil in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add scallops and cook until brown, about 2 minutes per side.

Divide lentils among 6 plates. Arrange 3 scallops atop lentils on each plate. Drizzle cider reduction over scallops and around lentils. Drizzle warm mascarpone cream over.

THE RESTAURANT

Manresa
 Los Gatos, CA



THE SECRET

37 cloves
 of garlic

Unless you've eaten at Manresa, you've never tasted a chicken Caesar like this one. Ingredients that are normally served raw are slow-cooked, turning the expected upside-down. In this version, the garlic is blanched six times, with fresh water each time to leech away the sting. The lettuce is broiled. The dressing is reconsidered as a sauce. And the result is heavenly. Think of it as a Caesar, deconstructed.

THE DISH

"Like a Caesar"

Meyer lemons add a floral note, but if you can't find them, regular lemons work just fine.

4 SERVINGS

MEYER LEMON MAYONNAISE

- 3 tablespoons Meyer lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 large egg yolks
- 1 cup grapeseed oil ▶