

Great Food and Good News for Chevalier

By Susie Iventosch



Chef Philippe Chevalier preparing his "Herb-crusted Rack of Lamb" Photo provided

My father-in-law treated me to a most delicious meal at Chevalier Restaurant in Lafayette a few weeks ago. As we were perusing the menu, the waiter arrived at the table to tell us all about the evening's specials. One mention of the herb-crusted lamb chops, and the decision was made ... for both of us! The lamb was cooked to perfection and served with Chef Chevalier's potato gratin Dauphinois, which was one of the best renditions of this dish I have ever tasted in my life!

After the meal, Chevalier made his rounds to greet his guests, which is always fun. When he stopped by our table, he mentioned that he had just received the exciting news that his restaurant was named Lafayette's Small Business of the Year.

"I was very happy and excited to be recognized the best little business in Lafayette for 2012," Chevalier remarked. "It proved to me that I have the support of the city behind me and I am so honored and appreciative to the Chamber and to the local community for their support."

This award is a countywide event organized by the Contra Costa Council each year. According to Lafayette Chamber of

Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson, each participating Chamber nominates several businesses from its town and then the local chamber boards vote in their winners.

"Through a lot of adversity, Philippe has been able to succeed in a tough economy among a lot of competition, and he has stayed true to French cuisine and cooking methods," Lifson pointed out. "We are so fortunate to have Chevalier call Lafayette home."

Chevalier Restaurant has received three Michelin Bib Gourmand awards and has been recognized as one of the 10 Best Restaurants of the East Bay by Diablo Magazine. Chef Chevalier hopes to be able to open for lunch in the near future, and remember to check out his summer cooking class/demonstrations on the third Saturday of each month. The atmosphere is very casual and classes take place in the garden when weather permits. Students sample each dish along with wine pairings, if desired.

For more information, please visit: www.chevalierrestaurant.com or call (925) 385-0793. Chevalier is located at 960 Moraga Road in Lafayette.

Chevalier Restaurant's Herb-Crusted Rack of Lamb with Wine Reduction Sauce and Potato Gratin Dauphinois



Photo provided

Herb-Crusted Rack of Lamb (Serves 6)

2 racks of lamb, some fat removed and season with salt and pepper

Put 2-3 tablespoons olive oil in a large frying pan. Place racks, fat side down in pan and cook over medium-high heat until slightly browned, approximately 2 minutes. Turn and brown other side for the same amount of time. Remove from pan and place racks in roasting pan and cook at 400 degrees for 25-30 minutes, depending up on desired doneness. Remove from oven, pat crumbs on "fat" side of rack and continue to bake for another 2-3 minutes, or so, until crust is nicely browned.

Slice into individual chops and drizzle white wine reduction sauce (recipe below) over chops.

Herb-Crust

- 1 cup bread crumbs, made from toasted baguettes broken into fine crumbs
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh tarragon
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced

Mix all and pat over fatty side of racks after initial baking.

Wine Reduction Sauce

- 1 cup white wine (Philippe uses Chardonnay)
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped shallot
- 2 teaspoons herbs de Provence
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh tarragon
- 2 cups veal or lamb stock

Place first five ingredients in a saucepan and boil over medium-high heat until reduced by half. Finish by stirring in 2-3 tablespoons unsalted butter and salt and pepper to taste. Drizzle over chops and serve immediately with potato gratin Dauphinois and vegetables of your choice.

Potato Gratin Dauphinois

- 5-6 Russet or Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and sliced into 1/8-inch slices
- 1.5 cups (or so) heavy cream
- Salt, pepper and nutmeg to taste
- 1.5 cups freshly grated Parmesan

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Butter a 9x13 casserole and place one layer of potato slices on the bottom (one medium to large Russet potato per layer). Drizzle 1/6 of the cream over potatoes and sprinkle with salt, pepper and nutmeg and 1/6 of the Parmesan cheese.

Repeat process six times, ending with Parmesan. Cover tightly with foil and bake for about 45 minutes. Remove foil and continue to bake for an additional 5-10 minutes, or until cheese is beginning to brown.

Cut into 2- to 3-inch squares and serve alongside rack of lamb.



Photo Susie Iventosch

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. **This recipe is available on our web site** www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at 925-377-0977.



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