

Light and Airy Apple Sharlotka Perfect for Fall

By Susie Iventosch



Apple Sharlotka

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 can be found on our website: 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.



Never in my entire life had I heard of "Apple Sharlotka," until my cooking buddy, Jeff, sent me his recipe for such a dessert. Apparently, it is a very common Russian sweet, and according to RussianFood.com, it is the most popular Russian sweet cake. We sometimes call it Apple Charlotte in the United States, and the Russian version is traditionally made to celebrate the apple harvest.

It is very light, moist and super easy to make, and even though most recipes I have now reviewed call for tart apples, doused in lemon juice, I much prefer it with a sweeter apple and no lemon juice added, because it is fairly tart all on its own.

The beauty of this dessert is in its simplicity and light airy texture. And, since apple season is here, it is a great time to give this one a try. Because it is so light, it would make a fabulous dessert for Thanksgiving when no one wants anything too rich after eating a turkey dinner with all of the trimmings.

The original recipe my friend sent called for baking this Sharlotka in an 8-inch spring form pan, but now I have also made it in a 9-inch square pan as well as a 9-inch pie dish, and it came out just as well each time!

INGREDIENTS

3-4 Honey Crisp apples
 ¼ cup brown sugar (for apples)
 3 large eggs
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1 cup brown sugar, divided for egg mixture and sprinkling on top of cake before baking
 ½ teaspoon cinnamon
 ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
 ¼ teaspoon cardamom
 Pinch of salt
 7/8 cup all-purpose flour
 ¼ cup powdered sugar, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Peel, core and slice apples. Place in a bowl and sprinkle with 2 tablespoons brown sugar. Allow to sit for about 5 minutes. Meanwhile, place eggs in a large mixing bowl along with vanilla and ¾ cup brown sugar. Beat on the high speed of electric beater, until thick, pale yellow and ribbons form. Fold in spices, salt and flour and mix well.

Place apples in the bottom of a sprayed or greased 9-inch pie dish, or an 8-inch spring form pan. Spoon batter over the top, smoothing out as much as possible with a rubber spatula. Sprinkle remaining ¼ cup brown sugar evenly over the top of the batter.

Bake at 350 F for approximately 40 minutes, or until top is golden-brown and begins to crack and a tester inserted in the center comes out clean.

Remove from oven, cool, and dust with powdered sugar. Serve warm or cold with a dollop of whipped cream spiced with a little bit of vanilla and powdered sugar. To make it more decadent, lightly drizzle your favorite caramel sauce or maple syrup over the top.

Day Trippin'

If You Fancy Fine Dining, Wines and More, Head to Healdsburg

By Fran Miller



Healdsburg's luxurious Hotel Les Mars is the perfect spot to end a day of sightseeing. Photos Fran Miller

Placing second on Smithsonian Magazine's 2014 list of America's Top 20 Small Towns, Healdsburg is the epitome of charm. With its central tree-shaded plaza, 'conscientious' cuisine, abundance of wineries, boutiques and galleries, visitors typically find more activities of interest than can be packed into a day, or even an overnight stay.

Central to the town's appeal is Healdsburg Plaza. Named by Travel & Leisure Magazine as one of America's most beautiful town squares, the plaza has through the years retained its importance as a central gathering spot since it was established in the 1850s. While the plaza remains largely unchanged, surrounding retail has evolved over the decades.

Gone are the hardware and feed stores from long ago, and the overall-clad farmers who frequented them. But the agricultural essence of the area remains and is found in the offerings of the area's artisan food purveyors and restaurateurs... places such as SHED, a market and eatery desiring to bring us closer to the foods we eat. Featuring a café, a pantry stocked with kitchen basics, and outdoor wood-fired grilled items on the weekend, SHED, at 25 North Street is a lively, communal gathering spot.

Every corner features a restaurant better than the next. Newcomer Valette serves creative dishes in its historic location at 344 Center Street. The realization of a dream for hometown brothers Chef Dustin Valette and Aaron Garzini, Valette is located in a building once owned by Valette's great grandfather. Chef Valette brings to his new restaurant the strong relationships with local

farmers and purveyors that he cultivated for six years as executive chef of Dry Creek Kitchen, just across the plaza.

Valette's interior features reclaimed wood tables, a spectacular redwood bar fashioned from a 300-year-old felled tree, and a scene-stealing custom-made charcuterie locker made by a third brother. Try the "Trust Me" portion of the Valette menu, and Chef Valette will surprise and delight you with creative selections from his eclectic menu. Our six courses with wine pairings enjoyed within an ambiance of warmth and soul ensured an unforgettable restaurant experience.

For more informal fare, consider Pizzardo, headed by Chef Louis Maldonado of Spoonbar fame. Guests may recognize Maldonado from his 2014 appearance on "Top Chef" where he wowed judges with his mastery of wood fire cooking, a technique that takes center stage at Pizzardo. Try his pizza, cooked to perfection with blistered edges surrounding the freshest seasonal ingredients. Pizzardo is located at 301 Healdsburg Ave., off the plaza.

Treasure hunters will love the 22 galleries and 50 boutiques in town – places such as Studio Bamdiva at 237 Center Street, a sensory-overload art gallery and bar. The large space features wire art, paintings, sculptures and eclectic one-of-a-kind collectibles.

Skip a few streets over to 30 Mill Street to quench your thirst at Sonoma Cider, handcrafted organic ciders produced from freshly squeezed organic apples by locals David Cordtz and his son Robert. Limited tastings are by appointment only. Email info@sonomacider.com to schedule.

The Plaza area has become a wine-lover's paradise with wine-tasting rooms and lounges at every turn – two per block to be exact, a limitation decreed by City Hall. La Crema, Banshee, Kendall Jackson, Thumbprint Cellars, and Ferrari-Carano are just a few of the many within walking distance.

For those desiring a sip straight from the source, visit one or more of the many wineries in the four celebrated Sonoma County wine regions nearby: Alexander Valley, Russian River Valley, Dry Creek Valley, or Chalk Hill, home of Chalk Hill Winery, owned by proprietor Bill Foley who also owns Healdsburg's luxurious 16-room Hotel Les Mars and its restaurant, Chalkboard, at 27 North Street.

Guests at Hotel Les Mars are provided access to other Foley-owned wineries, such as Roth and Lancaster. Hotel Les Mars' staff will effortlessly plan the perfect wine-centric day, including tours, tastings and a picnic lunch, followed by dinner back at Chalkboard with Chef Shane McAnelly, formerly of Va de Vi.

As one of only 520 Relais and Chateaux hotels and restaurants worldwide, Hotel Les Mars is all about service: room-delivered continental breakfast, afternoon wine and cheese, a half bottle of champagne at check-in. But the sumptuous interior is itself a draw. Furnished with stately French antiques, Carrara marble bathrooms, and hand-carved canopy beds enveloped in lush linens, Hotel Les Mars is the perfect spot to end your day or

weekend of wining, dining and sightseeing.

Charm, luxury, artisan foods, world-class wines and treasures galore – Healdsburg has it all.



Hometown brothers Dustin Valette and Aaron Garzini have realized their dream with restaurant Valette, housed in a building once owned by Valette's great grandfather.



The eclectic Gallery Bamdiva features one-of-a-kind treasures, and a very cool corner bar.



SHED is a farm-centric communal gathering spot featuring home goods, artisan grocery items, a coffee bar and restaurant.

Business Directory

Advertise

Reach 60,000+
in Lamorinda

Advertise in
Lamorinda Weekly
Call 925-377-0977
today

Heating

ATLAS
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING COMPANY
CA LIC. #489501

Present this coupon for
\$35 off any service.
*May not be combined with any other offer. Expires 11/15/2015.

925-944-1122
www.atlasheating.com Since 1908

Underpinning

Bay Area UNDERPINNING
GENERAL CONTRACTOR LIC. #87128

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS • LIFTING
LEVELING • STABILIZING

707 310-0602
www.bayareaunderpinning.org

Gardening

J. Limon Gardening

Maintenance/Clean-up
Monthly Service
Sprinkler System Repair

Call Jose
(925) 787-5743
License #: 018287

25 yrs. experience in Lamorinda