

HAUTE CUISINE AT HOME WITH MATT WALKER

SOUS CHEF OF MICHELIN-STARRED CELEBRITY CHEF NELSON MÜLLER!

Apprentices with Appetites!

Take a professional chef, add a handful of enthusiastic foodies, a liberal dash of laughter and some quality wine, and you have a recipe for a successful Haute Cuisine at Home experience! That's just what transpired in April at the home of our gracious hostess, Jane Park. The second in a series of these cooking events, Matt Walker, sous chef to Michelin-starred celebrity chef Nelson Müller at Müllers auf der Rü, gave an inspiring demonstration and prepared a five-star dinner with a little help from those of us keen enough to wield our knives.

Haute Cuisine at Home Menu:

Sekt sparkling wine

Salmon canapés

Pan-seared scallops on cauliflower puree with pancetta crisps and a lemon foam

Braised ox cheeks with creamy polenta, root vegetables and Port wine sauce

Chocolate medley of: chocolate brownie, dark chocolate mousse, chocolate ice cream

As introductions were made and we awaited the arrival of all of the participants, we sipped Sekt and sampled the delicate salmon canapés. Then, the cooking commenced! Matt proved to be an entertaining teacher, patiently answering our questions and providing us with multiple professional tips. Through the course of the evening, he shared a variety of useful techniques, including the need to always keep the tip of your knife on the chopping board and how to core a cauliflower. We learned the importance of oiling meat before frying or grilling in order to help with the heat transfer and to half-bake brownies and chill them quickly before serving to achieve a lovely, gooey center. In a festive and



Pan-seared Scallops



Braised Ox Cheeks



Chocolate Medley

relaxed atmosphere, we observed, laughed, listened, and assisted in chopping, peeling and squeezing while our chef displayed his culinary flair. By the time all was prepared, the apprentice chef à la Essen-Werden were more than ready to sample the fruits of our gentle labors.

The dinner kicked off with a pan-seared scallop appetizer served on to-die-for cauliflower puree with pancetta crisps and lemon foam. The frozen scallops had been defrosted with a bit of salt to draw out the water and tasted every bit as good as fresh. Copious amounts of butter, cream and salt ensured this dish was infused with rich flavor, but this was no time to start counting calories or grams of fat!

While we were still savoring the last trace of puree (I won't mention who licked their plates), we were presented with the main course: a generous portion of braised ox cheeks so succulent the meat melted in your mouth. And why wouldn't it, when it had been slow-roasted for 10 hours in wine and stock! The tender beef was served in a Port wine sauce with creamy polenta and fragrant, roasted root vegetables. Just when a few of us were loosening our belts, a medley of chocolate appeared. Soft-centered chocolate brownies were accompanied by silken, dark chocolate mousse and creamy, chocolate ice cream. Our chef suggested adding rosemary or chili, tied with a string for easy removal, when melting the chocolate for the mousse. He also recommended pre-chilling the mousse glasses to speed up the setting process. A sweet ending to a resplendent repast!

For me, the new friendships formed during this fun-filled and informative gathering were the icing on the cake. I'm sure I speak for all who attended the event when I say we can't wait to get cooking together again soon! WRITTEN BY KRISTAN JULIUS



Kristan Julius, Jörg Kreuder