Portobello Caps Stuffed with
Porcini Polenta, Broiled Asparagus, and Tomato Ragu

Yield: Serves 6

Ingredients:

6 ea	Portobello mushroom caps with stems
½ - ¾ oz	dried porcini mushrooms
¾ lb	asparagus (about 18-20 thin spears)
1 ea	small onion, minced
4-6 sprigs	fresh thyme
2 cloves	garlic, minced
1 tsp	fresh rosemary leaves, minced
3 ea	roma tomatoes, seeded and diced into large, 1-inch cubes
½ cup	dry red wine
½ cup	heavy cream
½ cup	polenta
As Needed	olive oil, salt, pepper and sugar

Method:

Prepare the Mushrooms and Asparagus:

-Remove stems from portobellos and set aside. Scoop out black gills from inside caps of portobellos and brush any excess dirt off the caps.

-Soak the dried porcinis in 1 cup lukewarm water for at least 20 minutes. Remove from the water (save ½ cup of this soaking water) chop porcinis coarsely, and set aside.

-Snap off the tough ends of the asparagus, peel the spears, and brush with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and set aside.

Make the Stock:

-Clean the Portobello stems – discard any parts that have stuck-on dirt – and slice.

-Heat 2 Tbsp olive oil, onion and the sliced Portobello stems together in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. When the mushrooms are very fragrant, add 2½ cups warm water, and bring to a simmer.

-Add the fresh thyme and 2 tsp salt, and simmer lightly for about 30 minutes while you make the sauce.

-Strain stock through a mesh strainer – you will need a total of 1½ cups of stock – use water to bring it up to this level if you are a bit short.

Make the Sauce:

-Heat 2 Tbsp olive oil and the garlic and the rosemary in a small saucepan over medium heat until garlic is fragrant (about 2 minutes)

-Add chopped porcinis, and cook for 5 minutes.

-Add the tomatoes, and red wine. Simmer lightly while you make the polenta.

-After the sauce has been cooking for 20 minutes, add a pinch of sugar, and then add salt and pepper to taste. Continue to simmer lightly while you finish the polenta.

Chef Matt Finarelli
703-677-6729 · chef@finarelli.com

Make the Polenta:

-Bring the 1½ cups of the mushroom stock to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium high heat. Add the cream, and return to a light boil.

-As soon as the stock/cream mixture is boiling, add the polenta while stirring to make sure the mixture is smooth. Continue to stir the polenta frequently while it cooks over low heat for the next 30-40 minutes.

-While the polenta is cooking, turn on your oven's broiler, and preheat your broiler pan.

-The polenta is done when the mixture has lost its gritty texture, and the polenta is pulling away from the sides of the pan when stirred.

-When the polenta is done, remove the pan from the heat and cover. Let the polenta rest for five minutes while you broil your vegetables.

Broil the Portobello Caps and Asparagus:

-Brush the Portobello caps with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. (If you do this ahead of time, the caps will absorb the oil, so you should only do it right before cooking.)

-Take your pre-heated broiler pan out, and place the asparagus spears and Portobello caps (cup side down) on the pan.

-Broil on one side for 2 minutes, then use kitchen tongs to turn all the vegetables.

-Watch carefully and broil until all the vegetables are done – about 2-3 minutes more. (You can test the caps for doneness by using a fork inserted into the stem area of the mushroom cap.)

-Place all the broiled vegetables on a plate, and you are ready to assemble the final dish.

Assemble the Final Dish:

-Place the 6 portobello caps on a serving platter, cup side up.

-Evenly divide the polenta between the caps, using a spoon (or your fingers dipped in cold water) to mound it in the cap.

-Drape 3-4 asparagus spears across the polenta in each cap.

-Top off with the porcini-tomato sauce, serve immediately.

Suggested serving: Serve with a crusty Italian bread with olive oil for dipping, and a crisp, cold Pinot Grigio.

Chef Matt Finarelli
703-677-6729 · chef@finarelli.com