

Sautéed Strawberries in Cabernet Sauvignon and Black Pepper Sauce with Vanilla Bean Ice Cream

from **TERRA, Cooking from the Heart of Napa Valley**

Serves 4

We love this dessert. It's like an adult ice cream sundae. Berries marry beautifully with the flavor of Cabernet Sauvignon, and the pepper adds an intriguing edge. You'll find lots of other uses for the light, slightly sweet, crunchy sacristan cookies. We serve this dessert in oversized martini glasses, with a single cookie perched across the rim. It makes a stunning presentation. This is an easy dessert for a big group, as the recipe can be increased many times.

Sacristan Cookies

10 ounces puff pastry, made with unsalted butter
1/2 cup clear crystallized sugar or sanding sugar
1/2 cup finely chopped slivered almonds
1 egg yolk
1 tablespoon water

Cabernet Sauvignon and Black Pepper Sauce

1 1/4 cups good-quality Cabernet Sauvignon
6 tablespoons sugar
1/4 vanilla bean, halved lengthwise
1 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
Small pinch of freshly ground black pepper (about one turn of a peppermill)
Confectioners' sugar for dusting
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
4 cups fresh strawberries, hulled and cut lengthwise into quarters or halves, depending on size
1 pint vanilla bean ice cream
6 fresh mint sprigs

To make the cookies, preheat the oven to 350°. On a lightly floured board, roll the puff pastry out into a 12 by 5-inch rectangle that is 1/8 inch thick. Refrigerate until solid, about 30 minutes. Line a small baking sheet pan with parchment paper and set aside. In a small bowl, mix together the crystallized sugar and almonds. In another small bowl, combine the egg yolk and water to make an egg wash. Brush the egg wash over the puff pastry. Sprinkle half of the sugar mixture evenly over the pastry, then turn the pastry over and brush the second side with the egg wash. Sprinkle with the remaining sugar mixture. Trim the edges of the dough so that it is squared, then cut it lengthwise into 1/2 inch strips to make 8 or 9 cookies. Take each strip and gently twist from both ends about 4 times. If the dough has gotten too soft to twist, refrigerate for 20 minutes and try again. Place the sticks on the parchment paper as straight as possible and 1 1/2 inches apart. Refrigerate until the dough sets, about 30 minutes. Bake for 20 minutes, or until puffed and golden brown. Transfer to a rack to cool. To make the sauce, combine 1 cup of the Cabernet Sauvignon, the sugar, and vanilla bean in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil.

Meanwhile, in a small bowl, whisk the remaining 1/4 cup Cabernet Sauvignon with the cornstarch. Remove

the sauce from the heat and whisk in the cornstarch mixture. Return the pan to high heat and bring back just to a boil, then set aside. (The pepper should be added at the last minute.)

To serve, dust the sacristans with confectioners' sugar. Melt the butter in a medium sauté pan or skillet over medium heat, add the strawberries, and sauté for 1 minute. Add the sauce and the pepper. Bring just to a boil, then remove from the heat. Divide the strawberries and sauce among 4 serving bowls. Place a small scoop of ice cream in the center of each bowl. Lay 1 cookie across each bowl. Put a sprig of mint next to the ice cream.

copywrite TERRA 2005