

## **Duck Confit in Black Cherry and Vanilla sauce.**

### **(My famous Double Crispy Extra Sticky Duck)**

#### **Serves 2**

##### **For the Sauce**

1 tin of black cherries in a light syrup drained by half  
1 seeded vanilla pod  
50 ml of beef stock  
1 large tablespoon of butter  
1 table spoon of white sugar

Place the sugar and the cherries in a hot frying pan. Allow to liquid to caramelise somewhat. Add the beef stock and reduce until quite thick (like runny honey) and then stir in the butter for a shiny gloss. This you leave over a very low heat until required

##### **For the Contorni (Side dishes)**

Choose your 5 favourite vegetables. I use red and yellow peppers, zucchini, onions, carrots and mushroom and slice into little strips of more or less even size. Heat a wok or frying pan with olive oil and toss in a clove of garlic. Stir fry al dente for two minutes seasoning with salt and pepper. This can be done while your duck is in the final stage in the oven. Add a knob of butter and stir through to enhance the colour.

##### **For the Starch**

Use either steamed basmati or jasmine rice or creamy mashed potatoes prepared with a drop of milk, butter and a luxurious swizzle of truffle oil. This really complements and brings out the flavour of the duck.

##### **For the Confit**

Find a nice large duck that has not been trimmed. Trim all the visible fat from the duck, leaving a little fat on the legs. Using a heavy casserole type pan (Le Creuset works well here), cook all the fat down at a very low heat and slowly. This is called rendering the fat. The fat turns slowly into what looks like a very viscous thick yellow oil which is very fragrant. Once all the fat is liquefied, strain out any errant pieces of skin or meat and any lumps through a fine strainer and return the fat to the casserole.

You will now need to completely submerge your two trimmed duck legs (use the wings too – they make excellent confit even if only as a treat for yourself later!!) in the oil in the pan. If you don't have enough duck fat to completely submerge the two duck legs, you can use duck fat purchased from any good French deli. It is always a good idea to have some of this in your fridge as anything tastes better when cooked with a little duck fat.

Place the duck legs into the fat, along with a couple of bruised garlic cloves, a big pinch of sea salt, a big pinch of black pepper corns, three bay leaves and some dried rosemary. Bring the casserole to a slow simmer. Take the casserole now and place in a preheated oven and bake at 200C for two to three hours until tender. Here you have to use your common sense. The bigger the legs the longer they must stay in.

Remove the legs from the fat and strain off the garlic and spices. Place the legs in a deep clip lock Tupperware or a big Consol glass jar and then submerge them completely with the strained fat. Duck legs can be preserved in this way for up to three months in the refrigerator. The fat turns a thick milky white.

When you are ready to eat your confit break your leg out of the fat. Place on a grill rack over a roasting pan and sear for three minutes in very hot oven turning once and not burning the duck. The fat will render instantly and when you see the skin gold and bubbling the duck is ready to serve.

### **To Assemble**

Place a spoon of your chosen starch on the centre of a large dinner plate and nap this with a large serving spoon of the quickly stir-fried and crunchy vegetables. Top off your little stack with your crispy duck leg and liberally spoon over the sticky cherry vanilla sauce drizzling some around the border of the plate. The sauce must be shiny and brilliant as it goes over the sizzling duck. This is one sensational dish!!