

A PERFECT MATCH

French Toast With Sparkling Chardonnay

Chef Sunny Jin, Jory, Newberg, Ore.

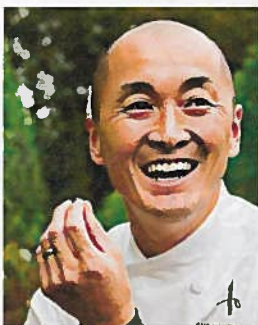
“It’s really strange for a restaurant to say it’s more focused on the community, but I think that’s just as important for us as the quality of the food,” says Sunny Jin, executive chef at Jory restaurant, located at The Allison Inn & Spa in Oregon’s Willamette Valley.

The statement speaks to the vision that The Allison’s late founder, Joan Austin, had in mind when establishing the property: She wanted a place that was just as open to the local community as it was to out-of-towners. But it also reflects the chef’s commitment to using locally sourced ingredients, including wines; the wine list, a *Wine Spectator* Best of Award of Excellence winner, features 850 selections with a pronounced focus on wines from Oregon and Washington. The restaurant takes its name from the valley’s volcanic Jory soil, found in most vineyard sites in the Dundee Hills.

For Jin, executive chef at Jory for more than four years, the restaurant offers a welcome change of pace. After graduating from the Western Culinary Institute in Portland, Oré., Jin did turns at The French Laundry in Napa, Tetsuya’s in Sydney, Australia, and finally, El Bulli, in Catalonia, Spain. “As soon as I came back stateside, I was looking for a place to call my own,” he explains.

Jin offers a recipe here for one of the restaurant’s most popular dishes. His brioche French toast is one of the few staples on the rotating brunch menu. Comfort food at its best, these thick slices of cinnamon- and vanilla-scented brioche are topped with crunchy candied hazelnuts, along with a citrus-ricotta cream that’s sweetened with just a touch of honey.

In addition, each serving gets a spoonful of blood orange “mimosa” marmalade, a playful nod to the wine pairing. This sticky, tart jam is made with blood oranges, apples, orange juice and allspice, along with a small amount of Argyle Blanc de Blancs Dundee Hills Knudsen Vineyard Julia Lee’s Block 2008, the chef’s pick to match this rich, homey dish.



CHEF’S PICK: Argyle Blanc de Blancs Dundee Hills Knudsen Vineyard Julia Lee’s Block 2008

WINE SPECTATOR ALTERNATES:

Schramsberg Brut Blanc de Blancs North Coast 2010 (91, \$38)
Domaine Ste. Michelle Brut Columbia Valley Michelle NV (87, \$14)

—Lizzie Munro

HOW TO MAKE BRIOCHE FRENCH TOAST WITH BLOOD ORANGE MIMOSA MARMALADE

4 cups blood orange segments, peel and pith removed (about 6 or 7 oranges)
1 cup Granny Smith apples, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 apples)
2 cups freshly squeezed orange juice
1/2 cups sparkling wine
1 cup white sugar
12 whole allspice berries, tied in a sachet
2 cups Jersey milk ricotta
Zest of 1 orange, 1 lime and 1 lemon
1 tablespoon honey
12 extra-large eggs
2 cups half-and-half
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 vanilla beans split in half, or 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1/2 cup Grand Marnier
1 cup brown sugar
6 slices brioche, each 1-inch thick
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, for frying
Candied hazelnuts, for garnish

1. Combine the blood orange segments, apple, orange juice, wine and white sugar in a medium-sized pot, and bring to a simmer. Add the allspice sachet. Cook down slowly to a thick consistency, about 2 1/2 to 3 hours, and allow to cool. (It is important to slowly reduce the marmalade, as rapidly reducing the mixture causes it to become bitter.)

2. Place the ricotta in a mixing bowl and gently fold in the citrus zests and honey. Set aside.

3. Gently whisk together the eggs, half-and-half, cinnamon, vanilla, Grand Marnier and brown sugar. Submerge each slice of brioche in the batter for about 3 seconds. Remove each slice and transfer to a wire rack set over a tray to catch any drips.

4. In a nonstick skillet set over medium heat, cook each slice in 1 tablespoon butter, until fully cooked and golden brown on both sides.

5. Lay the French toast on a plate and top with a generous scoop of the citrus ricotta. Finish the dish with a spoonful of blood orange mimosa marmalade and candied hazelnuts. Serves 6.

LEFT: THE ALLISON INN & SPA; RIGHT: ANDREW MCCAIL; FOOD-STYLIST: WATT VOHR/HALLEY RESOURCES