

TO DRINK

The lovely berry flavor of Cabernet Franc, fruity with a dry finish, shines through in Olga Raffault's Chinon Rosé from France, forming a perfect bond with the buttery brioche, sweet crabmeat, and decadent truffles. The locally produced Soter North Valley Rosé, made from Pinot Noir grapes, is refreshing with raspberry overtones. It complements the sandwich nicely.

Truffled Crab Melt

Recipe by CHEF VITALY PALEY



Truffled Crab Melt

(serves 4)

I've served this decadent variation of that diner favorite the tuna melt as part of an elegant lunch or cut in bite-sized pieces as an hors d'oeuvre. It is definitely fun, not at all fussy or difficult. A good-quality purchased mayonnaise will do nicely here, but if you like, try homemade aioli (recipe follows).

We use an Italian sheep's milk cheese, Boschetto al Tartufo, for its intense truffle taste and good melting qualities. Swiss Gruyère, which is easy to find, works as well. If fresh truffles are not in season, substitute frozen ones. Truffle butter is available at specialty food stores or online.

- 4 thick slices brioche or challah
- 4 teaspoons truffle butter, melted
- 1/2 pound Oregon Dungeness crabmeat, squeezed dry and picked over
- 2 ounces fresh Oregon black truffle, brushed clean and coarsely chopped
- 1 apple, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced
- Generous dash of Tabasco
- 2 tablespoons finely minced sweet red onion
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped Italian parsley
- Juice of 1/2 lime
- 1/4 cup aioli
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 ounces truffle cheese, such as Boschetto al Tartufo, shredded (about 1 cup shredded)

Preheat the broiler. Brush one side of the brioche slices with the truffle butter and set on a baking sheet, buttered side up. Toast the bread until golden, about 3 minutes. Remove the toasts and turn the oven temperature to 400°F.

In a bowl, mix the crabmeat with the chopped truffle, sliced apple, Tabasco, onion, parsley, and lime juice. Fold in the aioli to incorporate. Season with salt and pepper.

Top the toasts, buttered side down, with the crab salad and sprinkle with the cheese. Bake in the upper third of the oven until the crab salad has warmed through and the cheese has melted, about 5 minutes. Serve immediately.

Buckwheat Crêpes Stuffed with Turnips and Truffles (serves 6)

We like to offer guests a new view of humble vegetables—in this case, turnips. We cook the turnips in butter with shallots and honey, then elevate them with truffles. Once the crêpes are filled, we dip them in egg and pan-fry them until crispy. The resulting packet is a surprise of flavors, textures, and aromas.

Buckwheat flour in the batter produces a slightly sturdier crêpe that will better hold the stuffing and stand up to frying. Because making crêpes can be tricky, this recipe produces more than you'll need here.

- 1/2 cup buckwheat flour
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 6 large eggs
- 2 cups milk, plus more if needed
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted, plus 3/4 cup, melted, to fry the crêpes
- 3 tablespoons truffle butter
- 2 shallots, thinly sliced
- 1 large Oregon black or white truffle (about 2 ounces), coarsely chopped
- 1 pound turnips, peeled and coarsely grated
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups chicken stock

To make the crêpe batter, sift the flours with a pinch of salt into a bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour and add 3 of the eggs. Using a whisk, slowly incorporate the flour into the eggs so the batter develops without lumps. Add 1 cup of the milk, whisking until smooth, then remaining 1 cup milk, and 1 tablespoon of the melted butter. Cover and set the mixture aside for 30 minutes at room temperature.

To make the stuffing, in a large skillet, melt the truffle butter over medium heat without browning. Add the shallots and truffle, and cook until the shallots are translucent but not colored, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the turnips, honey, and cider vinegar. Season with salt and pepper. Add the stock and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring to mix the ingredients.

Decrease the heat to low, cover, and simmer very gently, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking and browning, until the turnips are very soft, about 1 hour. Adjust the seasoning if necessary. Transfer the stuffing to a bowl and set aside to cool. The

stuffing can be done a day in advance and refrigerated until ready.

To cook the crêpes, heat a 10-inch nonstick crêpe pan or skillet over high heat until hot, about 5 minutes.

Brush the pan with melted butter. Remove from the heat and pour 1/4 cup of the batter into the center of the pan, rotating the pan so the batter runs evenly to the edges in a thin layer. Return the pan to the heat. Cook the crêpe until the edges brown, about 2 minutes. Slip a flexible spatula under the crêpe, carefully flip it over, and cook on the other side for 30 seconds. Transfer the cooked crêpe to a plate. Repeat until all the batter is used, stacking the crêpes as they are done.

To stuff the crêpes, place one on a work surface, set a generous spoonful of turnip-truffle mixture in the center, and spread it to within 1 inch of the edge of the crêpe. Fold the filled crêpe in half and then in half again. Repeat with the remaining crêpe and stuffing.

Preheat the oven to 200°F.

Place the remaining 3 eggs in a shallow pie plate, beat them with a fork, and have ready. To fry the crêpes, heat 2 tablespoons of the melted butter in a large nonstick pan over medium-high heat. Carefully dip one stuffed, folded crêpe into the beaten eggs, turning it to coat on all sides. Lift the crêpe with your fingers, allowing excess egg to drip back into the bowl, and place the crêpe in the hot skillet. Fry until crisp and browned on both sides, 45 seconds to 1 minute per side. Transfer to a baking sheet and keep warm in the oven while cooking the rest. Repeat the procedure, using more melted butter as needed to fry the remaining crêpes. Serve hot.

METHOD PHOTOS ONLINE
PORTRAIT MAGAZINE/RECIPES

