

CONTINENTAL COOKBOOK

By Tammy Briggs

Chef Paul Minnillo

PAUL MINNILLO, ONE OF CONTINENTAL'S CELEBRITY CHEFS AND A FOUNDING MEMBER of our Congress of Chefs, is the owner and executive chef of the Baricelli Inn in Cleveland's Little Italy neighborhood. Serving complex haute cuisine, Minnillo has received numerous accolades, including three Best Chef Midwest nominations from the renowned James Beard Awards. The Baricelli has made *Food & Wine's* list of America's Top 50 Hotel Restaurants and has been named one of America's Best 50 Restaurants in *Gourmet*. We spoke with our chef and asked him to share a recipe.

Q. Who influenced your decision to become a professional chef?

A. I represent the third generation of a restaurant family and mostly learned the art of cooking from my grandmother and "Mama Nancy" Wilson, the cook at our family restaurant, Minnillo's. In terms of flavor and measuring, both were intuitive chefs who never glanced at a recipe. They loved what they did; it just came naturally to them.

Q. What do you think will be — or should be — the next trend in fine cuisine?

A. Tapas have grown popular recently. I think that will cross into mainstream dining.

Q. What is your favorite restaurant or dining experience?

A. I have too many friends in the business to answer that question!

Q. What's your perfect meal?

A. Heaven is a plate of homemade tagliatelle with butter and truffles, accompanied by a good bottle of Barbaresco.

Q. If you could invite anyone to dinner, who would it be?

A. Winston Churchill. He loved food, and rumor has it he started each day with a glass of Pol Roger. Quite a conversationalist, I hear.

Q. What chef has inspired you the most?

A. In 1984, I worked for Swiss-born chef Anton Mosimann at the Dorchester Hotel in London. He was the man! I loved every minute of my time there, because he taught me about discipline and leadership in a productive kitchen.

Q. What's one highlight of your career?

A. I never encouraged my kids to follow me into the restaurant business, but two of them have, and I'm delighted. John is with me at the Baricelli Inn, and Michael has been with Chef Thomas Keller in New York City for 12 years. I'm equally proud of my son Matt, who has a career as an educator.



Long-Bone Veal Chop on a Port Reduction with Butternut Squash and Baby Carrots

Ingredients

- 2 medium-size butternut squash, peeled
- ½ lb. butter
- ½ cup chicken stock
- 1 Tbsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. nutmeg
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- 12 baby carrots, peeled
- 4 14–16 oz. long-bone veal chops
- 4 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 shallots, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp. sage, freshly chopped
- 1 cup (ruby) port
- 1 cup veal (or chicken) stock
- 4 small sprigs of sage
- salt and pepper

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Cut squash into 1-inch-thick rings; place in a baking dish; add butter, ½ cup chicken stock, cinnamon, nutmeg, and syrup; bake for 40 minutes or until tender.
3. Poach carrots for 5 minutes in water; drain and add to squash dish for last 5 minutes of oven time. Set aside.
4. Season chops lightly with salt and pepper.
5. In a sauté pan, fully heat olive oil over medium-high heat and sear veal until golden brown, approximately 4 minutes per side; place sauté pan in 400°F oven for 15 minutes.
6. Remove chops from sauté pan and add shallots, garlic, and 1 tsp. sage; sauté on medium-high heat until brown.
7. Add port and veal stock and reduce by half.
8. Plate veal chops over squash and lightly drizzle with port sauce.
9. Garnish with remaining sage and top with sage sprigs. Serves four.

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Years Minnillo has represented the Cleveland Browns at the Taste of the NFL, an annual fundraiser for hunger relief.