WILL'S PICK · PETITE SIRAH

PETITE SIRAH–POACHED PEARS WITH WHIPPED MASCARPONE

Will's sweet tooth led him to turn one of our biggest, boldest wines into dessert. Petite Sirah is inky, so the pears come out nearly black-red, and its tannins give the syrup structure. Poach them the day before and leave them in the liquid overnight so the color reaches the core. Best part: dessert is done before the turkey goes in.

SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

PEARS

- 2 cups Petite Sirah
- 1 cup water
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ½ vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped (or 1 tsp vanilla extract)
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 star anise pods
- 6 black peppercorns
- 3 wide strips orange zest
- 6 firm-ripe Bosc pears, peeled, stems left on

WHIPPED MASCARPONE

- ½ cup mascarpone, cold
- ½ cup heavy cream, cold
- 2 Tbsp powdered sugar
- Pinch of flaky sea salt

METHOD

1. **Make the poaching liquid.** In a saucepan just wide enough to hold the pears upright, bring the wine, water, sugar, vanilla pod and seeds, spices and zest to a simmer, stirring until the sugar dissolves.
2. **Poach.** Slice a thin piece off the bottom of each pear so it stands. Lay the pears on their sides in the liquid. Cover the surface with a round of parchment to keep them submerged. Simmer gently, turning every 10 minutes, until a paring knife slides into the thickest part easily, 25–35 minutes depending on ripeness.
3. **Steep.** Let the pears cool in the liquid, then chill, covered, at least 8 hours or overnight.
4. **Reduce the syrup.** Lift out the pears. Strain the liquid into a small saucepan and boil until reduced to about 1 cup and syrupy, 12–15 minutes. It thickens more as it cools.
5. **Whip the mascarpone.** Whisk the mascarpone, cream and powdered sugar to soft peaks.
6. **Serve.** Stand each pear in a shallow bowl, spoon the syrup over and add a spoonful of mascarpone and a few flakes of salt.

MAKE AHEAD

Pears keep in their liquid, chilled, up to 3 days. The syrup keeps up to 1 week. Whipped mascarpone holds its shape, covered and chilled, up to 2 days; whisk briefly before serving.