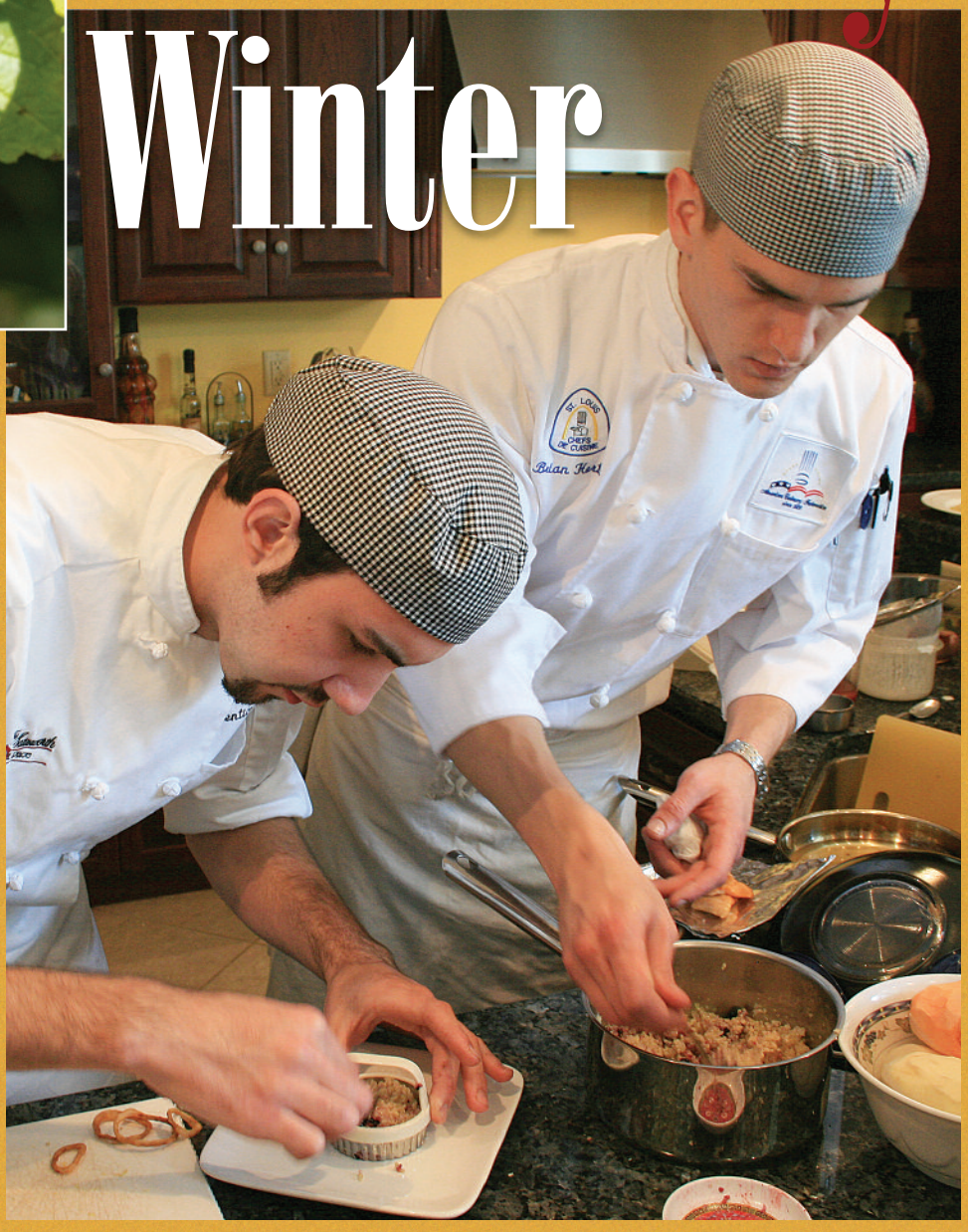
Our annual food issue features four juicy recipes you'll agree are berry delicious.

Blackberry Winter



The fruits of summer return to the table in a four-course meal prepared by apprentices Alex Marley (left) and Brian Horton.

Recipes By Apprentices
Alex Marley and
Brian Horton
Story By Kathy Andrews
Photos By Adele Hodde

The snow may be flying, but not so long ago springtime field edges shone with the bright, white flowers of blackberry brambles. By mid-summer, perhaps you donned long sleeves and pants, and waded into berry-laden brambles to pluck the delicious fruits from the unyielding, thorny bushes.

The gallons of berries you hauled home and stored away for some special occasion were worth every needle-prick from those possessive thorns.

Finally, that special occasion has arrived: It's blackberry winter again. Old-timers know blackberry winter as those late spring days when weather turns abruptly chilly—as if summer isn't quite so close after all. It's usually when blackberry bushes are in full bloom. And by the time the blackberry blossoms finally fade and berries begin to increase in size, summer has arrived. Blackberry winter is over. Now, blustery winter days provide the perfect excuse for raiding your freezer—or even the grocery freezer—and using blackberries to whip up a four-course meal celebrating the second arrival of Blackberry winter.

All recipes serve 4.

Smoked Trout with Blackberry-Lemon Quinoa

1 apple wood smoked trout
1 egg yolk
6 oz. salad oil
salt and pepper
2 tbsp. prepared horseradish
1 tbsp. small, diced onion
1 tbsp. olive oil
½ cup quinoa (keen-wa)
1 cup chicken stock
1 tbsp. lemon zest
¼ cup blackberries, roughly chopped
1 small shallot, sliced into ⅛ inch rings
1 cup buttermilk
1 cup seasoned flour
frying oil

Filet the trout and smoke at approximately 225-250˚ F until it reaches an internal temperature of 145˚ F.

To prepare the aioli sauce (mayonnaise-like), whip egg yolk until it turns a pale yellow. Slowly stream in 6 ounces of olive oil, drop by drop then in a steady stream. Add a bit of water if aioli begins to get too thick. Continue incorporating oil. Season to taste with salt, pepper, horseradish and lemon juice.

To prepare the quinoa, sweat onion in olive oil until translucent. Add quinoa and coat in oil. Add chicken stock, cover and bring to a simmer. Allow to simmer until the liquid is absorbed. Remove from heat covered for approximately 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork and finish with lemon zest and diced blackberries.

Slice shallot into rings and soak in buttermilk overnight. Drain buttermilk and toss shallots in seasoned flour. Deep fry in 350˚ F oil until golden brown.

Place quinoa on a plate, and top with trout. Drizzle aioli sauce over trout and garnish with shallot rings.

Baby Greens and Poached Pear Salad

1 lb. baby greens
¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted
⅛ cup Feta cheese
¼ cup red onion, diced
¼ cup cucumber, diced
2 pears, peeled, cored and halved
750 ml bottle blackberry wine
1 cinnamon stick
2 bay leaves
4 whole cloves
1 tbsp. white wine vinegar
1 tbsp. shallot, finely diced
¾ cup salad oil

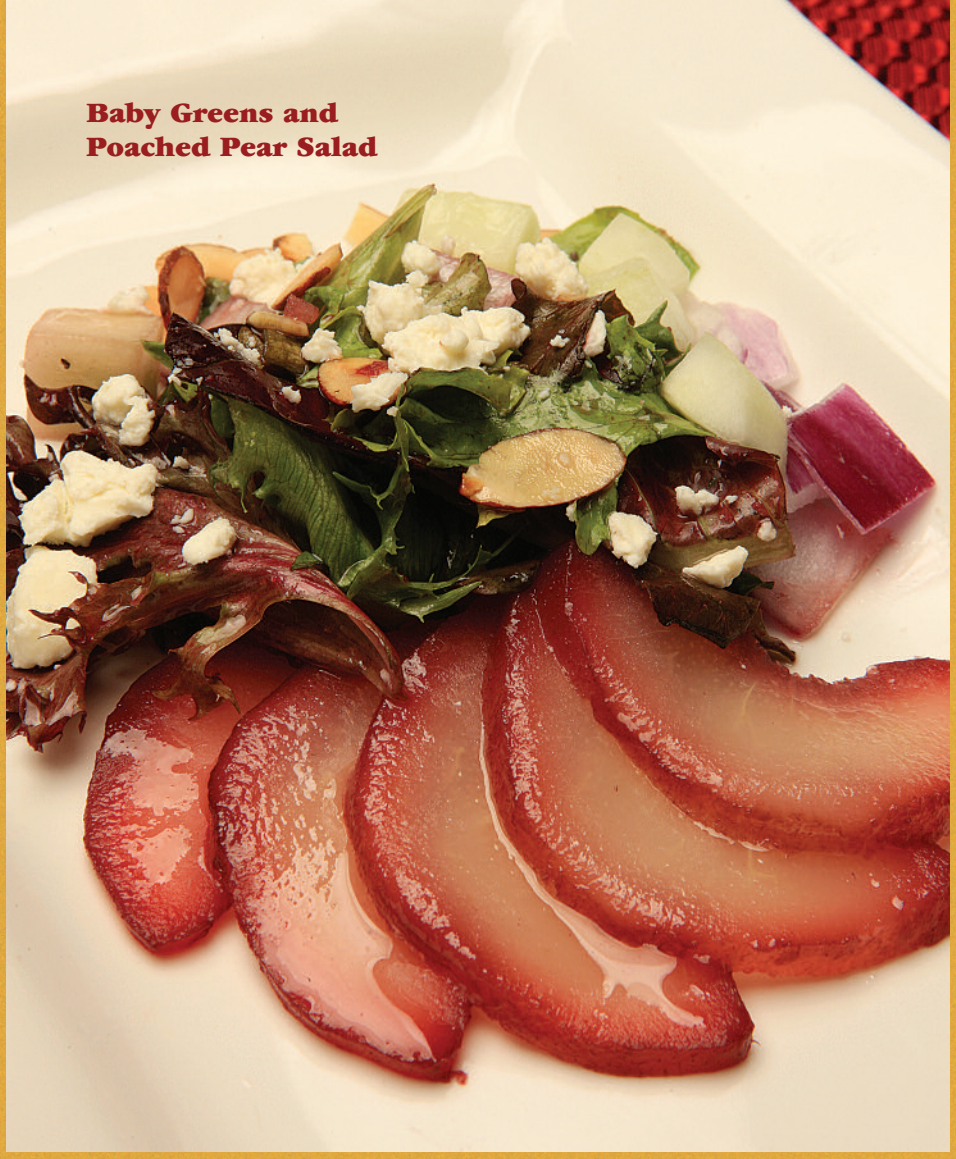
Rinse baby greens and set aside.

Toast the almonds at 400˚ F until golden brown.

Dice red onion and cucumber (deseed cucumber if desired).

Heat blackberry wine with cinnamon stick, bay leaves and cloves to 190˚ F. Add pears to poaching liquid, ensuring they are completely immersed. Simmer for about 25 minutes or until a toothpick can be inserted through the center with ease. Cool in the liquid. Remove pears and slice crossways to desired thickness. Reserve poaching liquid.

Smoked Trout with Blackberry-Lemon Quinoa



Baby Greens and Poached Pear Salad

Place 1 cup of the reserved poaching liquid over heat and reduce to ¼ cup. Chill to room temperature. In a blender, combine liquid with white wine vinegar and shallot, and slowly incorporate salad oil. Chill.

Toss greens with onion, cucumber and dressing. Garnish with pear slices, almonds and Feta cheese.

Roast Venison with Sweet Potato Puree and Vegetables

venison back strap loin, cleaned and trimmed to 4 portions
½ cup mirepoix (carrot, onion, celery), medium dice
½ oz. olive oil
½ cup blackberries (fresh or frozen)
1 tbsp. shallot, chopped
½ cup port wine
1 cup beef or venison stock
1 tbsp. butter
1 tbsp. mustard (Dijon or spicy brown)
½ cup pistachios, ground
cornstarch
water

Season and sear loin in a hot skillet with the olive oil. Remove and rest.

Add the mirepoix to the skillet and cook until well caramelized. Remove the mirepoix and make a bed on a roasting pan. Place the loin on the mirepoix and roast in a 350˚ F oven. (NOTE: To reduce the risk of foodborne illness, the FDA recommends that the minimum internal cooking temperature of venison be 160˚ F.) Remove venison and allow to rest under aluminum foil for 5-10 minutes.

In the same skillet that you seared the loin, caramelize the blackberries and deglaze with port wine. Add the shallots and reduce until nearly dry. Add the mirepoix, any cooking juices from the roasting pan and stock, bringing to a simmer. Thicken sauce with a cornstarch slurry (cornstarch and cold water whisked together to the consistency of wet sand). Stir in butter and season to taste.

Brush the loin with mustard and roll in pistachios. Slice and serve.

Sweet Potato Puree

1 large sweet potato
2 large white potatoes
1 tbsp. quatre spices (equal parts ground nutmeg, cinnamon, clove and black peppercorn)
1 stick unsalted butter
¼ cup cream
salt and pepper

Cook the potatoes in separate pots until fork tender. Heat cream and butter together. Whip potatoes together until well incorporated and no longer lumpy (puree will turn starchy if over mixed). Stream in cream and butter until the desired consistency is achieved. Season to taste with quatre spices, salt and pepper.

Sauteed Vegetables

1 cup mushrooms, quartered
1 cup zucchini, medium dice
1 cup yellow squash, medium dice

Roast Venison with Sweet Potato Puree and Vegetables

1 tbsp. garlic, minced
1 tbsp. olive oil
salt and pepper

Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Saute mushrooms, zucchini and squash until golden brown and tender. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant (do not caramelize garlic as it will turn bitter). Season to taste.

White Chocolate Blackberry Soufflé

3 tbsp. unsalted butter
5 tbsp. all-purpose flour
pinch of salt
¾ cup blackberry juice
4 oz. white chocolate, finely chopped
5 large eggs, separated, at room temperature
¼ tsp. vanilla extract
⅓ cup granulated sugar
non-stick spray
4 soufflé cups (ramekins)

Preheat the oven to 375˚ F. Spray the soufflé cups with non-stick spray and roll some sugar around the edges and bottom to coat cups (helps soufflé rise and not stick to the edges).

Push blackberries through a fine sieve to create juice. Set aside.

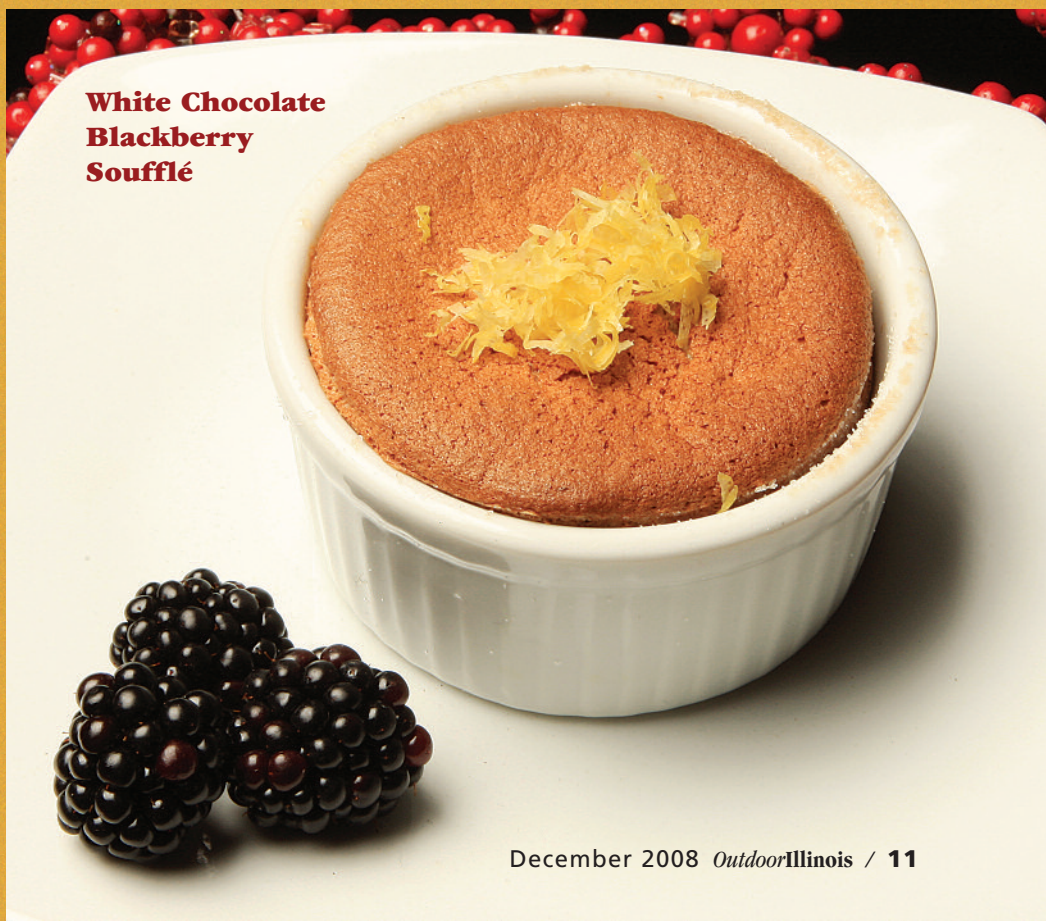
Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in flour and salt, stirring for about 2 minutes to cook out the starch. Gradually whisk in the blackberry juice, then bring to a boil, stirring often. This mixture should resemble thick pancake batter (add more blackberry juice as needed). Remove from heat and add white chocolate, whisking occasionally until smooth. Beat in the egg yolks and vanilla extract.

In a dry, grease-free bowl whip the egg whites until frothy. Continue to whip while gradually sprinkling in the sugar. Beat until stiff.

Slowly fold the whites into the yolk mixture until just blended and no streaks remain. Scrape the batter into the prepared cups. Bake for about 35 minutes, until puffed and golden.

Tips and tricks for a perfect soufflé. Soufflés get a bad rap for being difficult, but your success is greatly improved if you follow these simple rules, and use the right recipe. Preheat the oven. Fill the ramekins ¾ full and do not get any batter on the rim. Heat the ramekins from the bottom (heat a pizza stone or place the oven rack on the lowest part of your oven). Do not open the oven door (opening the door causes heat loss and soufflés will stop rising).

Soufflé's fall so eat them quick.



White Chocolate Blackberry Soufflé