

by melanie m. ward



RON BLAVLOCK

◀ Southerners Cori and Joel Miller always dreamed of owning their own restaurant. Their path to Ravine restaurant and the Inn at Ravine bed and breakfast in Oxford was a fifteen-year process that took them from Memphis to South Carolina to New Orleans, Puerto Rico, and lastly San Francisco. Joel, a graduate of Johnson Wales Culinary Academy, creates “contemporary Southern” dishes that reflect his culinary voyage, and are prepared with ingredients from the restaurant’s own garden. Guests come to Ravine to enjoy the beautiful grounds and accommodations but also to savor a meal that is a fine dining experience.

Ravine, 53 CR 321, Oxford; 662.234.4555; www.oxfordravine.com; Wednesday & Thursday 6 p.m.-9 p.m., Friday & Saturday 6p.m.-10p.m., Sunday Brunch 10:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Sunday dinner 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

Dear Mississippi Magazine,

I was in Oxford and had dinner at Ravine in August. The dinner special that night was a scallop dish that was the best I have ever had. It was served with corn couscous and asparagus and was just absolutely superb. I would love to have the recipe if you can get Joel, the chef there, to share it.

E. A. Allen, Gulfport

PAN SEARED SEA SCALLOPS WITH ROASTED CORN AND ASPARAGUS COUSCOUS AND ROASTED RED PEPPER AND TRUFFLE EMULSION

3 cups chicken or shrimp stock, divided
 1 cup dry Israeli couscous
 olive oil
 1 pound large dry sea scallops
 salt and pepper
 2 ears corn, chargrilled, kernels removed
 ½ pound asparagus, blanched and diced
 into ½-inch pieces
 white wine
 2 tablespoons garlic, crushed
 2 tablespoons butter, cold
 ¼ cup Parmesan cheese

FOR COUSCOUS:

Heat two cups of the stock in a pot until it boils. As soon as it boils, stir in the couscous, and return the stock to a simmer. Then turn off the heat, and cover the pot, allowing 20 minutes for the couscous to absorb the liquid. Turn couscous onto a baking sheet, sprinkle with olive oil, and let cool to room temperature, stirring occasionally.

FOR SCALLOPS:

It is important to obtain dry sea scallops, if possible, the kind that have not been treated with water retention chemicals. The drier the scallop, the better it will sear in a hot pan and form a nice, caramelized crust.

Season scallops with salt and pepper. Heat the olive oil coated skillet on medium-high until smoke point. Place the scallops in the pan carefully, and sear on each side until caramelized golden brown. Remove scallops from pan, drain excess oil, and return to heat. Place corn and asparagus in pan and stir until slightly brown; deglaze with white wine. Add garlic, season with salt and pepper, then add remaining cup of stock. Once the stock begins to simmer, place couscous in pan, breaking apart individual pieces with a rubber spatula if necessary. Simmer until couscous has absorbed nearly all of the liquid. Remove from heat, and stir in cold butter and Parmesan cheese until combined. Serve immediately.

Yield: 2 servings

FOR ROAST RED PEPPER AND TRUFFLE EMULSION:

olive oil, enough to cover bell pepper
 1 red bell pepper
 1 shallot
 1 teaspoon garlic
 1 teaspoon champagne vinegar
 salt and pepper
 3-4 oz truffle oil

Rub olive oil all over the bell pepper and place in oven at 350 for 20 minutes, or until the skin starts to blister and wrinkle. Remove from oven and place in a container tightly secured with plastic wrap then place in refrigerator for about an hour. This process will help steam the pepper with the residual heat from the oven, making the skin slide off easier.

Take the pepper out of the cooler, peel off skin, and remove seeds, stem, and inner ribs. Chop coarsely and place in blender along with all other ingredients except for the truffle oil. Turn the blender on low, and slowly stream in truffle oil, increasing the speed of the unit if necessary. Pour in as much oil as needed, until the oil starts to emulsify and thicken with the other ingredients. Blend until smooth, and adjust seasonings.

WOULD YOU LIKE RECIPES FROM YOUR FAVORITE MISSISSIPPI RESTAURANTS?

Send your requests to us, and the recipe could appear in our Dish It Out column. Send requests to editor@mismag.com or Dish It Out, 5 Lakeland Circle, Jackson, MS 39216. (Please note that recipes from chain restaurants may not be available.)