

liquidnews



WHY not throw a 'school dinner' supper party and make an occasion of serving those traditional desserts? Pair them with wines that truly complement them.

Try a Hardys Nottage Hill Dessert Shiraz (left) with sticky toffee pudding. It's £7.99 at Tesco and Sainsbury's.

A full-bodied red such as Gallo Family Vineyards Coastal Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon, £9.99, which is widely available, could be another choice.

A light sparkling wine, such as Hardys Crest NV Sparkling Rosé (centre), could be a good match for buttered panettone pudding. It's £9.99 from Sainsbury's. Alternatively, try a Gallo Family Vineyards Turning Leaf Chardonnay, (right), £6.49, which is widely available.



■ Banish chills on winter nights with a warming tippie, Crabbie's Old Scottish Green Ginger Wine. It's got seasonal ingredients like cloves and ginger as well as wild cowslips from Eastern Europe and cinnamon from the Orient.

The drink, created 200 years ago, is an essential ingredient for a Whisky Mac, using equal measures of Crabbie's and Scotch whisky.

Celebrity chef Nick Naim's new seasonal cocktail Hopscotch uses one measure of Crabbie's plus one measure vodka, one measure dry Martini and a twist of lemon zest to garnish. Serve in a tall glass.

Crabbie's is £4.99 from Tesco and other supermarkets and drinks retailers.

■ Sparkling wines are always a hit at parties and Chateau de Sours, a rosé wine specialist, has just brought out its first sparkling wine from Bordeaux.

Reserve De Sours, which is a blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, would pair well with party canapes such as smoked salmon and bellinis, as well as fruity desserts.

It's award-winning Chateau de Sours rosé is a full-bodied wine that could be a good choice for a Christmas meal.

Reserve De Sours and Chateau De Sours is around £7.99 a bottle from Majestic, Private Cellar and Jascots Wine Merchants.

Vodka tasting at... **Revolution**

Take a shot at masterclass with the local 'vodka pimp'

by Sarah Holt

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IN Russia it's rude to put down your vodka glass while there's still liquid inside.

It's also bad manners to stay sober when everyone else is getting drunk and, traditionally, you should never drink alone.

These are just a few of the reasons why the new vodka tasting masterclasses at Vodka Revolution are so much fun.

Another reason the sessions are so enjoyable is because they are run by passionate and fun loving people like the French self-styled 'vodka pimp' Quentin El-Bez.

Quentin (28) has been running vodka tasting masterclasses in Vodka Revolution branches across the country for the past couple of years and now they are available to drinkers at the Lincoln branch.

"The vodka masterclass will change your life forever," says Quentin. "It will teach you about the history of vodka, how it is made and how to taste it. You will discover things you never knew and you will leave with lots of knowledge and feeling a little bit tipsy."

The format of a vodka tasting masterclass is similar to that of wine tasting. Customers are presented with a selection of different vodkas and taught how to appreciate them.

"Vodka is the number one selling spirit in the world and accounts for 25 per cent of all spirit sales and yet it is a misunderstood drink," says Quentin. "People in the UK tend to drink vodka to forget where they live and fall over but

there is more to the spirit than that and that is what the masterclasses are all about, giving people the knowledge about vodka. That, and giving them the perfect start to a good night out."

The vodka masterclasses last about two hours and cost £15 per person. The classes are most effective when they are attended by six or seven people.

At the start of the evening each customer will be presented with a selection of six vodka shots but they won't be able to drink them until they have learnt about the history of what they are about to drink.

And that history is as complicated as the spirit is pure.

"The history of vodka is controversial and enigmatic," says Quentin. "No-one really knows where vodka came from and no-one really knows when. Both Russia and Poland claim that they invented vodka and they went through a 30 year legal process to discover the truth but still no-one knows."

"The first written record of the word vodka appeared in a Polish document in 1405 but that doesn't prove anything because the word for vodka is the same in all Slavic languages. It means little water, because people preferred to drink vodka instead of water in the past."

One of the most interesting things you will learn during your session is that vodka is



'Vodka pimp' Quentin El-Bez will guide you through a vodka master class at Revolution in Lincoln

not necessarily made from potatoes. Granted, Russians still produce their vodka using the spud but that's only because there are not many other options.

In fact, vodka can be made from anything that contains carbohydrates or sugar and the taste of the vodka changes depending on what it is made from.

Rye, wheat, bison grass and honey can all be used as the raw ingredients in vodka.

Another fascinating and useful fact that you will discover is that during the 15th century vodka was used as a form of medicine. More specifically, the spirit was used as tincture and in some areas of the world it is still used in this way. Therefore if you return home covered in vodka at the end of your night you can always claim that you did it for the benefit of your health.

■ To find out more about taking part in a vodka tasting masterclass call Vodka Revolution on (01522) 531516

■ The bar also offers a cocktail making masterclass for £15 per person. During this class drinkers will be able to go behind the bar and be shown how to make a selection of classy beverages.

Vodka masterclass tipples

1 **(1) Smirnoff Red** is the most popular vodka in the world. It has been produced in the UK itself since 1934 using molasses.

2 **(2) Wyborow** has been made in Poland since 1927 and is made from rye. The name translates as 'exquisite' and its taste has creamy notes and hints of pecan.

3 **(3) Flagship vodka** is made from wheat. It has been made in Russia since 1995 and it is rumoured that it is the vodka that is drunk in the Kremlin. It has a slightly minty taste to it.

4 **(4) Lüksow** vodka is made from potatoes and has been produced in Poland since 1928. The name means luxury.

5 **(5) Krupnik vodka** has been made in Poland since the 16th century and it is made from the honey of wild bees. In Poland this drink is not recognised as a vodka, it is known as a liqueur. It tastes of different spices including cinnamon.

6 **(6) Zubrowka** is a flavoured vodka made in Poland since 1928. It is made from bison grass and tastes of earth and roots. The bison grass is considered to be an aphrodisiac.



Tastes of Lincolnshire

Every week we bring you a recipe from chef Rachel Green, champion of the Tastes of Lincolnshire



Pan-fried Pork Fillet with Fried Apples and a Horseradish and Poacher Mash (serves 4)

INGREDIENTS

- 24 oz pork fillet
- 3 apples, eg Granny Smith
- 2 tsp hot horseradish sauce
- 2 tsp fresh chopped sage
- 1 tsp fresh chopped marjoram
- 1 tsp fresh thyme
- 1 kg (2½ lb) potatoes, suitable for boiling
- 75g (3 oz) unsalted butter
- ¼ pt cream
- 2 tsp freshly grated Lincolnshire Poacher
- 1 tbsp plain white flour
- 1 dessert spoon sugar
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

You will need a large frying pan. Rub the chopped herbs into the pork fillet and place them in a dish. Cover the dish and refrigerate for at least 24 hours.

Two hours before you start cooking, take the pork out of the fridge and let it come back to room temperature.

Boil the potatoes until they are tender and then mash them with 40 g (1½ oz) of the butter and add enough of the cream to make a purée.

Next add the Poacher and season to taste. Stir in the horseradish and put in the oven to keep warm. While the potatoes are cooking, you can coat the pork lightly with the flour and leave to one side. Peel and core the apples and then cut them into thin wedges. In your frying pan melt 25g (1 oz) of the butter until it foams and then sauté the pork fillet on a high heat for 4-5 minutes each side, until they are cooked through. They will also form a lovely crust on each side. Season the fillets and keep them warm in a low oven. To the frying pan add the remaining apples, sugar and 2 tsp of water. Cook this for 10 minutes until everything is golden.

To serve the fillet, spoon some potato purée onto a plate and place a piece of fillet next to it and then scatter the apple slices all around.

Look out for the Tastes of Lincolnshire sign – it identifies the pubs, B&Bs, restaurants, hotels and attractions you believe in the quality of Lincolnshire produce. If you would like to receive the Tastes of Lincolnshire Good Taste magazine call Amanda Allford on (01522) 550613 or e-mail amanda.allford@lincolnshire.gov.uk

