



FOOD

BY *Neil Perry*
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Make the most of the season's fresh flavours with this crisp, light salad and tangy berry dessert.



Pizzini Pinot Grigio 2016, King Valley, Vic \$21

The Pizzini family has been making wines in the King Valley region of Victoria since 1994. This pinot grigio is a definitive nod to their Italian heritage, with bursting aromatics of wildflowers, quince and pear. The palate is crisp and tangy with delicious savoury notes loaded with gooseberry and a touch of lime.

THIS SUPER-tasty salad is perfect for a summer afternoon – just add a crisp white wine and crusty bread. If you want to make it really simple, replace the poached chicken with a bought roast chook or cooked king prawns.

There is no simpler or more delicious dessert than summer pudding. And with all the wonderful berries in season, there is no better time to be making – and eating – it.

Chicken, avocado and witlof salad with walnut vinaigrette

Serves 4

2 small skinless chicken breasts (about 225g each)

For the walnut dressing

¼ tsp sea salt
2 tsp Dijon mustard
150ml walnut oil
juice of 2 limes
freshly ground white pepper

For the salad

1 small head white witlof, cut into wedges
½ head radicchio, cut into wedges
1 baby cos, leaves, cut into wedges
1 small bunch chives, finely chopped
½ cup of parsley leaves
sea salt
freshly ground black pepper
2 large avocados, peeled, seeded and cut into 1cm dice

1. Prepare the dressing by placing all the ingredients in a plastic container with a tight-fitting lid and shake.

2. To cook the chicken, bring a large pot of salted water to the

boil, plunge the breasts in, then immediately remove pot from the heat and allow the water to cool (takes about 1 hour). Remove the breasts. They should shred easily.

3. Place the leaves in a stainless-steel bowl and dress with a third of the dressing. Divide leaves between 4 plates.

4. Add the chicken, chives, parsley, salt and freshly ground pepper to the bowl and dress with enough dressing to coat well (about 100ml), then divide between plates.

5. Add avocado to the bowl and dress with a tablespoon of dressing. Sprinkle the avocado over the plates, then serve.

Summer pudding

Serves 6

250g each strawberries, blueberries and raspberries, plus extra to serve (optional)
125g blackberries, plus extra to serve (optional)
1 cup caster sugar
10 fairly thick slices of white bread, crusts removed
double cream (optional)

1. Remove the stalks from the fruit. Wash only the strawberries and blueberries. Hull the strawberries, cut in half if small, quarters if large.

2. In a saucepan, combine the sugar and strawberries and place over a medium heat for 3 minutes, stirring until a syrup forms and strawberries are slightly softened.

3. Add blueberries, simmer 1 minute, add raspberries and

blackberries and remove from heat straight away.

4. Use six slices of bread to line the base and sides of a 1.5-litre pudding basin. First, line base with a large round piece (about 10cm). Cut the remaining bread into thick, tapered fingers (two from each slice) to line sides, placing them side by side.

5. Place just the fruit in the dish, packing it tightly. Pour in half the juice and reserve the remaining liquid.

6. Place the 4 remaining slices of bread on top of the fruit, then pour over half the remaining syrup. Cover the dish with a heavy weight, one that is small enough to rest on the pudding itself. It must be able to exert considerable pressure. Perhaps a few extra plates will be needed.

8. Leave the pudding overnight in the refrigerator.

9. Turn out, place on a plate and serve with extra berries and double cream.



EAT

Middletown

WORDS BY *Annabel Ross* | PHOTOGRAPH BY *Armelle Habib*

I'M NOT sure what I expected from a cafe supposedly inspired by Kate Middleton. Framed photos of the royals on the walls? A menu of Devonshire tea, cucumber finger sandwiches and Eton mess? But Middletown is none of this. In fact, if no one had told you it was inspired by the Duchess of Cambridge, you'd be none the wiser.

What strikes you first is the duotone colour palette: the walls are a deep royal (there it is) blue, while benches and trims are as white as Kate's chompers. There are leather banquettes and pine tables with alabaster chairs, terrazzo tiles on the floor and marble and brass accents throughout.

It's undeniably pretty, sure, but, like Kate, it's got substance, too. The menu aims for quality over quantity, and chef Gilly Singh (ex-Top Paddock) has opted for timelessness over trends in the main. Barramundi comes steamed with pickled brussels sprouts, broad beans and fennel drizzled with lemon vinaigrette. It's delicate and delicious. Richer is the lamb neck, fried crisp on the outside and juicy on the inside, served with pickled beetroots, heirloom baby carrots, a daub of smoky yoghurt and green salt.

There are only a few breakfast options, among them the trio of

mushrooms on celeriac puree with crunchy pancetta, poached eggs, pecorino and brioche soldiers.

It's a gorgeous dish, as is the chia seed pudding with macadamia, almond and maple coconut crumble for crunch, fresh mango and a sweet burst of watermelon sorbet. At a pinch, it could work as a dessert, too (there are no dessert options *per se* on the menu, just a handful of pastries at the counter from Yarraville patisserie Cobb Lane – perfect with excellent Code Black coffee).

I have to ask when leaving: which part, specifically, is inspired by Kate? “Ah, it's a story the media ran away with,” says co-owner Randy Dhamanhuri (with Valerie Fong, both of Operator 25 in the CBD).

However, he concedes the brief he gave design team Studio Tate was to make the space “pretty and beautiful, but humble”, like Miss Middleton. Plus, there's a print on the rear wall of the royal's coat and engagement ring.

So yes, there are indeed touches of the duchess if you look for her. More than an homage, though, it's simply a nice place to eat – the kind of place you can imagine Kate feeling right at home.

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