



SAMBA NOUVELLE CUISINE



PHOTOGRAPHER: GUILHERME YOUNG



FOOD

Troisgros dynasty

His grandfather was a cook and a genuine revolutionary among chefs who, almost 40 years ago, was the first who dared to combine fish and red wine. His father Pierre is a cook, too. As is his uncle. Together, the two brothers have made the Troisgros family restaurant in Roanne into one of the most distinguished addresses in all of France.



Since 1968 the Troisgros has continuously been honoured with three Michelin stars; no greater accolade is possible. Together with Paul Bocuse, the Troisgros family are considered the master cooks of the nouvelle cuisine. Brother Michel is also stirring up headlines in the culinary court. As for the Troisgros sister, she, too, is busy cooking, namely at the Gravelier in Bordeaux.

Claude Troisgros never really had another option than being a chef. Which is why he became one. Practically raised in a kitchen, Claude was already preparing white butter sauces while his friends were still playing tag in the park. The world's best cooks were his teachers and gave him the extra education that soon made his skills outstanding. A man always full of joie de vivre, Claude began his career under the wings of "über-Vater" Paul Bocuse, later moved on to Witzigmann at the Tantris in Munich, worked at the Taillevent in Paris and The Connaught in London – surely a list that must make the mouths of gourmets water.

Today, the master cook has ascended Mt. Olympus, not only figuratively but also quite literally, as his restaurant is called Olympe and located not by the Seine but in Rio de Janeiro. Claude Troisgros has been busy cooking up a storm in the culinary world of the Amazonas since 1979.

His relocation to Brazil might well be the only major event in his life that was not predestined. "At the time it was exceedingly difficult to find fresh products for a European menu", he recalls. "Brazil was still a quite closed market so I soon began to rely heavily on local natural resources and fruit, such as passion fruit, various spices, and the big fish from the Amazonas River". The result was a kind of tropical French cuisine. It might be neither exaggerated nor fanciful to describe Claude Troisgros as a pioneer of today's popular fusion cooking, though the master demurs: "I didn't really fuse anything. What I did was use the perfect French cooking techniques – there are no finer ones – on the local fresh fruit and natural products. That was the secret, so to say. The so-called fusion is more of a US trend."

Now in his mid-50s, Claude Troisgros has also demonstrated his sensitivity and talents in the United States. He was responsible for the cuisine concept for Ian Schrager's hotel temples such as the Blue Door Restaurant in the Delano in Miami. This suits his philosophy admirably, as he is convinced that a good kitchen can only exist in places where there is also good wine. When asked about the currently trendy Spanish experimental kitchen – fish fried in Coke, Fisherman's Friend pastilles in Raviolis – Claude Troisgros replies: "I always appreciate it when people try to find new ways of cooking but one needs to do this very carefully and for my taste the Spaniards go too far." Then he adds respectfully: "However, they are all excellent chefs. The danger usually comes only from second-rate chefs." Any cuisine that is too artificial and aloof is nothing the Franco-Brazilian finds seductive. For him, the trick is to find simple perfection. "I rather try to find my way back to the way our mothers used to cook. It was all done in a single pot, you know. It was us who separated everything, who use one pan for fish and another for asparagus. I'm on my way back to true food."

Which is exactly why Claude Troisgros, when he visits his father and brother at home in Roanne, orders the speciality of the house: salmon in sorrel sauce. "There is nothing more exquisite – simple, but refined and ennobled by a marvellous technique."



AGNEAU "PASSION - MENTA"

Caramelised Colorado lamb loin, toasted Moroccan couscous with raisins, almonds and pearl onions, passion fruit and mint glaze

4 portions

Ingredients:

850 g lamb loin

1 tablespoon butter

MARINADE

250 ml fresh passion fruit juice

12 ml soy sauce

50 g sugar

1 teaspoon dry red pepper flakes

salt

20 g chopped mint

SAUCE

2 tablespoons butter

COUSCOUS

400 g couscous

800 ml salted boiling water

100 g raisins

50 g toasted almonds

12 caramelized pearl onions

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 tablespoons butter

LEMON ZEST CONFIT

zest of 3 lemons

200 ml water

125 ml sugar

salt and pepper

baby rucola garnish

To make:

MARINADE

Boil together passion fruit juice, soy sauce, sugar, dry red pepper flakes and salt. Add chopped mint. Remove from heat, and cover. Puree in mixer when cool.

LAMB

Marinate lamb loin for 2 hours in the refrigerator. Oven roast slowly at 160° C in butter until done and liquid (marinade) caramelises in the pan.

SAUCE

Add butter to caramelized marinade. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

COUSCOUS

Roast couscous in olive oil in a heavy pan over low heat for about 5 minutes, until the grains acquire a rich amber brown colour. Place the couscous in a bowl and slowly add salted boiling water. Cover and heat over low heat for about 10 minutes until the couscous is soft and has absorbed all the water. Then sauté the couscous in olive oil and butter. Mix in raisins, toasted almonds and caramelized pearl onions with the couscous. Season well with salt and pepper.

LEMON ZEST CONFIT

Boil lemon zest in water. Strain and set aside. Boil together water and sugar and reduce heat to low. Add lemon zest and stir slowly over low heat for 30 minutes, remove from heat.

To serve:

Form couscous in the middle of the plate. Place sliced lamb loin on top of couscous bed. Cover with mint sauce. Top with a drizzle of lemon zest confit and baby rucola garnish.

FOIE GRAS CAJU

Caramelised caju with ginger and jalapeno, foie gras, honey mustard vinaigrette

4 portions

Ingredients:

4 caju fruits, thinly sliced (note: caju is also known as cashew apple)

250 g sugar

seeds from 2 vanilla beans

100 g chopped ginger

1 jalapeno, chopped

800 ml water

VINAIGRETTE

1 tablespoon dijon mustard

juice of 1 lime

1 tablespoon honey

6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

salt and pepper

400 g foie gras

croutons sautéed in olive oil

crushed peppercorns

To make:

CAJU

Make a caramel by melting together sugar and vanilla over medium heat. When mixture is brown add ginger and jalapeno. Deglaze with water. Bring syrup mixture to a boil. Place sliced caju in a bowl. Pour boiling syrup on top and let cool.

VINAIGRETTE

Mix together mustard, limejuice, honey, salt and pepper, and olive oil.

FOIE GRAS

Slice foie gras equally into 4 slices and season with salt and pepper. Pan fry in a dry heavy iron skillet quickly on both sides (no additional oil for frying). Dry well on a paper towel.

To serve:

Arrange caju on each plate. Add foie gras on top. Surround the foie gras and caju with vinaigrette. Garnish with sautéed croutons and crushed peppercorns.





CHERNE BANANA

Filet of grouper in a brown butter sauce with raisins, garlic, lime and fresh herbs, served on roasted bananas

4 portions

Ingredients:

4 filets of grouper, 100 g each
1 tablespoon olive oil
salt and pepper

SAUCE

Juice of 2 limes
60 ml soy sauce
2 shallots, chopped
200 g butter
150 g raisins
1 tablespoon fresh coriander,
chopped

4 yellow bananas

baby rucola garnish

To make:

GROUPER

Season grouper filets with salt and pepper and pan-fry in olive oil until crispy and brown. Remove and drain on paper towel.

SAUCE

Mix together limejuice, soy sauce, garlic and shallots. Melt butter in pan and deglaze with the limejuice mixture. Add raisins and coriander, season with salt and crushed peppercorns.

BANANAS

Slice bananas in half lengthwise. In a pan, caramelize bananas in butter on both sides.

To serve:

Spoon a generous amount of the sauce with raisins onto the centre of each plate. Place two roasted bananas each on the plate. Place the fish atop the bananas. Garnish with baby rucola.

CREPE PASSION

4 portions

Ingredients:

PAstry CREAM

3 egg yolks
75 g sugar
15 g all purpose flour
1/4 litres milk
seeds from 1 vanilla bean

PASSION FRUIT SAUCE

140 g sugar
100 ml water
1/4 kg fresh passion fruit
2 tablespoons cold butter

CREPES

1/2 litres milk
6 tablespoons butter
10 egg yolks
100 g sugar
125 g all purpose flour
10 egg whites + 100 g sugar
+ 1 teaspoon baking soda

To make:

PAstry CREAM

Combine yolks and sugar. Beat until light and fluffy. Add flour. Bring milk and vanilla to a boil. Gradually add yolk mixture to the milk. Return to heat and bring to a boil, whisking constantly until thick. Cool for at least two hours.

CREPE

Beat yolks and sugar until white and smooth. Add flour, gradually. Bring milk and butter to a boil. Then reduce heat. Let cool for 2 minutes, then add to the egg yolk mixture, mixing well. In a separate bowl, beat egg whites with the sugar to form soft peaks. Stir in baking soda. Fold egg whites into the hot milk mixture. Heat a non-stick pan 15 cm in diameter with butter and add a generous ladle of the crepe mixture. Cook for 2 minutes on one side and then remove to rest in a warm oven at 180° C for at least 5 minutes. When all the crepes have been prepared, remove from oven to cool. Place on plate and fill with one spoon of pastry cream and roll the pancake closed.

PASSION FRUIT SAUCE

Halve the passion fruits to scoop out flesh and seeds. Combine sugar and 1 tablespoon of water in a medium sized pan. Increase heat until the mixture turns a light caramel colour, then remove from heat. Add passion fruit flesh and half of the seeds, and remaining water. Bring mixture to a boil. Simmer for 5 minutes and finish by stirring in butter until it melts.

To serve:

Place each crepe on an ovenproof dish and dust with powdered sugar. Caramelize the top of each crepe with a blowtorch. Heat crepes in hot oven until they puff up like soufflé (for about 4 minutes). Top with passion fruit sauce and seeds.

