



Vermont Fresh Network Newsletter

Winter 2001

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SWEET CORN AND LEEK RISOTTO

By Rick Iffland
Sweet Tomatoes Trattoria
Rutland

Ingredients:

½ cup diced
Spanish onion
¼ cup sweet butter
1 cup Arborio rice
3 cups chicken stock
½ cup diced leek
1 cup corn kernels
1 tbsp. chopped garlic
½ cup heavy cream
salt & pepper to taste

Method:

Lightly sauté onions in butter. Add the rice and mix it thoroughly until all grains are coated. Cook until a toasted aroma develops. Add leeks, corn, and garlic and mix. Add the stock in small portions, stirring the rice frequently after each addition. Cook the rice until it is “al dente” and most of the liquid absorbed. The texture should be creamy. Finish with the heavy cream, check seasoning, and serve hot.

Saveur Magazine declares Vermont the “Coolest Food State” in the USA!

The January/February 2001 issue of *SAVEUR* magazine selected Vermont and the Fresh Network as part of this year’s *SAVEUR 100!* The behind the scene story showcases one of our partner’s entrepreneurial spirit and collaborative involvement.

For several years, Tony Clark of Blueberry Hill Inn in Goshen, has worked with Michael Patrick Destinations & Communications (MPDC), a Cape Cod tourism PR and marketing firm. Recently, he decided to concentrate his promotional efforts on “pure public relations,” reducing his memberships and cutting back the Inn’s advertising in favor of hosting travel writers.

Over the last two years, MPDC helped arrange stories and other placements that appeared in glossy magazines. They brought television crews from Bavarian Broadcasting to Tony’s 1813 country farmhouse inn, while *Country Living* magazine conducted a

three-day photo shoot for a feature story on blueberries for its July 2001 issue.

During the September 2000 press gathering, Tony talked with a *Saveur* journalist about the Vermont Fresh Network’s efforts to “create relationships between the Green Mountain State’s finest growers and restaurateurs throughout the state.” Tom Harty, Vermont’s deputy commissioner of Agriculture, Food & Markets, further enlightened the half dozen journalists about the department’s efforts to market local products within Vermont and to the world beyond!

Tony’s new promotional efforts have paid big dividends for the Inn—and Vermont. A Welshman by birth, he has truly adopted the Green Mountain State as his home. He speaks frequently at state and regional tourism conferences and recommends his *modus operandi* as “... by far the most effica-

cious approach to tourism marketing I have ever used.” As writers and guests are wont to claim, a visit to Blueberry Hill Inn is a “whole-Vermont experience.”

Afterwards, the *Saveur* journalist visited Shelburne Farms for several days. He learned more about the farm’s commitment to sustainable agriculture and where its involvement with the Network contributes to daily support of local farmers.

Thank you Tony and Megan Camp of Shelburne Farms, for bringing *Saveur*’s attention to Fresh Network partners Vermont Butter and Cheese Company, and NECI, as well as Blueberry Hill, and the Network. The article also highlights the Vermont Land Trust, Ben & Jerry’s, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, the state’s maple industry, and the Department of Agriculture’s Seal of Quality.

President's Letter: 2001 Initiatives

We are a network of farmers, chefs, distributors and friends. We are bound together by the common causes of maintaining and improving Vermont farms and serving the finest products of our working landscape to discriminating diners.

I want to draw attention to a few of last year's accomplishments. We now have 100 chefs and 75 farmer partners many with multiple relationships, as well as a group of members whose financial support helps sustain the organization. Thank you partners and members! The Network, in collaboration with several partners, sponsored a series of successful radio announcements on Vermont Public Radio. And as the front-page article describes, *Saveur* magazine recognized our efforts to Vermont agriculture.

These successes mean even more challenges this year. At the Board's annual retreat in November, we labored to answer these questions:

How can the Network improve chef/farmer partnerships? What new initiatives are appropriate? What are Network's priorities? After developing a number of alternate strategies, we pared them down to sixteen activities for 2001. They include such items as:

1. Develop a weekly "Fresh Sheet". Collect farm crop information and distribute to chefs by fax.
2. Develop information about distribution system for farm fresh products.
3. Integrate VFN and partner advertising and promotional efforts.
4. Improve VFN consumer communications efforts to build the VFN Brand.

We hope you will attend the February 26th Partner Round Table Supper. The evening begins with a brief Annual Meeting to elect officers and directors, followed by a tasty supper. Then we will have an open informal discussion on the initiatives developed by the Board and on what you see as your individual needs for the upcoming year.

Your input is critical to the success of our joint efforts to improve opportunities for Vermont farms and to bring more customers to VFN restaurants by featuring the finest products of our working landscape. Please see information on page four about signing up for the Round Table Supper. If you cannot attend, we will distribute a summary of the VFN 2001 Plan following input from the meeting.

Vermont Fresh Forum: Creating A Green Bottom Line

JUNE 18, 2001
at Shelburne Farms

You're invited! Join us for this year's Forum, *Creating a Green Bottom Line*, at **Shelburne Farms** on June 18, 2001 from **2 – 8 PM**. We chose this date to attract farmer and chef partners and to invite the general public. The afternoon begins with a special farmer/chef program that focuses on the cornerstones of cost, convenience, quality and consistency, and marketing to consumers. We'll also present the first VFN partners' award to an outstanding farmer/chef team that exemplifies the Network's mission and goals.

Deborah Madison, founder of Greens Restaurant in San Francisco and author of seven books, is the keynote speaker. Her latest book is entitled *Saturday Market, Sunday Lunch*. During the partners' program, she'll talk about her philosophy of food and describe the challenges and experiences of buying local products.

A silent auction of foods, restaurant coupons, artwork, and other Vermont products highlights a reception that precedes dinner. Deborah will have several books available for purchase and signing. Dinner features a cornucopia of local Vermont foods. After dinner, Deborah will speak about the consumers' role in sustainable agriculture.

Look for event details shortly.



There is no fee to be a farm or chef partner in the Vermont Fresh Network. We rely on voluntary donations from members.

I want to become a member of the VFN. Enclosed is my tax deductible gift to support sustainable agriculture in Vermont.

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$150 Other

Name: _____

Address: _____

Make check payable to: Vermont Fresh Network
Mail to: 116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

I want to be a partner with the VFN. Please send more information.

Board of Directors

MARK CURRAN
BLACK RIVER PRODUCE

DAWN MORIN-BOUCHER
BOUCHER FARM

ELLEN OGDEN
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Two New Board Members

In November, two talented individuals joined the Fresh Network board. We present brief profiles to introduce them to you. We look forward to working with them.

Dawn Morin-Boucher

Dawn works with her husband Dan and brother-in-law Denis, on the Boucher Family Farm in Highgate Center. A 12th generation farm, the Bouchers operate a 170-cow dairy with 400 animals, where until recently they just sold fluid milk. A few years ago, Dawn began making artisan blue cheese from their milk. In 1999, the farm entered its Green Mountain Blue Cheese for the first time in the annual American Cheese Society competition and won a third-place ribbon! You can find her cheeses as far away as California!

She then developed a German-style bratwurst and weisswurst made from the farm's beef and veal. Doug Mack at Mary's of Baldwin Creek and Leslie Myers of Smokejacks in Burlington encouraged the Bouchers and now feature both sausage and veal chops on their menus.

Dawn brings a strong commitment to land, animals, diversified agriculture, and entrepreneurial spirit to the board.

Rick Iffland

In 1998, Rick joined Sweet Tomatoes Trattoria in Rutland as its executive chef. After graduating from Otter Valley High School and Stafford Technical School, he entered an apprentice program sponsored by the American Culinary Federation (ACF). During this program, he worked at the Balsams Grand Hotel, Dixville Notch NH and The Cloister in Sea Island GA. Now in Rutland, he emphasizes good food, buying local products, consumer satisfaction, and education. Rick is president of the Vermont chapter of ACF; he appreciates the opportunities he received from ACF and wants deeply to give back to his profession.

Other ACF members who are part of VFN include: Brian Aspell (Equinox Hotel); Tom Bivins (Old Tavern at Grafton); Greg Lang (Equinox Hotel); Norman Levits (Putney Inn); Doug Marsh (Equinox Hotel); David Merrill (Basin Harbor); David Miles (NECI); David Phelps and Walter Van Price (Middlebury College).

Rick brings his commitment to consumer and professional education, flair for good food, and the value of Vermont farms to the board.

We welcome Dawn and Rick to the board.

Annual Meeting February 26, 2001

Please plan to attend the Annual Meeting and Partner Round Table Supper

Location: Old Dorm Lounge at Vermont Technical College

Time: 5:00 – 8:00 PM

Cost: A \$5 contribution will be requested at the door.

So that we may know how much food to order please let us know if you plan to attend.

Call 1-800-658-8787 or email info@vermontfresh.net to sign up.

Reservation deadline is Thursday, February 22, 2001.

Directions: Take Exit 4 off Interstate 89. Turn left (up hill) if coming from the north and right if coming from the south. Proceed 1 mile uphill to a 4 way intersection. Go straight ahead and park in the lot on the right. The Old Dorm Lounge is the first building on the right

Join Our email List

We have created an email list that enables us to send messages to our members easily. We will be using the list to update you on events, meetings and important information.

You can use the list to network with fellow members

It is easy to subscribe. Visit our web site at: www.vermontfresh.net and click on "Subscribe to our email list". Or simply send an email to: vtfresh-request@list.state.vt.us, leave the subject line blank, in the body of the message type: subscribe.

Once you are subscribed you can send email messages to VFN members. In the "To" line, type in: vtfresh@list.state.vt.us

While you're at it, check out our revised web site. If you have any suggestions or comments you can send them to: webmaster@vermontfresh.net

We're on the web!
www.vermontfresh.net

**Vermont Fresh Network
116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2901**

Mission: The Vermont Fresh Network builds innovative partnerships among farmers, chefs and consumers to strengthen Vermont's agriculture.