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The Swiss Specialties —

More Than Cheeses & Chocs



With its premium range of meats, it is no wonder Huber's is one of Chef Heuberger's favourite places for grocery shopping.



INGREDIENT AND TASTE ARE THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF SWISS CUISINE, SO SAYS CHEF DE CUISINE PATRICK HUEBERGER. A GROCERY SHOPPING TRIP AT HUBER'S BUTCHERY & BISTRO @ DEMPSEY (HUBER'S) AND A FIERY AFTERNOON IN THE KITCHEN OF LE BISTROT DU SOMMELIER MARK MY VERY ENJOYABLE INTRODUCTORY COURSE ON THE BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY OF SWITZERLAND AND ITS EVEN MORE CHARMING FOOD.

When I first proposed this feature to Chef Hueberger of Le Bistrot Du Sommelier, he was more than happy to introduce the wonderful cuisine of his native country to us. There was only one place on his mind to conduct our grocery shopping for the ingredients needed to prepare his two Swiss dishes. "Yes, all the ingredients will be available!", "They have all Swiss food", "I checked, all good!" beeped my mobile phone as a string of reassuring texts from the enthusiastic chef was received. There is no doubt that Huber's is one of Chef Hueberger's favourite haunts. When we arrived for the photoshoot, he had just finished his breakfast at the bistro. Besides its proximity to his home, the other reason why the Geneva native likes to shop at this Huber's outlet is because it offers a good array of Swiss products that satisfies his occasional longing for authentic Swiss food.

Armed with a shopping basket, Chef Hueberger navigated the store with much ease. He first picked up a packet of macaroni, while pointing out the wide range of Swiss pasta available on the shelf. The next item added to the basket was a packet of ready-to-fry Swiss rösti. "This is really convenient; all you need to do is pan-fry them. Even my mum uses this back home in Switzerland!" Proceeding to the meat counter, Chef Hueberger selected veal tenderloin and instructed the friendly butcher to cut it into large chunks. But before the butcher could do so, the energetic chef hopped behind the counter and took over the butchering knife himself. A very hands-on chef indeed! At the charcuterie counter, Chef Hueberger picked the Swiss farmer raw ham and offered us some slices to taste. "Most people are unaware that Switzerland produces ham, but I must say they are pretty good!" Some of his other favourite items found on the shelves at Huber's include le Parfait ("this is a spread of liver in a tube container"), Thomy mayonnaise ("One of the best mayonnaises!"), Cremo coffee creamer ("I always use this in my coffee"), the carbonated drink Rivella ("This is the Swiss version of Coca-Cola. We drink these during sports events."), Vollmond beer ("My personal indulgence"), and not forgetting the famed Swiss cheeses, such as the cave-aged Emmi's Kaltbach Emmentaler and Le Gruyère cheese. Named after the Kaltbach caves in Lucerne, the former undergoes an intensive maturing process that gives it its naturally black rind, a distinct characteristic of the Kaltbach Emmentaler.

Due to its unique landlocked location, Swiss cuisine encompasses strong influences from France, Italy and Germany. Beneath its multiple facets lies a very simple, yet indispensable principle of Swiss cuisine

– the importance of ingredient and taste. Hailing from Geneva, Chef Hueberger's cooking style can be described as Swiss-French. "We're very blessed. Besides providing beautiful scenery, the lakes give us fish and the mountains give us cheeses and hams." When asked to describe Swiss cuisine, Chef Hueberger told me cheekily that they cook food delicately with fat. "Unlike Chinese cuisine where the ingredients are often stir-fried in a wok of cooking oil over high heat, Swiss cuisine employs a more tender approach towards cooking with fat." Chef Hueberger demonstrates this as he prepares the rösti for one of his dishes. While frying the rösti, he took extra care in ensuring that there is enough cooking oil in the pan and added diced butter at intervals to make sure that the rösti turns an enticing golden brown.

"The dishes I'm making today are very simple. Anybody can do it at home, with the ingredients bought at Huber's. These are very typical household dishes in Switzerland. We have more than cheeses and chocolates!" After spending half an hour with Chef Hueberger in his sweltering kitchen, I was convinced that albeit it seemed like a reasonably easy task to replicate the dishes according to his recipes, the challenge lies in our lack of Chef Hueberger's unique flair that makes each dish he creates so irresistible. For example, I asked the brilliant chef how he could tell when to stop searing the veal, he replied matter-of-factly (with a tinge of mischief), "Twenty years of experience!" When it comes to listing his favourite Swiss dishes, though, Chef Hueberger stops short of a quick comeback. Finally, after moments of hesitation, the Swiss chef muttered 'longeole'.

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Upon further explanation, I found out that 'longeole' is a type of sausage that is a specialty in Geneva. Made from pork, the sausage is usually boiled and served with potatoes and leek. Another favourite of his is the 'saucisson vaudois', a smoked sausage from Vaud in southwestern Switzerland. Unsurprisingly, cheese fondue also makes it to his list of favourite dishes, as well as chocolates ("I always bring back lots of chocolates for my friends here!").

Both of Chef Hueberger's dishes, gratin of macaroni with Swiss farmer ham and raclette cheese and sautéed veal in Swiss brown mushroom and white wine cream sauce with rösti, are manifestations of the elements of Swiss cuisine: a bevy of comforting flavours paying humble homage to the best ingredients used to rustle them up. They are unpretentious; boasting robust flavours and served with unfettered enthusiasm – leaving you without a doubt that they are a labour of obvious love and dedication. CL



200g macaroni pasta
300ml single cream
Freshly ground white pepper, to taste
50g Swiss farmer raw ham, diced
250g raclette cheese, sliced

- Cook the macaroni pasta in a pot of boiling salted water until al dente, for about 4 minutes. Drain well and set aside. Heat the single cream in a saucepan until reduced by half. Season to taste with freshly ground white pepper. Add in the diced farmer raw ham and toss with the macaroni pasta. Divide the pasta mixture among 2 gratin baking dishes and top with sliced raclette cheese. Bake in a preheated oven at 220°C for about 10 minutes. Serves 2

gratin of macaroni with Swiss farmer ham & raclette cheese



Chef Heuberger proves to be a hands-on chef indeed!



The produce available at Huber's are of the best quality.

sautéed veal in Swiss brown mushroom & white wine cream sauce with rösti

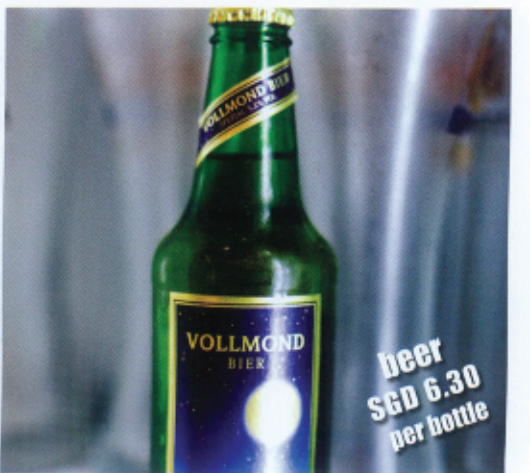
200g veal tenderloin, cut into large chunks
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
½ tbsp olive oil
1 (each) French pink garlic clove and shallot, peeled and chopped
200g Swiss brown mushrooms, sliced
50ml white wine
80ml single cream
Chopped parsley, for garnishing

Rösti
½ tbsp olive oil
1 pkt ready-to-fry rösti
20g fresh butter, diced

- For the rösti: Heat the olive oil in a sauté pan on low heat and pan-fry the rösti on one side until lightly browned. Add in the diced butter and continue to pan-fry until butter has melted and rösti is golden browned. Flip over and pan-fry the other side until golden browned.
- Season the veal tenderloin chunks with salt and freshly ground pepper. Heat the olive oil in a sauté pan and briefly sear each side of the veal tenderloin until browned. Remove sautéed veal tenderloin from the sauté pan and set aside. Add the chopped pink garlic, chopped shallot and sliced brown mushrooms into the same sauté pan and sauté for about a minute. Add in the white wine and simmer until alcohol has evaporated. Add in the single cream and simmer until sauce has reduced by half. Return the seared veal tenderloin into the sauté pan and coat well with the white wine cream sauce. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.
- Place the rösti on one side of each serving plate and the sautéed veal tenderloin with white wine cream sauce on the other. Garnish with chopped parsley. Serves 2



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Swiss Selections

- Huber's Butchery & Bistro @ Dempsey, 18A Dempsey Road, Singapore 249677, Tel: (65) 6737 1588
- Le Bistrot Du Sommelier, 46 Prinsep Street, #01-01, Singapore 188675, Tel: (65) 6333 1982