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Braised Canada Pork Cheeks, Juniper, Ginger Beer, Stone Ground Grits, and Arugula

Chef Jason Alley of *Comfort* - Richmond, VA

Adapted by StarChefs.com

Yield: 6 to 8 Servings

INGREDIENTS

Stone Ground Grits:

- 1½ pints whole milk
- 1½ pints chicken stock
- 1½ cups Byrd Mill stone ground grits
- 4 ounces unsalted butter
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Braised Pork Cheeks:

- 3 pounds pork cheeks, trimmed
- 2 sprigs thyme
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 2 sprigs sage
- 2 tablespoons lightly crushed juniper berries
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 large white onion, peeled, and roughly chopped
- 2 large carrots, peeled, and roughly chopped
- 4 stalks celery, leaves removed, and roughly chopped
- 1 head garlic, split
- 2 fresh bay leaves
- 1 cup red wine
- 2 bottles Reed's ginger beer
- 1½ quarts rich pork stock

To Assemble and Serve:

- Arugula
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Lemon juice

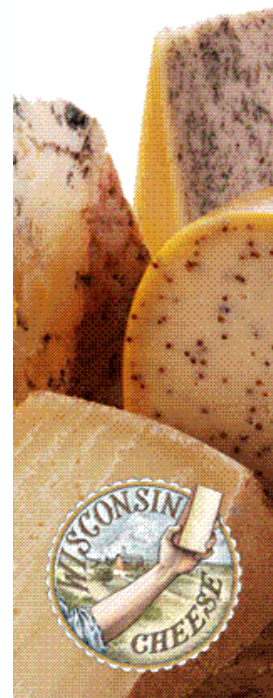
METHOD

For the Stone Ground Grits:

Bring the milk and stock to a boil in a medium pot. Reduce the heat and simmer the liquid, then slowly whisk in the grits. Simmer, stirring often, for approximately 45 minutes, or until the grits are tender. Stir in the butter, and season.

For the Braised Pork Cheeks:

Combine the pork, thyme, rosemary, sage, juniper berries and olive oil in a mixing bowl. Coat the pork, cover the bowl and refrigerate. Marinate the meat for 3 to 6 hours. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Heat a heavy-bottomed pan over a medium heat and add the vegetable oil. Remove the cheeks from the marinade and reserve the marinade. Season the cheeks with salt and pepper. Oil the pan



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with the vegetable oil and carefully sear the cheeks on both sides until well browned. Remove the cheeks from the pan and reserve.

Add the onions, carrots, celery, garlic, and bay leaves to the pan to sweat. Add the reserved marinade to deglaze and cook until lightly browned. Deglaze the pan again with the wine, add the ginger beer, and scrape the pan to release the browned bits.

Add the stock and the browned pork cheeks, cover, and braise in the oven for about 3 hours, depending on the size of the cheeks. When the meat is fork tender, remove the cheeks from the pan and reserve. Strain the braising liquid through a chinois, skim all fat and reduce by 40% over a medium-high heat.

To Assemble and Serve:

Gently re-heat the cheeks in the reduced braising liquid. Spoon the grits into a shallow bowl, top with the beef cheeks, and pour a little braising liquid over the top. Toss the arugula in the olive oil and lemon juice and use to garnish the plate.



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