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KING CAKE BABKA

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LIVING HISTORY

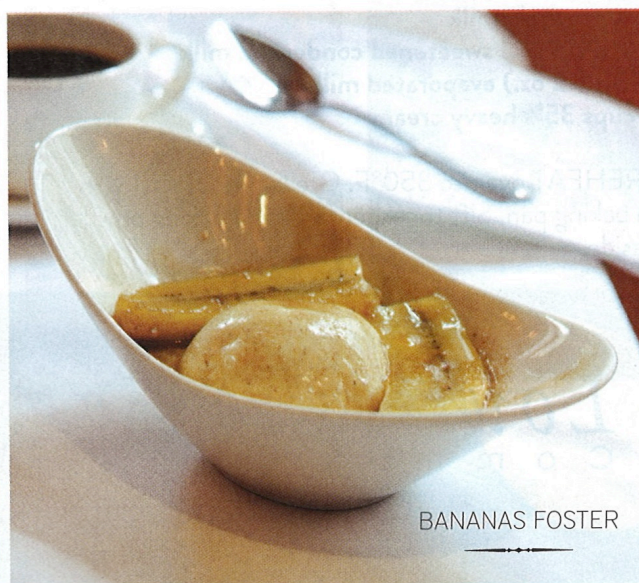
UPDATING
CLASSIC DISHES
FOR THE
MODERN PALATE

WHEN 2006 CHEF TO WATCH SLADE RUSHING was named executive chef at Brennan's, which reopened after an extensive renovation in 2014, he was faced with a unique dilemma: how to maintain the integrity of the historic French Quarter restaurant's menu while updating it for the modern palate. He set about refining some of its classic dishes with his fresh, lighter approach to cooking while retaining those familiar flavors that diners have come to know and love. One traditional Brennan's favorite that Slade has left his mark on is the Filet Stanley, which he has put his own twist on by replacing certain elements of the dish with elevated components.



Q What can you tell us about the history of Filet Stanley? This dish was created by Owen Brennan and Chef Paul Blangé. It was named after the character Stanley Kowalski from Tennessee Williams' play *A Streetcar Named Desire*, who was portrayed by the great Marlon Brando in the Broadway play in 1949.

Q To you, what makes Filet Stanley an interesting and unique dish? The pairing of a filet of beef [and bananas] seems odd, but comes together nicely with help from French curry Vadouvan, horseradish yogurt, and Perigourdine Sauce.



BANANAS FOSTER

Q Talk us through your thought process when you updated the recipe. [I added a] Vadouvan and Parmesan-panko crust on the banana, seared until crispy, to help add a deep savory element with texture to the banana. Porcini mushrooms give the dish a Cadillac approach compared to the button mushrooms [which the restaurant used in the past]. We also make a horseradish yogurt to add a little extra tang to the dish.

Q How do the bananas interact with the dish? The sweet and savory flavor of the banana works surprisingly well. The crispy crunch of the banana along with its creamy center adds a nice textural contrast to the steak as well.

Q How do you prepare the bananas? It's just pan sautéed. We're just caramelizing the Parmesan and the panko, and the Vadouvan spices are getting toasted. It's got some herbs on there as well—a little bit of fresh parsley—and usually we get it searing and then we finish it in the oven and let it roast.

Q What tips would you give readers making Filet Stanley at home? Make sure your bananas are ripe but still firm enough to sauté.

Q What substitutions would you suggest for the porcini mushrooms? Shiitakes would be a fine substitute and are readily available.

Q Brennan's has a slate of very important, historic recipes. How do you balance expectations of longtime diners while keeping the dishes relevant to modern diners (who possibly haven't had the classic dishes before)? It is very important to respect these old dishes, in a way, by elevating them without losing the integrity of what they were in the past. So, if you can't improve the dish by either adding freshness or some other new technique, then the dish should be left alone. You have to make it as good or better than the original; otherwise, what's the point? You're not really doing the dish justice. The key thing that we do is we always try to give the dish clarity. With the Marchand du Vin sauce, we've actually seared porcini mushrooms and arranged those on the plate so you can get a little bite of porcini and you can get a taste of the filet. All the elements are free to speak on their own without being lumped together, but they're meant to be together, if that makes sense.

Q So, it's about being sure all the parts make a better whole? Right. But I'll say this. What's interesting is, when I look at this dish, Vadouvan spice has more toasted shallots and more mustard seed. It's a French curry blend, but what I like about it is that those two things, the mustard seed and the shallot, go well with the horseradish element, and the yogurt is kind of a cooling effect, which is very typical with Indian food or Middle Eastern food. So, it all kind of works together



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in harmony with the horseradish, which goes great with the mustard seed and shallot and goes great with prime rib and horseradish sauce. It all kind of has some sort of familiarity to it to where it all works.

Q **Have there been any classic Brennan's recipes that you feel like you can't change?** Bananas Foster is something that I have done takes on before, but I don't dare try to change the original here because it can't be improved. It works. It's a great combination of flavors, and it's exactly what it's supposed to be. Bananas Foster is so much of a show. It's the aroma from the flambéed action tableside. It fills the room with this amazing smell.... People know they're at Brennan's when they walk through that front door. It doesn't need to be changed. It's truly great. But we updated a lot of [other] things. For instance, the Soft-Shell Crab Châtres. We've done it our way. We are using our own Canadian bacon. We're using fresh cherry tomatoes. Again, we're talking about the refinement or lightening up of some of these dishes. We've come up with our own new turtle soup. Our gumbo's slightly different. But the Bananas Foster is the untouchable.

FILET STANLEY

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

Courtesy of Chef Slade Rushing,
Brennan's, New Orleans

- 6 (6-ounce) beef filets
- 6 king trumpet mushrooms, halved
- 12 green onions, washed

Salt

Ground black pepper

Extra-virgin olive oil

Horseradish Banana Purée (recipe follows)

Sautéed Vadouvan Bananas (recipe at louisianacookin.com)

Perigourdine Sauce (recipe follows)

1. Preheat grill according to manufacturer's instructions. Season steaks, mushrooms, and green onions with salt and pepper. Top with a light coating of oil.
2. Grill steaks until desired degree of doneness. Remove steaks from grill, lightly cover with foil, and let rest.

Grill mushrooms and green onions until tender.

3. Divide Horseradish Banana Purée among 6 serving plates. Arrange steaks on top of purée, and top with mushrooms and green onions. Add a Sautéed Vadouvan Banana to each plate. Spoon 2 tablespoons Perigourdine Sauce over steaks and around plates.

HORSERADISH BANANA PURÉE

MAKES 4 CUPS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 6 ripe bananas
- 8 ounces chicken stock
- 2 ounces banana liqueur
- 4 ounces horseradish

Salt

Ground black pepper

1. In a large nonstick saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat until smoking. Add bananas, and sear until

caramelized all over. Add stock and banana liqueur, stirring and scraping browned bits from bottom of pan.

2. Bring to a boil over high heat; reduce heat, and simmer until liquid is reduced by half. Add mixture to the container of a blender, and blend until smooth. Add horseradish and salt and pepper to taste. Keep warm until ready to serve.

PERIGOURDINE SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT ¼ CUP

- 8 ounces veal demi-glace
- 1 tablespoon canned black truffle peelings
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons Madeira wine
- 1 teaspoon truffle oil

1. In a small saucepan, heat all ingredients over medium-high heat until reduced to ¼ cup. Reserve in a warm place until ready to serve. ♣