

Wine Pairing: Tenderloin of Pork with Apricots

This recipe, a Haas family favorite for the winter months, is an excellent pairing with the newly released 2005 Esprit de Beaucastel. The fruit of the apricots and the natural earthiness of the pork enhances the intense fruit and spicy, smoky flavors of the Esprit. Cous-cous is a delicious accompaniment. Serves 6.

Ingredients

3 pounds pork tenderloin, cut into 1 inch cubes
1 pound dried apricot halves
1 cup seedless raisins
2 cups dry red wine
1/2 cup red wine vinegar
3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
3 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon dried thyme
salt, to taste
4 tablespoons olive oil
4 shallots, peeled and minced
2 cups chicken stock
2 bay leaves
3 tablespoons honey

In a large bowl, combine pork, apricots, raisins, 1 1/2 cups wine, vinegar, parsley, mint, cumin, pepper, thyme, and salt to taste. Cover and marinate, refrigerated, for 4 hours. Stir occasionally.

Remove pork and fruit from marinade, reserving marinade. Place fruit in a small bowl. Pat pork dry with paper towel.

Heat olive oil in large skillet and saute meat, a few pieces at a time, until well browned. With a slotted spoon, transfer pork to a deep casserole.

Drain oil from skillet, add shallots, and saute over medium heat for 5 minutes. Add reserved marinade and bring to a boil, scraping up any browned bits remaining in the skillet. Cook for several minutes, until slightly reduced, and add to the casserole.

Preheat oven to 375F

Stir in apricots, raisins, remaining 1/2 cup of wine, chicken stock, bay leaves and honey; mix well. Set over medium heat, bring to a boil, cover, and set on the middle rack of the oven.

Bake for 2 hours, or until meat is tender and sauce rich and thick.