

FOOD

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THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

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BRIGITTE BOUVIER, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Guests of the Viennese Winter Ball will whirl around the floor from 7 p.m. to midnight to the strains of Strauss performed by the Thirteen Strings Orchestra.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Viennese Winter Ball, an enchanting evening under the stars



RON EADE

There's nothing quite like a good fairy tale to stimulate the imagination. You know, *Rapunzel*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Snow White* ... I've loved them all, since my early days when Mom used to read *The Brothers Grimm* and Hans Christian Andersen to coax me off to sleep.

And so the story of Cinderella has been in my thoughts lately while preparing for the eighth annual Viennese Winter Ball, which takes place this Saturday at the National Gallery on Sussex Drive.

The ball has all the makings of an enchanting evening. Imagine, if you will, the Great Hall of the gallery filled with

beautiful ladies dressed in their very finest gowns; handsome gentlemen in crisp tuxedos; 26 young men and women opening the evening with waltzes, quadrilles and polonaises; guests whirling around the floor from 7 p.m. to midnight to the strains of Strauss performed by the Thirteen Strings Orchestra.

Soprano Shawne Elizabeth and tenor Fraser Rubens will be on hand for a special performance. Other musical artists include the Stevens & Kennedy band and the Ottawa Schrammel Quartet.

Instead of pumpkins and mice turned magically into Cinderella's gilded coach and handsome footmen, you'll see 30 limousines with chauffeurs pressed into service from as far away as Montreal to ferry special guests to and from the ball.

And the food, prepared exclusively for the occasion by the Westin Ottawa, will be no less exotic: from Pekin duck terrine and Viennese lobster rolls on the hors d'oeuvre plates to maple-smoked tenderloin and gratin for the entrée, everything served on this fairy tale evening will be first-rate.

Courses will be spread out over the evening, giving partygoers ample opportunity to mingle and dance.

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CHRIS MIKULA, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

After dancing the night away, guests at the Viennese Winter Ball will complete their memorable meal with a Luscious Chocolate Ganache from the Westin Ottawa.

LUSCIOUS CHOCOLATE GANACHE

(From: Philippe Wetzel, executive chef, Westin Ottawa)
Serves 4

- 1 small 5-ounce (140-g) can red cherries
- ½ cup (125 mL) port wine
- ¾ cup (175 mL) sugar
- 2½ cups (575 mL) heavy 35-per-cent cream
- 8 ounces (225 g) semi-sweet chocolate chips
- One 10-inch (25-cm) loaf sponge cake

For the fruit coulis:

- ¼ cup (50 mL) frozen or fresh berries (ie: strawberry, blueberry, raspberry)
- ¼ cup (50 mL) sugar

1. Strain cherries and marinate overnight with port wine. Discard juice from can.
2. Make coulis by combining ¼ cup (50 mL) of berries with ¼ cup (50 mL) of sugar and purée in blender or food processor. Set aside, covered and refrigerated, up to 1 day in advance.
3. For the chocolate ganache, in a saucepan combine ¾ cup (175 mL) sugar with cream; mix well and heat over high heat to bring just to a boil, then remove from heat. Meanwhile, chop chocolate into small pieces. Place damp towel on countertop, then pan of hot cream on the towel. Add chopped chocolate to cream and beat vigorously while chocolate melts until completely mixed — the mixture will thicken into a paste as it cools, about 10 to 15 minutes. (If necessary, you may place the pan in cold water to cool mixture just until it thickens to spreading consistency; remove immediately from cold water to prevent over-thickening.)
3. Strain cherries (reserving marinade) and fold into chocolate mixture.
4. Slice pound cake into three equal portions, then slice each portion into 3 pieces (total: 9 slices). In a loaf-size pound cake mould lined with plastic food wrap, place 3 slices of pound cake to cover bottom of the mould; brush lightly with reserved port marinade and ⅓ of the cherry-chocolate ganache mixture. Place 3 slices of pound cake to cover the ganache, and again brush lightly with port marinade and ⅓ of the ganache mixture. Repeat with final slices of pound cake, topping with a light brushing of port marinade and remaining ganache.
5. Refrigerate until set, about 2 hours, before removing from mould. Slice in thick portions with about 2 tablespoons (25 mL) of coulis spooned on the side of each serving.

MORE ON THE BALL

Friday: A look at the colourful history of the Viennese Ball.

Saturday: 21st-century Cinderellas. Thirteen debutantes prepare to shine.

Sunday: A night at the ball — Ottawa's tribute to Vienna.