

FOOD

Editor: Ron Eade, 596-3793 • food@thecitizen.canwest.com

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THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

SECTION D

VIENNESE BALL KICKS OFF GALA SEASON



GAY COOK
TASTE OF THE TOWN

Flickering candles, sparkling lights, eye-catching floral arrangements and spectacular ice carvings will greet guests as they arrive Saturday at the Viennese Winter Ball in the National Art Gallery.

The Viennese Ball has a long history dating back to 1814 in Vienna, Austria, and has become a tradition for generations around the world.

In Ottawa, the magical night of music, cuisine and dance is under the patronage of the Austrian ambassador, Otto Ditz. About 350 guests will attend.

The ambassador will welcome 30 young dancers who will perform the classic polonaise, a traditional European court dance, before the guests.

Dinner in the spectacular hall has a menu to set the tastebuds buzzing.

Executive chef Philippe Wettle of the Westin Ottawa and his team are preparing hors d'oeuvres, roast red deer loin with juniper berries, roast apple, Yukon Gold potato and chestnut mash with cranberry venison sauce, and a variety of

colourful vegetables. Wines donated by the ambassador include Schottenmeister Zweigelt 2002 and Schottenmeister Grüner Veltliner 2003.

Dessert is a composition of crisp chocolate fondant and Saskatoon berry crème brûlée.

After dinner, guests can dance or return to the lobby where the Kaffee Haus will be open to serve chocolate martinis, fruit, cheese and biscuits with Vienna folk music played by the Schrammel Quartet.

In keeping with the Viennese tradition, guests are encouraged to stroll through the many rooms of the gallery. The Marsyas String Quartet will provide musical entertainment in the Canadian galleries.

Money raised at this event will support the Champions for Children Foundation bursary program, as well as provide assistance to the Thirteen Strings Junior Orchestra.

For more information, check the website at www.winterball.ca/index.html.

Thyme & Again Creative Catering, 1255 Wellington St., is now carrying Yum Tea Truffles made with Belgian chocolate. Flavours include Kombucha green tea with Lime, rooibos chai, Egyptian chamomile, Earl Grey, lapsang souchang and peppermint.

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STILTON CHEESE AND PEARS ON HERBED BREAD

Serves 4

For the mousse:

- 4 ounces (115 g) Stilton cheese
- 4 ounces (115 g) cream cheese, regular or reduced fat (not fat-free)
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) cognac or other brandy
- 2 tablespoons (25 mL) finely chopped shallots
- Several grinds black pepper
- 3 tablespoons (50 mL) heavy 35-per-cent cream
- 1 large, firm but ripe Bartlett pear, halved and cored
- 2 slices, rosemary focaccia or any country bread, 1/4-inch (7-mm) thick
- 4 small sprigs fresh herbs of your choice
- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) olive oil

1. To prepare mousse, in a mixing bowl, place Stilton cheese, cream cheese, cognac or other brandy, shallots, pepper and cream; blend well and set aside.

2. Place pear halves on a lightly oiled baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven at 350°F (180°C) about 15 minutes, or until lightly browned. Remove pear from oven and cool slightly. When cool enough to handle, slice each pear half into thin slices lengthwise.

3. Toast bread until light brown. Using a 2-inch (5-cm) cookie cutter, cut out 4 rounds.

4. To assemble the plate, fan 3 or 4 pear slices on each toasted round of bread. Add a mound of stilton mousse on top of each, or place cheese in a pastry bag and pipe a mound of cheese on top. Gently toss herbs in the olive oil and use to garnish top of cheese mound. Serve slightly chilled.



PAT MCGRATH, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN