

ART AND COMMUNITY

Pink Sugar Pumpkins the Secret to a Great Pie

Late fall is a cook's favorite time of year. Not only is the foliage changing on some of the local fauna but also in our produce markets and kitchens. For those of us that are fortunate to live in the south, we begin see beautiful squashes, collard greens, zesty arugula, persimmons and citrus of different types to name a few.



Phillip McDonald

Simple, Local & Seasonal by Chef Phillip

Chef & Owner of Table Five

To me the cornerstone ingredient of fall is the pumpkin – and I'm not referring to the ubiquitous gourds that light up our front porches. Those pumpkins are great for tricks but the treat lies in the culinary pumpkins that often get overlooked. One in particular is the sugar pumpkin (also called the pie pumpkin) that has been growing in our region since pre-civil war. This gourd is a

culinary delight that swings on an even playing field with sweet and savory. Now don't get me wrong. I love the nostalgia of carving Jack-O-Lanterns and they serve their purpose well, but for cooking they are watery, mealy and not at all ideal for consumption. That is probably why they have always been used for arts and crafts. Sugar pumpkins on the other hand are smaller and usually have bright orange skin and very thick flesh. When roasted, they offer a delicate but complex earthy flavor with a touch of sweetness.

Doing my homework on this indigenous variety of pumpkin I looked beyond the neon lights and found a certain heirloom variety of sugar pumpkin at Perennials & Natives by a girl named Toni in Grayton Beach, a local market that I frequent regularly. The pumpkins she carries are not the familiar orange shade but rather a pinkish color and are a lot smaller than the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown. The heirloom variety she sells is grown right here in Northwest Florida and yields more sweetness than supermarket sugar pumpkins. Since I'm goofy for anything of heirloom variety, I bought

one and away I went to play in the kitchen for the rest of the day. I found the versatility of this local variety amazing. First I roasted it in a 400 degree oven for about 1 1/2 hours to soften the flesh and concentrate the sugars. Then I spooned the flesh from the skin and pureed it in a processor.

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After I pureed the roasted product I faced a myriad of ideas of what to do with this culinary delight. I began stuffing the pureed pumpkin in pasta with mascarpone cheese to make raviolis. I mixed the pumpkin with mashed potatoes and got rave reviews from the family as they enjoyed the combination with pork chops.

I confess that I have never made a traditional pumpkin pie in my life, but I was inspired so I went for it and it was a hit (A little tip: the

technique for good pie texture from scratch is to tie the puree that you would use for pie in cheesecloth and strain it overnight to leach some of the water out).

After a second trip to Toni's with two sugar pumpkins now in tow and the cooler weather creeping in I decided to make a soup. This was in my opinion the best way to enjoy the texture and flavor of this seasonal treat. I served this recipe with Belle Chevre Goat Cheese from Alabama that I purchased from Modica Market in Seaside and the combination was Simon & Garfunkel. No wait! Actually more delicate and complex like Coltrane & Monk. A few seasonal foods to look out for now:

Apples, Meyer Lemons, Arugula, Watercress, Mustard Greens, Persimmons, Collards, Winter Squashes, Stone Crab, Oysters and Flounder.

Phillip McDonald is the chef/owner of Table Five, a personal chef service specializing in dinner parties and private home events. He may be reached at info@tablefivechef.com or (850)496-5066.

Sweet Pumpkin Soup with Alabama Goat Cheese & Sage Oil

Serves 4-6

For Soup:

2 strips bacon, diced
1 onion, julienne
1 Granny Smith apple, diced & peeled
1 small sweet pumpkin OR 1/2 of large pumpkin, roasted & peeled*
3 cups chicken stock
2 T. heavy cream

For Sage Oil:

1/2 cup Canola oil
1 bunch of Sage leaves

Method for soup: In a medium saucepot on medium heat, add bacon and render until crispy. Once rendered, strain bacon through fine mesh strainer over a bowl and reserve fat. Set bacon aside. Return the bacon fat to the pot and add onion and apple and sauté until onions are translucent. Rough chop the roasted sugar pumpkin and add to the pot with the chicken stock. Simmer on medium heat for about 20 minutes and transfer to a blender (or using an immersion blender) blending until smooth adding the cream as you blend. Season to taste with salt and pepper and garnish with good Alabama goat cheese, crispy bacon and finish with sage oil.

Method for Sage oil: Take the 1/2 cup of Canola oil and 1 bunch of sage leaves and blend in a food processor or blender. Pour liquid into a fine mesh sieve lined with a coffee filter and let drip over bowl until all of liquid is strained.

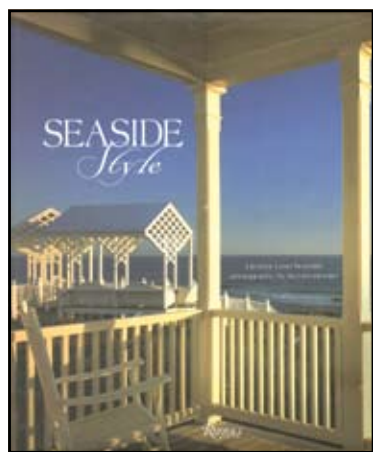
*To roast pumpkin: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut pumpkin in half and scoop out all of the seeds and pulp in the center of the pumpkin. Quarter the pumpkin and place on sheet pan lined with foil and roast for about one hour or until pumpkin is tender.



Seaside recently celebrated Erica Gibson-Pierce's 20th anniversary with the town. Congratulations!

'Seaside Style' Provides a Peek Into Seaside Homes

By Lynn Nesmith
Excerpted from *Seaside Style*



Hansbrough House

There's a demanding duality of a house directly on the water. It must address the best and worst Mother

Nature has to offer – one day embracing the splendor of the sun setting in the Gulf and the next day enduring the brunt of a tropical storm. Melanie and Tommy Hansbrough's Seaside home happily responds to the dictates of its glorious setting.

The design and construction of this house is a true collaborative effort.

"First, there was Robert's vision and inspired town plan," maintains Melanie. "Our architect, Alexander Gorlin, is a genius. But our builder, Benoit Laurent is one of the unsung heroes of Seaside. You can't build a town without a master builder. Benoit is a true artist."

And you also need enlightened clients like Melanie and Tommy Hansbrough.

Seaside's covenants dictate long narrow houses on the water. This

structure adheres to town rules with a low-pitched, standing-seam metal roof, clapboard siding of Southern pine, and wide overhanging eaves. Although Alexander alludes to indigenous forms, he goes about creating his own concurrent order and in the process augments the elemental power of the natural setting.

The second-floor terrace offers a fresh take on a familiar form with its abstracted pergola. The wooden canopy follows the form and low pitch of the house's metal roof and ever so gracefully filters the harsh Florida sun. Large exterior windows are arranged in a rational grid inspired by Japanese screens.

Inside, the house gradually opens up to its surrounding. The first introduction is the unpretentious foyer. The drama of the interiors unfolds with a

staircase bathed in natural light and detailed with maple that ascends to the open and loftlike second floor. This great room is the true heart of the house and readily fulfills the promise of its name. The interconnected living dining kitchen areas are equally conducive to family intimacy as well as holiday gatherings and large parties.

Balancing sleekness and carefully crafted details, the room boasts limestone floors, maple-paneled walls and built-ins, and granite accents in the kitchen. A careful manipulation of interior volumes enhances the feeling of spaciousness.

A series of sturdy pillars, combined with the gently sloping ceiling framed with precise maple trim, instills a broad tentlike volume in the living

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