



A PERFECT MATCH

## Mushroom Flan With Cru Beaujolais

Chef David Bouley, Bouley, New York

David Bouley does not like the term “Asian fusion”: “I try not to do confusion cooking,” he said recently.

He is correct in that his food bears little relationship to the sometimes haphazard inclusiveness of that cuisine. But the fact that he weaves together some of the most refined elements, techniques and ingredients of French and Japanese cuisine is irrefutable.

Bouley got an early start in kitchens, and lit out for Europe to learn. In 1985 he opened Montrachet, an ambitious French restaurant in Manhattan, with Drew Nieporent.

The restaurant was a great hit, and soon he had his own place, Bouley, a very fine restaurant with a downtown vibe. But the vicissitudes of the business forced him to open and close a number of times.

Bouley has two restaurants now. One, bearing his name, is the source of this signature dish. “The flan is always requested by regulars,” he says, “even when it’s off the menu.”

The primary flavors come from the dashi—a savory stock—used to make the custard and sauce the dish, and the mushrooms, which can be any tender variety. The sauce is dosed with black truffle paste, which underscores the earthiness. And don’t let the word “flan” throw you; this is a carbon copy of the Japanese custard chawanmushi.

The dish is rich without being heavy. Though he serves it with whites—especially from Bordeaux or the Rhône—Bouley also likes to get a light red that will play to its “forest floor” aromas. “This dish works great with cru Beaujolais,” he says.

He has been an advocate of Western wines with Japanese food. “A lot of [Japanese food] goes well with wine,” Bouley says. “Dashi has an incredible amount of mineral, so wine makes sense. Minerals open proteins to find more flavors on the palate.”

And this is his goal, no matter the restaurant. “Cravings are for flavor. Intellectual cooking is a blast but what people want without thinking comes from the physical sensation of flavor.”

—Owen Dugan



**CHEF'S PICK:** Louis-Claude Desvignes Morgon La Voûte St.-Vincent 2010  
**WINE SPECTATOR ALTERNATES:**  
 Georges Duboeuf Morgon Belles Grives 2010 (88, \$15 )  
 Domaine Rochette Morgon Côte du Py 2010 (88, \$17)

### HOW TO MAKE MUSHROOM FLAN

- 1 4-inch piece of ginger, thinly sliced
  - 3 large eggs
  - 3 cups dashi broth, fresh or from a mix
  - 1 tablespoon arrowroot powder
  - 2 tablespoons light soy sauce
  - 1 teaspoon mirin
  - 1 tablespoon yuzu juice
  - 4 to 6 ounces black truffle paste
  - 3 ounces assorted mushrooms, sliced
  - Olive oil
  - Chives, minced, for garnish
1. Set a fine-mesh strainer over a bowl, and line with cheesecloth. Pulse the ginger slices in a food processor until finely chopped, and transfer to the strainer. Gather the cheesecloth around the ginger, and gently squeeze to release the

- ginger juice into the bowl. Set aside.
2. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Whisk the eggs together in a large bowl until thoroughly combined, and pour in 2 cups of the dashi broth. Stir to combine, and pour the mixture through a strainer into a separate bowl. Divide the mixture among 4 8-ounce ramekins, and set them inside a small roasting pan. Pour boiling water into the roasting pan until it reaches halfway up the sides of the ramekins, and cover the pan tightly with aluminum foil. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until the flan is just set.
3. While the flan is baking, mix the arrowroot with 1 tablespoon water and stir until dissolved. In a saucepan, combine the arrowroot and water with the remaining dashi and simmer until the dashi has thickened, about 5 minutes. Remove

- the dashi from the heat, and add the soy sauce and mirin. Divide the dashi sauce between two saucepans.
  4. Season one of the dashi sauces with the yuzu juice and 1 teaspoon fresh ginger juice. Stir the black truffle paste into the other dashi.
  5. Sauté the mushrooms in olive oil until soft but not colored. Reserve several of the mushrooms for garnish, and puree the rest in a food processor.
  6. When the flan is set, it can be served in the ramekin, as Bouley does, or gently removed and plated. To assemble, divide the mushroom puree among the flans. Top each with a spoonful of the black truffle-dashi sauce, followed by a spoonful of the yuzu and ginger-dashi sauce. Garnish with the reserved mushrooms and chives.
- Serves 4.

LEFT: MICHAEL GOSWAMI; MIDDLE: ANDREW HAYES; RIGHT: JACOB STYLISS; SMILEY VOIR; FISH MARKET RESTAURANT; PROP: STATO; COURTESY: BOULEY