

How To: Be More Romantic

From the purveyors of romance at Pier W

Pier W is the truffle of romance. Just a little taste will set you soaring: indulgent dishes, attentive but not smothering service; and, oh, that view. We asked the chef and manager how to re-create the Pier W magic at home. (We know — the skyline set against Lake Erie is going to be tough to pull off.)

"There is something about breaking bread together that brings us together as human beings — as men and women," says chef Regan Reik. "Cooking a meal together can really be a great, and romantic, way to spend an evening."
— *Tori Woods*

The Meal:

Labster Cannelloni

For the pasta:

1 cup semolina flour
6 eggs
1 tablespoon salt

For the filling:

1/2 pound Maine lobster meat, cooked and chopped
2 ounces Tellagio cheese
2 ounces Reggiano Parmesan cheese, grated
1 bunch chopped parsley
1 egg
1 teaspoon granulated garlic
salt and pepper to taste

For the pomodoro sauce:

3 pounds ripe plum tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1/2 cup olive oil
1 Spanish onion, minced
1 bay leaf
1 cup dry white wine
2 ounces whole butter, cubed
Salt and pepper to taste

1. For the pasta, place all ingredients into a small mixer fitted with a dough hook, and knead for 7 minutes. The dough should be springy and elastic. Set aside and let it rest for 15 minutes.
2. In a mixing bowl, mix the lobster, half the Tellagio cheese, half the Parmesan cheese, the egg and half the parsley. Season to taste with salt, pepper and garlic. Set aside.
3. For the sauce, heat a medium-size saucepan over low heat. Add the oil and then the onion and bay leaf. Season with a little salt, and sweat over medium heat until the onion is translucent. Add the tomatoes, and raise the heat to high. When the liquid starts to release from the tomatoes, add the wine and simmer rapidly to reduce the wine by half.
4. Reduce the heat to low, and then simmer the sauce for about half an hour.
5. Whisk in the butter, season to taste and set aside.
6. Cut the pasta dough into 8 equal pieces, then flatten each with the heel of your hand. Roll out to 1/8 inch each on a floured surface, and cut each piece into a rectangle shape.
7. Divide the lobster mixture between the pasta sheets, then roll each into a cylinder, placing them into a greased baking dish.
8. Top with the sauce, and the remaining cheeses, and bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for about 45 minutes.
9. To serve, place 2 cannelloni on each warm plate, and top with some of the Pomodoro sauce and some of the parsley.

The Ambience:

The best way to set the stage for romance is by paying attention to your sweetheart's preferences — an interesting bottle of wine, a preferred flower or a favorite dessert, says Pier W manager G Espejel. Then, let him or her relax. "When I do this for my wife, I make sure I cover everything from beginning to end, from cooking it all from scratch down to washing the dishes," says Espejel.

The Music:

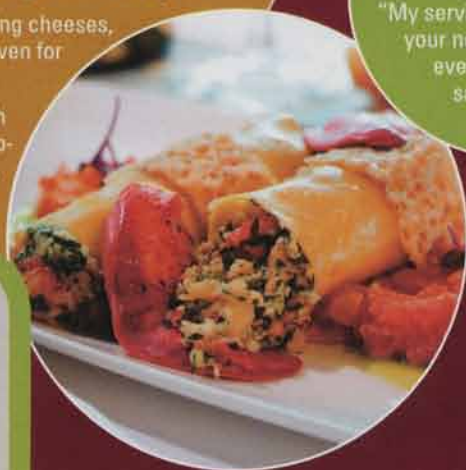
Pier W focuses on perfect, classic details, so its romantic atmosphere is enhanced by a pianist and bass player playing smooth jazz. But when the musicians aren't there, Espejel subs in a jazz CD, "the perfect accompaniment" to a meal.

The Lighting:

Pier W eschews candles in favor of individual spotlights over each table, designed to re-create the warm glow of firelight. At home, candles can do the trick — but make sure they're unscented!

The Service:

Take a cue from the meticulous Pier W staff. "My service is to anticipate your needs before you even have them," says Espejel.



"Values cannot be dictated by either person. They must naturally blossom from the relationship. As the relationship grows, values become its mutual, implicit foundation."

Craig Christ, bachelor, 54

➔ Visit www.clevelandmagazine.com for salad and dessert recipes, tips on seafood preparation, and an exclusive second menu featuring king crab and braised artichoke gratin, pan roasted sea scallops and Baileys cake, custom designed by chef Regan Reik.