

■ master class

with efisio and francesco farris

All photos by Dick Patrick



stuffed veal chop with fregula



Veal chops are upscale comfort food, perfect for a big Sunday dinner, and a great choice for when family comes to visit. Prepare them assembly-line style: Roll up the prosciutto pieces for the whole rack all at once, butterfly all the chops and stuff all the veal pockets at the same time. Put your relatives to work by assigning them a vegetable to chop or steam. Efisio remembers his mother cooking a dish a lot like this one for Sunday dinners in Sardinia. He and his brother have refined the fillings a bit, but the essence is the same. Efisio and Francesco use a Sardinian grain similar to couscous, called *fregula*, introduced to the island through Arab occupation. *Fregula* is available at many Italian gourmet stores.

rack of veal with 6 chops
1 cup Pecorino Sardo, finely grated
1 pound fregula (if unavailable, substitute couscous)
9 thin slices prosciutto, 3 chopped and 6 left whole
1 small bunch arugula, chopped
1 small bunch purple kale, chopped
1 sprig rosemary, finely chopped
1 sprig thyme, finely chopped

seasonal vegetables, such as winter squash, carrots and zucchini, diced and steamed
½ cup fresh ricotta
extra-virgin olive oil
1 large red onion, chopped
6 tomatoes, diced
1 bunch parsley, chopped
salt and freshly ground pepper

- 1 You'll need a 6-chop rack for this recipe. You can either strip the bone yourself, or have your butcher do it for you.
- 2 Preheat the oven to 400°. Grate the Pecorino Sardo and chop the rest of the ingredients as specified.
- 3 Boil *fregula* in salted water until tender; drain. In a medium-sized bowl mix *fregula* with chopped prosciutto, arugula, kale, Pecorino Sardo, herbs and seasonal vegetables.
- 4 Lay out the 6 slices of whole prosciutto on a flat work surface and evenly divide filling on one end of each slice. Roll up halfway and drop on a spoonful of ricotta. The ricotta will spread as you roll up the rest of the prosciutto slice and will help bind the roll closed.
- 5 Prepare the veal chops: Split rack into 6 separate chops. Butterfly the chops open. Brush the interior of each veal chop with a little olive oil. Place one prosciutto roll in each chop. Close chop.
- 6 Drizzle olive oil in the bottom of a large, heavy baking dish. Add onion, tomatoes and parsley. Add stuffed veal chops. Bake for 20 minutes.
- 7 Place *fregula* mixture in the center of the plate. Place veal chop on top of *fregula*. Drizzle with baking juices and finish with roasted onions and tomatoes from baking dish. **Serves 6**



Efisio and Francesco Farris have a lot in common besides just their DNA. The brothers, who grew up in the town of Orosei on the island of Sardinia, both love to get behind the stove, and eventually, that passion drew them both to the U.S. to pursue twin careers as chefs.

Efisio made the stateside move first, accepting a job in 1986 in New York City (where he also met his wife). Eight years later he moved to Houston, Texas and opened his first restaurant, a Sardinian place called Arcodoro Ristorante Italiano. Francesco joined his brother in 1991 and together they run mirroring restaurants: Arcodoro in Houston and Arcodoro and Pomodoro in Dallas.

Their menus focus on traditional Sardinian dishes made with indigenous ingredients like *fregula*, a Sardinian couscous-like grain, and *bottarga*, a flavorful, sun-dried fish roe. The brothers come up with new recipes collaboratively. One will create the framework, and the other will refine it, until the perfect synergy of taste and aesthetics is achieved. "Francesco will tell me what he's thinking," says Efisio, "and then I'll change it a bit. But he never likes it as much as his original recipe. You know brothers."