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VIVmag, the all digital luxury magazine for women earns two

international awards. The tradition of creating excellence in digital magazine publishing continues as VIVmag has won the Digital Magazine Awards 2010 - Silver Award for Lifestyle Magazine of the Year while also sharing in Photographer of the Year for their - March/ April VIV cover shot by Alexx Henry.

VIV SAYS: BLOG 

FEATURED, HEALTHY EATING | No Comments
November 15th, 2011

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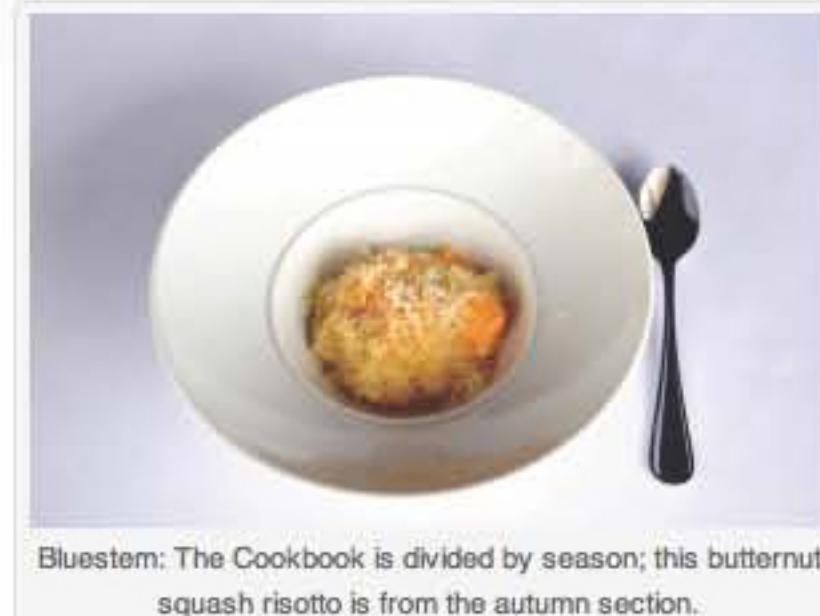
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'Bluestem: The Cookbook' Highlights Seasonal Ingredients

Whenever a cookbook from one of our favorite fine-dining establishments is released, we're eager to flip through the pages to glean kitchen secrets from the pros. But as home chefs, we're often daunted by long lists of uncommon ingredients and complicated steps. So when we first opened

Bluestem: The Cookbook (Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2011), we were delighted to see "User

Manual: Or how to use this cookbook, by someone who is not a chef." The volume is filled with gorgeous photographs and even better recipes from the restaurant in the historic Westport district of Kansas City, MO.



Bluestem: The Cookbook is divided by season; this butternut squash risotto is from the autumn section.

The restaurant is the baby of chef Colby Garrels (repeated nominee for the prestigious James Beard Foundation Award) and his wife, pastry chef Megan Schultz Garrels. (The Garrels also have two real-life children, Madilyn and Colin.) Bonjwing Lee contributes the photographs and the aforementioned tips for the home cook, including a guide to techniques and tools.

We've spent hours in the warm, comfortable lounge, chatting with friends while eating free-range chicken from **Campo Lindo Farms** or sharing a prettily plated Meyer lemon tart with candied fennel and pomegranate seeds. Since we don't get to Kansas City very often, we're thrilled to have this book, categorized by season then by course: amuse-bouche, cold, hot, pasta, water (seafood), land, sweet (dessert) and petits fours.

We love Bluestem's way with vegetables: The beets with blue cheese and pecans would brighten the rainiest autumn day. Winter utilizes celery root in soup, spring showcases fiddleheads with burrata and olive oil, and recipes for summer's bounty include ingredients such as fresh melon, sweet corn and snap beans. Other highlights include hen with pistachio pistou, smoked salmon panna cotta, braised short ribs, pink peppercorn shortbread, sausage with rye whiskey and plums, and chocolate sponge cake with bing cherries, cocoa foam and "popcorn" ice cream.

The volume's as handsome as our first crush, but don't just judge this book by its cover (blue, of course). We all have those pretty volumes that sit uncracked near our well-worn, food-spattered cookbooks. But Bluestem's recipes, while ambitious, can be tackled by the humble home chef. Following is an autumn recipe for risotto, which is not difficult to make but requires patience for half an hour of stirring.

Risotto, butternut squash, allspice

Serves 8 as a starting course, 4 as a main course

Ingredients

8 cups chicken stock or vegetable stock
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, cold and cubed
2 shallots, finely diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups butternut squash in 1/2-inch cubes
2 cups Carnaroli rice
1/4 cup white wine
Salt and freshly ground white pepper
1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for garnish
Freshly grated allspice

1. Heat the chicken stock in a stockpot over low heat. Cover and keep warm.
2. Heat the softened butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the shallots, garlic and butternut squash and stir until softened, about 5 minutes (you don't want to develop any color). Using a wooden spoon, stir in the rice, coating it with the butter and seasonings.
3. Continue to stir and toast the rice for about 5 minutes. Add the wine and stir until it evaporates.
4. Stirring the rice continuously, add the warm stock, 1 cup at a time, making sure that the liquid is completely absorbed by the rice before adding the next cup. The rice will start to release its starch and thicken into a creamy porridge, about 30 minutes. Depending on the texture of risotto you like, the grains of rice should be tender to firm, but not gritty. Season the risotto with salt and pepper. Remove from the heat and let sit for a couple of minutes.
5. Beat the cold butter and Parmesan into the risotto. Serve immediately. Grate a bit of allspice over the risotto with a nut grater or Microplane zester and any additional Parmesan over the risotto at the table if you like.

NUTRITION SCORE (per serving, based on 8 servings)

304 calories
Fat 12 g (7.3 g saturated)
Carbs 36 g
Protein 10 g
Fiber 1.7 g
Calcium 155 mg
Iron 2.5 mg
Sodium 711 mg

What's your favorite restaurant cookbook? Or is there a restaurant that you'd like to see put out a cookbook?

Photo credit: Bonjwing Lee