Les Marmitons
NEW JERSEY

November 2026 Event

Chef xxxxxxxx

First Course: *Mixed Greens Salad with an Apple Cider Reduction, Sun-Dried Tomatoes, Toasted Walnuts & Blue Cheese*

Second Course: *Nonna's Italian-Style Beef & Pork Meatballs with Whipped Ricotta*

Third Course: *Herb-Encrusted Branzino with Whipped Potatoes & Sautéed Broccoli Rabe*

Fourth Course: *Cannoli Cookies*

1st Course: Mixed Greens Salad with an Apple Cider Reduction, Sun-Dried Tomatoes, Toasted Walnuts & Blue Cheese

Serves 30

Apple cider reduction vinaigrette 8 cups fresh apple cider (unfiltered) ½ cup apple cider vinegar 2 tbsp Dijon mustard 2 tbsp honey 2 shallots, minced 1½ cups extra-virgin olive oil 1 tbsp kosher salt, plus more to taste	1 tsp freshly ground black pepper **Salad** 3 lb mixed greens (spring mix), washed and dried 16 oz oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and thinly sliced 1¼ lb walnut halves 1¼ lb blue cheese (Gorgonzola dolce or Maytag), crumbled

Instructions:

Reduce the cider: in a wide pot, boil the apple cider over medium-high heat until it reduces to about 2 cups and is lightly syrupy, 45–60 minutes. Cool completely; it thickens as it cools.

Make the vinaigrette: whisk the cooled reduction with the cider vinegar, Dijon, honey, shallots, salt and pepper. Slowly whisk in the olive oil until emulsified. Taste and adjust salt. You will have about 4 cups; plan on 2 tablespoons per plate.

Toast the walnuts: spread on sheet pans and toast at 350°F for 8–10 minutes, until fragrant. Cool and roughly chop.

Just before serving, toss the greens with about three-quarters of the vinaigrette in batches in a large bowl. Add more only as needed; the greens should glisten, not pool.

Plate about 1½ oz greens per person. Top each with sun-dried tomatoes, about 1 tablespoon walnuts and about 1 tablespoon blue cheese. Drizzle a few drops of the remaining reduction vinaigrette around the plate.

Make-ahead notes:

The cider reduction and vinaigrette keep refrigerated for up to 1 week; whisk again before using.

Dress the greens at the last minute, in batches of 8–10 plates, so they don't wilt.

2nd Course: Nonna's Italian-Style Beef & Pork Meatballs with Whipped Ricotta

Serves 30

Meatballs (makes about 60)

2½ lb ground beef (80/20)
2½ lb ground pork
2 cups plain dry breadcrumbs
1½ cups whole milk
5 large eggs
6 oz Pecorino Romano or Parmigiano-Reggiano, finely grated (about 1½ cups)
1 head garlic (about 12 cloves), finely minced
1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped (about 1 cup)
2 tsp dried oregano
2 tbsp kosher salt
2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
½ tsp red pepper flakes (optional)
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, for the sheet pans

Marinara

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium yellow onion, finely diced
½ head garlic (about 6 cloves), sliced
3 (28 oz) Cans San Marzano crushed tomatoes
1 bunch fresh basil (half for sauce, half for garnish)
1 tbsp kosher salt, or to taste

Whipped ricotta

2 lb whole-milk ricotta, drained 2 hours or overnight
¼ cup heavy cream
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
2 lemons, finely zested (save the juice for another use)
1 tsp kosher salt

Instructions:

Make the marinara: warm the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Cook the onion until soft, about 8 minutes, then add the sliced garlic for 1 minute. Add the crushed tomatoes, a few basil sprigs and the salt. Simmer gently for 30 minutes, stirring often.

Soak the breadcrumbs: in a very large bowl, stir together the breadcrumbs and milk and let stand 5 minutes. Beat in the eggs, then add the cheese, minced garlic, parsley, oregano, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes.

Add the beef and pork and mix gently with your hands just until combined. Overmixing makes tough meatballs. Fry a small test patty and adjust the seasoning.

Heat the oven to 425°F. Oil 3–4 sheet pans. With a 1½-tablespoon scoop, portion the mixture into about 60 meatballs (about 1¼ oz each) and roll lightly with damp hands.

Bake 15 minutes, until browned. Transfer the meatballs into the marinara and simmer gently for 20 minutes to finish cooking (internal temperature 160°F) and absorb the sauce.

Whip the ricotta: in a food processor or stand mixer, whip the drained ricotta with the cream, olive oil, lemon zest and salt until smooth and fluffy, 1–2 minutes.

To plate: spread about 2 tablespoons whipped ricotta in a shallow bowl or small plate, set 2 meatballs on top with a spoonful of sauce, drizzle with olive oil and garnish with torn basil.

Make-ahead notes

The meatballs can be baked a day ahead, refrigerated in the sauce and reheated gently, covered, at 325°F.

Whipped ricotta keeps 2 days refrigerated; re-whip briefly before serving.

Drain ricotta for several hours or overnight

3rd Course: Herb-Encrusted Branzino with Whipped Potatoes & Sautéed Broccoli Rabe

Serves 30

Branzino and herb crust

30 skin-on branzino fillets (4–5 oz each), pin bones removed (from about 15 whole fish)
2 bunches flat-leaf parsley, leaves only
1 bunch fresh dill
1 bunch chives
1 bunch fresh thyme, leaves only
½ head garlic (about 6 cloves), minced
4 lemons, zested, then cut into wedges for serving
1 cup panko breadcrumbs
1 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
1 tbsp kosher salt
1 tsp freshly ground black pepper

Whipped potatoes

6 lb Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch chunks
½ lb (2 sticks) unsalted butter
1½ cups heavy cream
1½ cups whole milk
2 tbsp kosher salt, plus more for the cooking water
1 tsp freshly ground white or black pepper

Sautéed broccoli rabe

6 bunches (about 1 lb each) broccoli rabe, tough stems trimmed
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 head garlic (about 12 cloves), thinly sliced
1 tsp red pepper flakes
1 tbsp kosher salt
1 lemon, juiced
1 tsp freshly ground black pepper

Instructions:

Potatoes: cover the potatoes with cold, well-salted water, bring to a boil and simmer until very tender, 15–20 minutes. Meanwhile, warm the butter, cream and milk together until the butter melts.

Drain the potatoes well and let them steam-dry for 2 minutes. Pass through a ricer or food mill, then whip in the warm cream mixture a little at a time with a sturdy spoon or a mixer on low. Season with salt and pepper. Hold covered over a barely simmering water bath.

Broccoli rabe: blanch in heavily salted boiling water for 2 minutes, then plunge into ice water. Drain, squeeze dry and cut into 2-inch pieces. This can be done hours ahead.

Herb crust: finely chop the parsley, dill, chives and thyme (about 3 cups total) and mix with the garlic, lemon zest, panko, salt, pepper and ½ cup olive oil. It should look like damp green sand.

Fish: heat the oven to 425°F. Line sheet pans with parchment and brush with olive oil. Pat the fillets dry and lay them skin-side down. Brush the tops with the remaining olive oil and press about 2 tablespoons herb mix onto each fillet.

Roast 8–10 minutes, until the fish is opaque and flakes easily (internal temperature 145°F). Do the fish in waves so every plate goes out hot.

While the fish roasts, finish the broccoli rabe: warm the olive oil in 2 large skillets over medium heat, cook the sliced garlic and red pepper flakes until the garlic is golden, about 1 minute, then add the rabe and toss until heated through, 3–4 minutes. Season with salt, pepper and lemon juice.

To plate: spoon about ⅓–½ cup whipped potatoes onto the plate, add a small bundle of broccoli rabe and lean a branzino fillet against them. Finish with a lemon wedge.

Make-ahead notes

Ask your fishmonger to fillet and pin-bone the fish; order 30 fillets or 15 whole fish at about 1¼–1½ lb each.

The herb mix can be made 4 hours ahead; keep it covered and refrigerated.

4th Course: Cannoli Cookies

Serves 30

Cookies

5 cups	all-purpose flour
2 tsp	baking powder
1 tsp	baking soda
1 tsp	kosher salt
1 tsp	ground cinnamon
½ lb (2 sticks)	unsalted butter, softened
2 cups	granulated sugar
2	large eggs
¾ lb (1½ cups)	whole-milk ricotta, drained overnight
2 tsp	pure vanilla extract
2	oranges, finely zested
1½ cups	mini semisweet chocolate chips

Finish

3 oz	shelled unsalted pistachios, finely chopped (about ½ cup)
½ cup	powdered sugar

Instructions:

Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon together in a bowl.

In a stand mixer, beat the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then the drained ricotta, vanilla and orange zest.

On low speed, add the dry ingredients just until combined. Fold in the mini chocolate chips. Chill the dough 30 minutes; it is soft, like a cannoli filling.

Heat the oven to 350°F and line sheet pans with parchment. Scoop the dough with a 1½-tablespoon scoop, about 2 inches apart, and press a pinch of chopped pistachios onto the top of each.

Bake 11–13 minutes, until set and just golden on the bottom; the tops stay pale and cakey. Cool on a rack.

Dust with powdered sugar just before serving.

Make-ahead notes

Draining the ricotta is essential, or the cookies spread. Set it in a cheesecloth-lined sieve over a bowl overnight in the refrigerator.