

VERO *Fine* DINING

Chef Scott Varricchio and his lavender dessert

BY TINA RONDEAU
Columnist

Ever have a craving for a dessert where the secret ingredient was lavender? That's right -- the flowering purple plant that's a member of the mint family. As it happens, the Matanzas Creek Winery grows lavender as well as grapes in the Napa Valley. Each year, it harvests the lavender, makes dried lavender, lavender honey, and lavender salt, and distributes tins of these products to chefs around the country.

The chefs are then challenged to create a new dish using lavender. Af-

ter receiving the entries, a recipe is declared the winner and the chef is invited to Napa Valley for the annual "Days of Wine & Lavender Festival." This year's winner was chef Scott Varricchio of the Citrus Grillhouse, and below is his winning recipe.

Vanilla semi-freddo, caramelized pizelle, lavender ice cream & raw honeycomb

Ice Cream:

- 1 qt 40% heavy cream
- 1 cup milk
- 8 oz sugar
- 11 yolks

- 1 teaspoon dry matanzas creek lavender

Steep lavender in cream, milk and half the sugar over low heat for 15 minutes.

In a separate bowl whisk together the yolks and the rest of the sugar.

Strain the lavender out of the milk mixture, then using a ladle slowly add the milk mixture into the yolks. Whisk in the mixture until the matter is tempered.

Add everything back into the sauce pan and over a low flame stir until it thickens.

Pour the mixture into a pre-chilled

Paco-Jet beaker and freeze until needed.

To finish ice cream place beaker into paco-Jet machine and spin as much is needed.

**note, do not pre-spin ice cream*

Semi-Freddo:

- 12 ozs 40% heavy cream
- 4 ozs milk
- 3.5 ozs sugar
- 5.5 yolks
- 1 vanilla bean split and seeded

Bring to a slow boil the milk, cream,

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VERO Fine Dining

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sugar and vanilla bean. Remove from heat until warm.

Add yolks, combine and pour through a fine strainer.

Spray a half sized sheet pan with pam then line with plastic wrap.

Pour the mixture into the sheet pan and place in freezer until needed. Make sure the pan rests level.

Caramelized Pizzelle:

- ❑ 1/3 cup sugar
- ❑ 2 egg whites
- ❑ 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ❑ 4 tablespoons melted butter
- ❑ 1/3 cup a.p. flour
- ❑ 2 tablespoons 10-x

Preheat your pizzelle maker.

In a bowl whisk together the sugar, whites and vanilla.

Slowly whisk in the melted butter, then the flour.

Spoon about a tablespoon of the mixture into the hot pizzelle maker and close and cook until lightly browned open the press and sprinkle a small amount of the 10-x over the pizzelle and close the press. Remove the pizzelle after about 15 seconds and store (wrapped up) until needed.



Vanilla semi-freddo, caramelized pizzelle, lavender ice cream and raw honey comb: an award winning dessert dish by Chef Scott Varricchio. PHOTO BY TOM MCCARTHY JR.



To Assemble:

You will also need sliced honeycomb and mantanzas creek pink Himalayan lavender finishing salt.

Using a ring mold cut out a 3" diameter circle of the vanilla semi-freddo.

Place a caramelized pizzelle on top of the semi-freddo.

Then spoon out one scoop of the just spun lavender ice cream and place that on top of the pizzelle.

Add a slice of the honeycomb and just a few pieces of the lavender salt. ■

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