HAREWOOD

Individual Pies of Harewood Rabbit with home-made stuffing balls, served with cider-braised red cabbage

By Darren Collinson Executive Head Chef

Serves 6

1	Large Rabbit, jointed
35g	plain flour, seasoned with salt and pepper
50g	butter
175g	thick cut smoked streaky bacon, cut into strips
1	large onion, finely chopped
225g	carrots, diced
	Finely grated zest of one lemon
4	sprigs of lemon thyme
600ml	chicken stock
350g	jus-rol shortcrust pasty or home-made shortcrust
1	egg, beaten
	Salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the home-made stuffing

100g	freshly made white breadcrumbs
50g	shredded suet
1tsp	each of finely chopped herbs such as rosemary, lemon thyme and sage
1tbsp	finely chopped parsley
50g	pancetta very finely chopped
pinch	Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1	large egg, beaten

For the cider-braised cabbage

1	medium red cabbage, finely shredded
2	English eating apples, such as Cox's, peeled and diced
500ml	Scrumpy Cider
1	cinnamon stick
4tbsp	red wine vinegar
2	star anise
120g	soft brown sugar
	zest of one small orange

To Serve: boiled new potatoes, crushed with butter and chopped parsley

To make the individual pies you will need six - 6 inch pie dishes, alternatively you can make one large pie.

1. Coat the rabbit pieces in seasoned flour, saving the excess flour for the next stage of cooking. Heat the butter in a large heavy-based pan and brown the rabbit pieces, turning carefully to ensure that the meat doesn t stick to the pan. Remove the rabbit and set aside, before adding the pancetta to the pan. When the pancetta is beginning to take on colour add the onion and carrots and fry for around five minutes.

2. Add the remaining flour to the pan along with the lemon, lemon thyme and the hot chicken stock. Add the rabbit to the cooking stock, cover and simmer until the rabbit is tender (around 45 minutes/1 hour).

3. Whilst the rabbit is cooking make the pancetta stuffing. Combine all of the ingredients, season and bind with enough of the beaten egg until the mixture can be formed into balls. The stuffing balls will need to be around the size of a hazelnut.

4. Roll out the pastry and cut into rounds, 8inch diameter. Place one of the pie-dishes open side down on the pastry rounds and cut round inch away from the edge of the dish, leaving a ring of pastry and a round for the lid. Take each ring of pastry, brush with water and press the rings onto the rim of each dish. Set the prepared dishes and remaining rounds aside.

5. When the rabbit is tender, remove from the pan with a slotted spoon and cool slightly. Take care to remove any bones and then cut into pieces, again these should be the size of a hazelnut.

6. Divide the rabbit between the six small pie dishes. Add some of the cooking liquor ensuring a decent amount of vegetables in each dish. Divide the stuffing balls between each of the dishes, resting them onto of the rabbit mixture.

7. Brush the pastry rim on each of the pie-dishes with water and place the pastry round on top, crimping the edges to make a seal with an attractive finish. Make a small hole in the centre of each pie-lid, to vent steam during cooking. Preheat the oven to 200C/425F/gas mark 7 whilst the pies chill in the refrigerator for half an hour.

8. Before placing in the oven, brush the top of each pie with beaten egg, then bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes until the pastry is golden.

9. Whilst the pies are cooking prepare the cabbage; place the sliced cabbage into a saucepan and add the cider, cinnamon stick, red wine vinegar, star anise, sugar and orange zest. Cook over a medium heat for 15 minutes, then stir in the apples and cook for a further two minutes. Set aside and keep warm until the pies are cooked.

10. Serve the individual pies with the cabbage and cooked new potatoes crushed slightly with butter, seasoned to taste and sprinkled with parsley.