



Get ahead of now.

Market Watch

Visit Now ▶

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WSJ.com

OCTOBER 22, 2010, 9:31 AM HKT

Dish: Lemon & Lemon Tart



Artbeat

Lemon Lemon Tart

Paul Pairet has built his career on being a playful chef.

His clever takes on Asian flavors at Café Mosaic in Paris made critics take notice in the 1990s. Then in 2005, he took the fine-dining stage in Shanghai: At Jade on 36 in the city's Pudong Shangri-La hotel, he entertained diners with dishes such as his foie gras bonbon — a bite-size morsel of liver followed by a shot of herbal tea that was topped with champagne foam.

Mr. Pairet, who now runs the casual Shanghai brasserie Mr & Mrs Bund, has a new project in the works: A tiny 10-seat restaurant called Ultraviolet that's equipped with state-of-the-art technology allowing him to adjust the ambience — lighting, sound, projection images and aroma — to fit every dish served. "It's very experimental," he says, adding that he expects to open the new restaurant early next year.

Until then, diners can sample the best of his "experiments," such as his Lemon & Lemon Tart, a mischievous and witty take on a traditional French *tarte au citron*. It has been in his repertoire for over a decade, but remains a hit because of its visual trickery: What appears to be a whole lemon is in fact a hollowed-out fruit stuffed with lemon curd, Chantilly cream and sorbet — the traditional tart filling.

"I love how this is so complex in preparation," he says, "for a result that is so very simple."

The lemon. Mr. Pairet takes a fresh lemon, cuts a small hole in one end, and removes as much of the pulp and pith as he can without damaging the skin. He then poaches the hollowed lemon in water for 12 hours. After it cools, he carefully removes more of the pith until "you can see right through the lemon."

It's important to use a lemon whose skin is very thin but very strong. Meyer lemons — organic, of course — fit the bill for Mr. Pairet.

Candied rind. The lemon shell is then poached for six hours more, this time in a simple syrup (equal parts sugar and water). Mr. Pairet then raises the heat so the syrup begins to thicken and form a glaze around the lemon skin. The end result: A hollowed lemon in its original shape with a candied shell that is both soft and sweet.

The filling. Mr. Pairet's version of lemon curd, the main filling of a regular *tarte au citron*, is a classic textbook version, as are his sorbet and Chantilly cream. "There is only one idea in each of my dishes," he says. "If I get more esoteric, then it gets confusing. One idea is enough." He fills the hollowed, candied lemon with the three ingredients to form his dessert.

Sablé biscuit. A classic lemon tart has a crumbly crust, which Mr. Pairet reimagines as a biscuit stick that gently rests on the lemon. Elegant in presentation, this is a dessert to be eaten with primal zeal, the chef says: "Take a spoon and make your own disaster on the plate."

Copyright 2008 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Distribution and use of this material are governed by our [Subscriber Agreement](#) and by copyright law. For non-personal use or to order multiple copies, please contact Dow Jones Reprints at 1-800-843-0008 or visit www.djreprints.com