

# Bring Luxury Back this New Year's Eve

You may remember with fondness Stephen Starr's swanky seafood restaurant, Striped Bass. In the 1990s through 2008, Striped Bass on Philly's Walnut Street was a destination for special occasions.

This New Year's Eve dinner menu features the iconic restaurant's namesake fish, and mirrors the luxuriousness of its dishes. I created this meal for Vincent's birthday after a trip to my favorite local gourmet food market, Janssens, but decided it should be replicated for a special New Year's Eve dinner in our home kitchen.

As soon as I arrived at Janssens, I went straight to the fish counter. The beautiful dark stripes and pink flesh of the striped bass stood out from the regular offerings. After learning that it just came in that morning, I ordered a pound. If you decide to execute this menu, I suggest you put in an order for the fish in advance. Not wanting to sauté this delicate seafood, I decided to poach it in an Asian broth and headed down the international aisle for an udon noodle accompaniment. Then, I proceeded to produce for watercress and oyster mushrooms to spice up my noodle salad.

The celebratory nature of the dinner called for a first course, so I backtracked to my favorite aisle – canned and jarred sardines, tuna, olives, and peppers. A few new items caught my eye, and a Spanish appetizer was born...La Brújula Small Squids in Ink Sauce, Matiz Piparra Peppers and L'Estornell "Crashed Olives". Since "the" Striped Bass is no more, bring luxury back to your New Year's Eve celebrations with "a" striped bass. Wishing all a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season.

## Spanish Squid Starter

Place two squid on each appetizer plate. There are four cute and tender calamari per can with their tentacles as stuffing. Top with an "X" of Piparra Peppers – mild, sweet and pale green from the Basque region. Add a few of the tart and smoky olives from the Caceres Province to each plate. Top with some fresh squeezed lemon juice.

## Asian Udon Noodle Salad

Slice the oyster mushrooms lengthwise and sauté in a healthy dose of salted butter and olive oil. Bring a small pot of water to a boil for the noodles and cook according to the package instructions. Rinse with cold water, drain and add directly to the pan of mushrooms. Transfer both the mushrooms and noodles to a flat serving bowl and toss with two handful of watercress. Combine with soy sauce, sesame oil, fresh squeezed lime juice, sea salt and fresh ground pepper to taste.

## Striped Bass

Using kitchen shears, cut a 1 pound filet of striped bass into three pieces. This serves two but is so good that you probably want to split the third as seconds! Add 1/2 cup soy sauce, 1/2 cup water, 2 teaspoons of sugar, 2 tablespoons of sesame oil and the juice of one lime to a flat pan. Bring to a boil and then turn down to a low simmer. Add the fish, skin side down. In about 4 minutes, flip gently with two wooden spatulas. After another 4 minutes, turn again and test whether a knife goes through the fish without resistance. If not, cook for another minute, but be careful not to overcook. Plate the fish with a sprinkle of sliced scallions and spoon over some of the soy broth. Serve immediately with the udon noodle salad.

Pair with a Crémant d'Alsace – the perfect bubbly to accompany an entire seafood meal.

For a flambéed dessert to go along with the fireworks, try a Bananas Foster, Crêpes Suzette or, if you are really adventure-some, a Baked Alaska. 🍷



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