



The Grind

Winter meals develop their deep flavors from slow roasting or stewing. In the warmer months, on the other hand, we usually cook more quickly, adding flavors through a sauce or rub. Pestos, vinaigrettes, wet and dry marinades for meat or fish destined for the grill—these are the fast and easy enhancers of summer.

Food processors can help, especially when cooking for a crowd. But the time and energy saved from pressing “pulse” a bunch of times is lost when you have to take the thing apart and wash it. Plus there are those who claim that the chop is too fine, adversely affecting flavors.

I sidestep the chop argument, but I do prefer the control I get with the mortar and pestle. You get to build the sauce, adding, adjusting and tasting as you go. And there’s something about the pounding and grinding that is therapeutic, sort of like kneading bread.

This instrument comes in an endless variety of shapes and sizes from all points of the globe, and the materials vary from wood and lava to porcelain, with prices to match. I like the marble one from La Cornue (\$450; www.joanneHUDSON.com) because it’s good and heavy, and the handle made of rosewood is comfortable to use. The pestle has

The traditional mortar and pestle, such as La Cornue’s (above), has been updated by chef Jamie Oliver as a shaker (below).

a wide head that’s especially good for grinding.

Considering that the mortar and pestle are millennia old, you wouldn’t think they could be improved. Nevertheless, celebrity chef Jamie Oliver has come up with an interesting innovation. His Flavour Shaker (\$30; www.amazon.com) is essentially an enclosed version of the mortar and pestle, with a heavy ceramic ball replacing the pestle. You unscrew the lid, add the ingredients, screw the top back on (making sure it’s sealed tight), and give it to your kids to shake like crazy.

The contraption is a little too small for making pesto in large quantities, but it works well and, best of all, can go right into the dishwasher. Plus it’s fun.

—Owen Dugan



ITALIAN SALSA VERDE

1 clove garlic, peeled and roughly chopped

1/4 teaspoon black peppercorns

A pinch of salt

1 small shallot, peeled and roughly chopped

1 bunch parsley leaves

3 anchovy fillets, rinsed and deboned

1 tablespoon capers, rinsed

Zest and juice of 1/2 lemon

1/2 teaspoon chile pepper, seeded, deveined and finely chopped

1 tablespoon vinegar

1/2 cup olive oil

Pound and grind the garlic, peppercorns, salt and shallot until they form a paste. Add the parsley as you go, then the anchovies and capers. Add the lemon juice, zest and pepper, and mash well. The mixture should still be quite thick. Add the vinegar and gradually the oil, all the while stirring and grinding, until you have a thick sauce. Serve on grilled fish, pork or chicken.

BUENOS AIRES HOT SPOT

FERVOR BRASAS DE CAMPO Y MAR



BUENOS AIRES IS A NEW WORLD CITY WITH Old World charm, and its citizens, known as *porteños*, pursue pleasure with fervor. A new restaurant delivers the flavors of Argentina with gusto and style. Fervor Brasas de Campo y Mar is a beautifully appointed brasserie in the upscale Recoleta district. Steps from the grand Alvear Palace hotel and the modern Park Hyatt Palacio Duhau, it’s an ideal place for visitors to relax for a few hours and experience the *porteño* way of life.

The high ceiling, tall windows and well-placed mirrors give the space a bright, open feel. A huge chandelier made of forks and spoons makes a striking, playful centerpiece. Red banquettes and velvet curtains complete the brasserie decor.

Fervor’s menu is grill fare, based on fresh ingredients, with the typical Argentine presence of beef and offal. Yet there are more seafood than meat dishes, and plenty of salads. The owners also run two of Buenos Aires’ best Italian restaurants (both called Sottovoce), so Fervor gives a nod to Italy with items such as grilled sweet red peppers, grilled provolone cheese and two pasta dishes rounding out the menu.

The wine list offers nine wines by the glass and 200-plus bottle selections ranging in price from 30 pesos (less than \$10) to 1,280 pesos (\$375). Most choices cost less than 200 pesos (\$58). We enjoyed a rich Achával-Ferrer Quimera Mendoza 2006, with blackberry, cassis and boysenberry flavors, for 257 pesos (\$75).

Fervor may be Buenos Aires’ latest hot spot to see and be seen in, but the excellent food and interesting wine list make it more than just a destination for people watching.

—Bruce Sanderson

FERVOR BRASAS DE CAMPO Y MAR

Posadas 1519, Recoleta, Argentina Telephone (54) 11-4804-4944 Web site www.fervorbrasas.com.ar Open Lunch and dinner, daily