

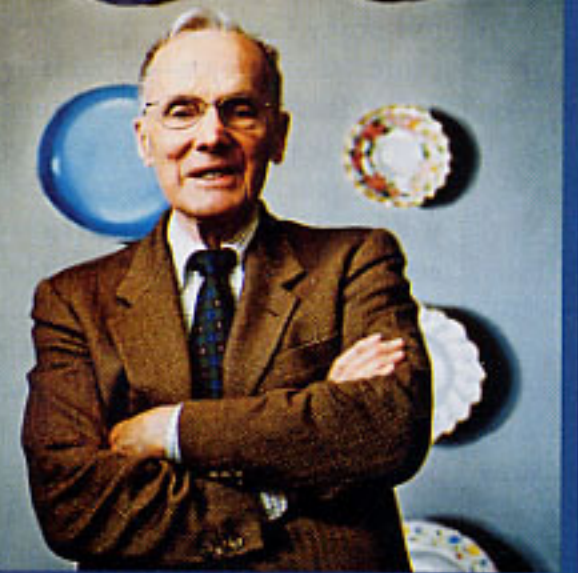
FUSION FOOD

WE HAVE NO BEEF WITH

72 ONE NIGHT last winter, dining at Lumière, a superb, stylishly low-key restaurant in the Boston suburb of West Newton, we sampled something called **RED CURRY STEAK TARTARE** and found it exquisitely, almost hauntingly seasoned with a spice box full of Asian flavors. Now, this, we thought, was fusion we could meld with. ★

MOST BENEVOLENT POT MERCHANT

73 Countless chefs travel to France and come back dazzled by the food they found there. What got the attention of **CHUCK WILLIAMS** was the vessels and utensils the French used for cooking and serving their food. Back home in Sonoma, he opened a little cookware store, like nothing else in America at the time; in the late '50s, he moved it to San Francisco. Today, there are more than 200 Williams-Sonoma stores in the U.S., and—despite all the imitators—they still deliver the goods with intelligence, dependability, and panache. And Williams himself, at 86, is still discovering useful kitchen and dining-room tools. ★



RECIPE

Red Curry Steak Tartare

SERVES 4

AT LUMIÈRE, chef Michael Leviton makes this tartare with top-quality sirloin that has been dry-aged for 28 days. See THE PANTRY, page 94, for sources for hard-to-find ingredients.

FOR THE KAFFIR LIME-LEAF OIL:
 ½ cup fresh kaffir lime leaves (about 16)
 6 tbsp. canola oil

FOR THE RED CURRY VINAIGRETTE:
 2 tbsp. red curry paste
 2 tbsp. chopped fresh lemongrass
 2 tbsp. seasoned rice vinegar
 ½ tsp. patis (Philippine fish sauce)
 ¼ cup canola oil

FOR THE STEAK TARTARE:
 1 lb. aged sirloin, very finely chopped
 1½" piece ginger, peeled and minced
 1 shallot, peeled and minced
 1 tbsp. finely chopped Thai basil or spearmint leaves
 1 tbsp. finely chopped peppermint leaves

1. For the kaffir lime-leaf oil: Put kaffir lime leaves and oil into a blender and purée until oil is flecked with the leaves, 1–2 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and cover. Set oil aside at room temperature overnight. The following day, strain through a cheesecloth-lined sieve into a small bowl, discard solids, and set aside.

2. For the red curry vinaigrette: Put curry paste, lemongrass, vinegar, and fish sauce into a blender and purée until smooth, about 1 minute. With motor still running, gradually add oil in a slow, steady stream through hole in blender lid. Transfer to a small bowl and set aside. Vinaigrette may appear separated or broken.

3. For the steak tartare: Put meat, ginger, shallots, basil or spearmint, peppermint, and 6 tbsp. of the vinaigrette into a large bowl and gently mix together until just combined.

4. Gently pack one-fourth of the steak tartare into a deep, 2½" ring mold set in the middle of a plate, then unmold by removing ring. Repeat process on 3 more plates with remaining steak tartare. Drizzle some of the lime oil and remaining vinaigrette around each one.



BUSIEST PLACE TO BE LAZY IN EUROPE

74 THERE IS no better place to celebrate Lisbon's marriage of stoic ancient culture and bustling modern commerce than the **PRAÇA DO ROSSIO**. Shops and cafés surround its central fountain on gorgeous tiled streets. And the drinks—go for a bica (a tiny shot of strong black coffee) or a ginja (cherry liqueur)—are worthy of the Marques de Pombal, who rebuilt the city after an earthquake in 1755 and now stands high above the square.

SAKE MADE SIMPLE

75 Philip Harper, gaijin, certified master sake brewer, and Osaka resident, makes learning about sake both easy and rewarding with his witty, thorough **THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO SAKÉ** (Kodansha International, 1998).



SOFTTEST Kitchen Essential

76 KITCHEN TOWELS may not be glamorous, but we wear them and use them with pride—wiping counters, drying dishes, picking up hot pots; they work hard, and the best grow more beautiful with age.