

GREAT CHEFS OF BOSTON

Hamersley's Lobster Risotto

By **Clint Hamblin**

Back in 1987, way before the South End earned its reputation as a dining destination, Gordon Hamersley had the vision, optimism and talent to conceive and open Hamersley's Bistro. "Back in those days, there were very few restaurants in this neighborhood," Hamersley remembered.

Located at 553 Tremont Street, this award-winning restaurant has become a Boston landmark serving simple and hearty French/American-style food conceived and often cooked by Hamersley himself.

The center-placed open kitchen reveals several well-choreographed chefs flipping pans, tossing salads and producing elegantly delicious peasant-like cuisine that, as the saying goes, "sticks to your ribs."

Dinner began with a Bacon, Egg and Blue Cheese Salad with Bibb Lettuce and Creamy Lemon Dressing. The great taste of bacon and eggs is a compelling combination by itself but adding blue cheese and lemon amplifies these simple and basic complementary tastes preparing you for more of Hamersley's outstanding culinary creations.

Fennel Dusted Seared Scallops with Braised Leeks, Pickled Pumpkin and Cider Vinaigrette will please your palate as you bite into the barely cooked scallop. The light fennel taste doesn't overpower the

clean and milky taste of the scallop. Every bite of this dish will command your attention until it is completely gone.

The Halibut and Clam Roast with Bacon Braised Greens, Big White Beans and Black Trumpet Mushrooms featured a perfectly cooked piece of halibut fish surrounded by massive white beans you may want to cut with a knife.

When was the last time you had rabbit? Most people believe this furry little creature tastes like chicken but Hamersley's Rabbit Braised in Pinot Noir with Wild Mushrooms, Bacon and Pearl Onions is hearty and unique and tastes nothing like chicken. The cooked kale, carrots and pearl onions feel like a stew with the moist rabbit almost flaking at the touch of a fork.

Our knowledgeable waiter, Larry, brought a Cranberry-Pear Tart with Ginger Infused Whipped Cream. He also brought Warm Apple Fritters with Brown Sugar Custard Sauce and Calvados Ice Cream. These great combinations of flavors were all beautifully plated and all gone in the blink of an eye.

Lobster and Fennel Risotto with Parmesan Cheese was truly extraordinary. Big chunks of sweet, red lobster found its way in between each grain of the risotto. Served as a warm appetizer, Hamersley's Lobster Risotto is a simple to make dish that will stand out at any dinner party.



Lobster Risotto

Hamersley's Bistro's Lobster and Fennel Risotto with Parmesan (Serves 4)

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups Arborio rice
- 1 bulb of fennel, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 3 shallots, peeled and minced
- 1 teaspoon thyme and marjoram
- 1 cup white wine
- 5-6 cups lobster stock (substitute clam or chicken stock)
- 2-3 cups cooked lobster meat, cut into 2-inch chunks
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 3-4 tablespoons Parmesan cheese

Preparation

Heat olive oil and 2 tablespoons unsalted butter in a large sauté pan until the butter turns nutty brown. Add the fennel, garlic and shallots and stir to combine. Cook over medium heat for three or five minutes. Add the Arborio rice and stir to combine.

In a separate pan, bring the wine to a boil with the stock.

Add 1 cup of the stock to the rice. Stir the rice over medium-high heat using slow and long strokes of a wooden spoon that has a squared off top. Stir until the stock has been absorbed into the rice. Continue adding the stock to the rice in this manner until all the stock has been used up.

Toward the end of the cooking, add salt

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