

Newsletter – Spring 2015

First Call for Lamb!

For the first time in many years, Spring finds Dunhill Ranch with plenty of grass for the sheep. The combination of excellent summer rains, a reduction in the rodent population, and the addition of adjacent leased lands will allow us to have a larger flock this year.

We will still be practicing targeted grazing with shepherds, dogs, and horses in order to maintain the health of the land, but for the first time in a long time, large portions of our land need extra grazing.



Roast Lamb w/ Potatoes – Photo by Jeremy Noble

Last year, we were very disappointed that we sold out early and some of our customers missed out on lamb due to our small flock size. This year, we hope to have enough lamb for everyone. Even so, please make your reservations for lamb as soon as possible. It always helps us to know in advance when and how many lambs we have to deliver. Reserving lamb does not require a deposit. Information on all our products and prices can be found at <http://www.dunhillranch.com/ordering.html>

You can e-mail your reservations to sales@dunhillranch.com or call us at 575-

854-2847. Please remember to include your phone number in your e-mail so we can call you when your lamb becomes available.

Jennifer James 101

Nestled in a wilderness of strip malls on Menaul Blvd in Albuquerque is an oasis in the desert: the restaurant Jennifer James 101. Entering from the street, you are often greeted by one of the owners and chefs, Nelle Bauer and Jennifer James. As soon as the door closes, you are soothed by an inviting, contemporary space where conversation is easy, the staff is attentive, and the food is delicious.



Simplicity is at the heart of Jennifer James 101

For several years now (generally in the fall and winter), Jennifer and Nelle have featured Dunhill Ranch lamb at JJ101. We have had dinner there whenever we can get an evening away from the ranch, and have always been impressed. Clean, simple dishes, using the freshest possible ingredients, expertly prepared and served in an contemporary, informal atmosphere that

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Sicilian Lamb with Braised Vegetables

This is a Southern Italian recipe for pungent ground lamb in a mild red sauce. It was adapted from a recipe out of [Bon Appetit](#) magazine. It's great with a nice bottle of wine.

If you have polenta around the kitchen, you probably don't need me to tell you how to make it. If not, I have included instructions for making an approximation with corn meal. If you don't like polenta or corn-meal, you can serve this dish over any type of pasta. You can substitute grated Parmesan or Romano cheese for the Pecorino if necessary. Serves 4.

Ingredients for Lamb

½ cup fresh breadcrumbs, no crusts, chopped
¼ cup water
1 pound ground lamb
½ cup shredded pecorino cheese
1 large egg, beaten
1 Tbs chopped fresh mint (or 1 tsp dry)
1 Tbs chopped fresh oregano (or 1 tsp dry)
½ tsp coarse salt
½ tsp ground black pepper
¼ tsp cayenne pepper
¼ tsp ground cinnamon

Ingredients for Vegetable Mixture

1 lb eggplant, unpeeled, cut into ¾" cubes
6 Tbs olive oil
Coarse salt and black pepper
1 red bell pepper, cut into 2 ½" x ½" strips
1 cup finely chopped onion
1½ cups dry white wine
3 large garlic cloves, minced
28 oz chopped tomatoes with their juice
2 tsp chopped fresh oregano (or ¾ tsp dry)

Ingredients for Polenta

4 cups water
1 tsp salt
2 Tbs olive oil
1 cup yellow corn meal
½ cup shredded pecorino cheese

More cheese and chopped parsley for garnish.

Technique

1. Roast the eggplant. Preheat your oven to 400°F. Combine cubed eggplant and 4 Tbs oil in a large bowl and toss to coat. Spread eggplant out on a heavy baking sheet; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake 15 minutes. Turn eggplant over and bake until soft and slightly brown, about 15 minutes longer.

2. Prepare the lamb. While the eggplant bakes, combine the breadcrumbs and water in a large bowl. Soak for 5 minutes, then squeeze all the water from the crumbs and discard the water. Then add the lamb and remaining ingredients, mixing thoroughly with a fork. Shape into 8 patties, each about 2½ inches long and ¾ inch thick.

3. Sauté the lamb and peppers. Heat 1 Tbs oil in a large, deep skillet over medium-high heat. Add lamb patties and sauté until brown, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer patties to plate. Add pepper strips to the drippings in the skillet; sauté until beginning to soften, about 4 minutes. Transfer peppers to plate with lamb.

3. Make the sauce. Reduce skillet heat to medium. Add 1 Tbs olive oil and chopped onion. Cook until the onion is soft, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook for another minute. Add wine and cook on high, scraping up browned bits, until wine is reduced to glaze, about 7 minutes. Return lamb and bell pepper to skillet; add eggplant, tomatoes, and oregano. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and simmer until the lamb is cooked through and vegetables are tender, about 12 minutes. If sauce is thin, simmer uncovered until it thickens. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

5) Make the polenta and serve. Bring water and salt to a boil in large saucepan over medium-high heat. Gradually whisk in corn meal. Reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer until polenta is very thick, whisking often, about 5-10 minutes. Stir in the olive oil and cheese just about a minute before serving.

Spoon the polenta into shallow bowls. Top with lamb and vegetables. Sprinkle with additional cheese and chopped parsley.

Roasted Lamb Koftas with Vegetables

Traditionally, koftas are grilled on a fire and while vegetables can be grilled too with delicious results, but it is quite challenging to get everything to finish cooking at the same time, to say nothing of dropping your lamb into the coals or burning your vegetables while you wait for the lamb to finish.

I got so frustrated with these problems that I created this recipe and dedicate it to all those who love lamb but have trouble with timing.

Serves 4.

Ingredients – for the koftas

1 lb ground lamb
4 cloves garlic, minced
½ tsp salt
3 Tbs grated onion
3 Tbs fresh parsley, chopped
1 Tbs ground coriander
1 tsp ground cumin
½ Tbs ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground allspice
¼ tsp cayenne pepper
¼ tsp ground ginger
¼ tsp ground black pepper

Other Ingredients

Olive Oil
1½ lb mixed vegetables (onions, eggplant, peppers, carrots, squash)
1½ cup rice
3½ cups chicken broth

Technique

1. Mash the garlic into a paste with the salt using a mortar and pestle or the flat side of a chef's knife on your cutting board. Then, in a small bowl, using a fork, mix the lamb along with the garlic, onion, parsley, and spices until well blended. Form the mixture into 16 balls and place on a small, oiled roasting pan.
2. Pre-heat your oven's broiler, setting the top-most rack about 6" below the broiler element.
3. Chop the mixed vegetables into large (about 1¼") chunks. Toss them with olive oil and

spread on another small, oiled roasting pan.

4. Put the rice in a pot, add just enough olive oil to coat the grains and heat on high for 30-60 seconds stirring often. Don't let the rice brown. Quickly add the chicken broth. Bring to a boil and then cover and simmer on low until all liquid absorbed (about 20 minutes)

5. Broil the vegetables on the top rack for 10 minutes, then turn them over with a spatula and give them another 10 minutes. About 7 minutes before the vegetables are done, put the lamb under the broiler (top rack again). If this all works as it does in my kitchen, the lamb, rice, and vegetables will all be done at the same time. Serve immediately.

Dunhill Ranch Goes Solar

Located near Magdalena NM, Dunhill Ranch gets a lot of sunshine-- almost half of the days in the year have blue skies. For many years we have wanted to install a solar electric system, but every time that we added up the cost, we could not afford one.

Last year however, the combination of a little more free cash, generous tax and electricity generation incentives, and a dramatic drop in the cost of solar panels allowed us to install a modest-size system. We are still hooked up to the electric grid, but on average, we generate as much power as we use each day. In addition, the system is maintenance free!

We are thrilled each time that we get a negative electricity bill, not only because of the monetary savings, but because it's a tangible reminder of the many benefits of sustainable ranching.



Jennifer James 101- Contd.

makes dining a joy. The food is so flavorful and unpretentious that we wondered how Jennifer and Nelle manage to produce such great food night after night, week after week, year after year. We recently met up with them on one of their days off and talked to them about JJ101.



A relaxing place to talk, dine, enjoy life

We mentioned to them how different JJ101 seemed to us and wondered what they thought set it apart from other restaurants. "Simplicity", replied Jennifer firmly. "Good food can be complex, but the complexity is in the simplicity; using high quality, fresh, local ingredients, so that the food speaks for itself. Seasonality drives our menu and good quality ingredients, well prepared, can stand on their own. It's a very basic approach to food."

Is that where the "101" in their name comes from? "Well, yes. It's about back-to-basics, hands-on techniques, experimenting and having a constant learning approach to our food, our space, and our service."

Does this simplicity extends to other areas of the operation? "Absolutely", replied Nelle. "The fact that we have a small space, a small staff, and a very small open kitchen means that we have to have orderly and meticulous routines that ensure quality without chaos. Our kitchen isn't like "Hell's Kitchen" with everyone shouting and pots clanging. Sometimes we'll go a whole evening, with

both of us working side-by-side in the kitchen saying barely a word to each other, but, at the same time, we know that everything is being done properly. That way, we can enjoy cooking while still keeping an eye on everything else that happens in the restaurant."



The kitchen at JJ101. Very small, very clean

Isn't it difficult being the owners, managers, chefs, and hosts all at one time? "Sure, but with all the responsibility comes a lot of freedom. We both have a strong work ethic and are constantly trying to make sure that we have done our best for each person dining at the restaurant. That means lots of long days and nights working, but we also have the ability to adapt our menus, try out new ideas, and experiment with what's available seasonally, sometimes at the last minute. That makes it fun to cook, it keeps our menu varied and interesting, and it brings customers back."

Is it tough dealing with the notoriously variable nature of waiters and waitresses? "We've been really lucky, actually", said Nelle. "We first opened on Earth Day in 2008, and we had all our staff ready a week ahead of time. I think that most of them stayed 5 or 6 years. I'm not sure that we've ever actually had to fire anyone. One critical job our wait staff have to do (and they do well) is explain our ever-changing menu since sometimes we will get some fantastic but limited new ingredient offered to us by a

local farmer that we want to incorporate into a special that evening."



Chefs, owners, managers, hosts - Nelle and Jennifer do it all

Because this is a lamb newsletter, we, of course, had to ask Nelle and Jennifer if they have any tips for cooking lamb for folks at home. "The most important thing is to have a nice piece of lamb and the basic knowledge about how that cut is best cooked and what temperature brings out the best in that cut", said Jennifer. "I really love lamb shoulder, and that's always best as a slow braise, like in a crockpot. On the other hand, if you have some nice chops, first learn how to grill them plain, maybe just a bit of pepper and salt, till they are medium-rare or at most medium, but remember that a lamb chop does not respond well beyond medium. If you don't like meat medium or medium rare, try a different cut that corresponds better to your taste rather than trying to make chops work for you. It's really important to start with simple methods, perfect the basics and then branch out and experiment. Once you can grill that chop to perfection with salt and pepper, try it with a little rosemary butter or garlic. Take simple ingredients, try them out, and build on your experience. Again, it's the basics that count, knowing what you can and can't do with various cuts of lamb."

It's quite amazing to us that such a simple concept-- "back-to-basics"-- can be regularly applied to achieve such outstanding results. From the simple elegance of JJ101's décor, to the prominence of fresh local foods, to the lack of computers and beeping kitchen equipment, Jennifer and Nelle have created a restaurant that can be appreciated over and over again.

Jennifer James 101 is located at 4615 Menaul Blvd, NE Albuquerque NM. It is open for dining by reservation, Tuesday through Saturday 5-9pm. Call 505-884-3860 for reservations. In addition to their regular menu options, on Thursdays Jennifer and Nelle offer the \$25 dinner, which is a fixed price three course dinner available by prior request. To get a map, or see their current menu, visit their web site at www.jenniferjames101.com

Looking Forward...



We hope that this summer will be as nice as 2014.