

READING EAGLE

La Caja China Pig Roaster

Shop For Top Quality BBQ Grills! Best Roasters, Accessories, Recipes

Originally Published: 1/29/2014

Berks pig stars in meal honoring the patron saint of swineherds

Berks County pig stars in special meal honoring the patron saint of swineherds.

By **Monica von Dobeneck**
Reading Eagle Correspondent [Like](#) [Share](#) 4 people like this.

A special pig raised on a Berks County farm was the star of a fancy meal in Philadelphia yesterday honoring the patron saint of swine herders.

Chef Chris Painter of il Pittore, one of Philadelphia's finest Italian restaurants, used every part of the pig raised at Country Time Farm in Hamburg for his five course dinner. It celebrated La Festa di Sant' Antonio Abate, a traditional feast held every January in Italy.

The pig is a breed called, descriptively but not terribly originally, "Large Black Hog." It is a rare heritage type of hog originally bred in England, where it was called Devon or Cornwall. Large Black Hogs have a sweet, slightly nutty flavor, Painter said.

"It's the best pork we could find," he said.

Farm owners Paul and Ember Crivellaro raise about 200 heritage hogs organically on their 55-acre farm, and supply some of Philadelphia's upscale restaurants with premium cuts of meat. Aside from Large Black Hogs, they also breed Gloucestershire Old Spots and, soon, an American heritage hog called the Hereford. There are only a few breeders in the country.

The heritage pigs have more fat than the type of pork most people buy at the grocery store, which gives them more flavor, Crivellaro said.

His hogs are raised organically, with a vegetarian diet, no hormones, and no antibiotics. They are free to roam their shaded, 10-acre pasture with the other pigs, and can wander into shelters bedded with straw to get out of the weather.

The are docile and friendly, he said.

"They are like little kittens or puppies, they like to be petted," he said. "They are raised with a lot of loving care."

Crivellaro was raised on a dairy farm near Easton that was taken over by I-78. He bought his Hamburg farm about 20 years ago and started raising pigs.

He almost lost his farm when the bottom fell out of the market for hogs in the mid 1990s, he said. But after he made contact with a professor at St. Joseph's University whose students were trying to connect farms with restaurants, business blossomed.

The market for local, organically produced food has exploded, he said. His farm also supplies health food stores and goes to the Phoenixville Farmers Market every Saturday.

"People are getting tired of supermarket meat," he said. "Supermarket pork today has no flavor."

[+] Enlarge. (3 pictures) -



Courtesy of il Pittore
Chef Chris Painter presented a special, five-course pork dinner Tuesday at his Philadelphia restaurant il Pittore, using a pig from Country Time Farm, an all-natural pork farm in Hamburg. The dinner celebrated a traditional feast in Italy, La Festa di Sant'Antonio Abate, held each January to mark the life of the patron saint of swine herdsmen.



SEARCH READINGEAGLE.COM

THE OFFICIAL NIKE NFL LIMITED JERSEY

SUIT UP FOR PLAYOFFS

SHOP NIKE.COM

FREE SHIPPING ON ORDERS \$75+

Upcoming Events ▶

Listen to WEEU Live!

WEEU

Download Apple App
 Download Android App

Find us on Facebook

Reading Eagle
Like

24,871 people like Reading Eagle.

Facebook social plugin

Purchase Daily Photos

He cited consumer concerns about hormones, recalls and the increasing importation of food produced in China, where there are fewer regulations.

"People feel a commitment to their local farmers," he said.

The pig raised for chef Painter's table was about six months old, and weighed about 300 pounds.

Painter said he got the idea of a whole hog meal at a wine tasting with Federico Dall'Olmo, a native of Bologna who supplied the wine pairings for the five course dinner.

Dall'Olmo told him about Saint Antonio, the Italian patron saint of swine, and the tradition of basing a dinner on "the whole hog."

No part of that Large Black Hog went to waste.

Meat from the head was combined with diced apples and black truffles, strained through a cheesecloth and served cold.

Shoulder meat sausage was combined with clams and pasta to create a type of ravioli.

Belly meat was rolled into something like a roulade.

Leg meat was diced small and combined with vegetables and wine to make a ragu.

Roasted pork loin was combined with a custard made of jowl meat and black truffles.

Dessert did not involve a pig, Painter said. He could only take the theme so far. Instead, it was a hazelnut torte and lemon gelato.

At a price of \$130 per person, Painter expected to attract about 30 of his loyal customers, and leave the rest of the 88 seat restaurant on Rittenhouse Square for those desiring the regular

menu. However, within 24 hours of advertising the whole pig dinner, 60 people made reservations, he said. The restaurant opened only for the special meal.

Crivellaro said he has supplied whole hog dinners to other restaurants before, and the trend is growing.

"They don't mind spending extra for local," he said. "People want to know where their food comes from."

Painter said this is the first time he tried it.

The restaurant staff was excited, he said. They started carving the pig a few days ahead of time, and it took a couple of days to prepare the dishes.

Such theme meals keep restaurants fresh and reward regular guests, Painter said.

"It gives us a great outlet for our creativity," he said. "It's a lot of work, but it's worth it."

Contact Monica von Dobeneck: 610-371-5025 or country@readingeagle.com.



Daily photos from 1/13/2015 Daily photos from 1/12/2015 De from



 **InHome Oxygen**
Medical Equipment

Oxygen, Canes & Walkers
Bath Aides, Lift Chairs & Wheelchairs
103 Lancaster Ave, Reading, PA - 610.929.2004

■ Editorial

- News
- Money
- Sports
- Berks GameDay
- Life
- Voices
- Business Weekly
- Berks Country
- Weekend
- Opinion

■ Content

- Columnists
- Blogs
- eEdition
- Archives
- Calendar
- TVTimes
- Special Sections

■ Marketplace

- BIGdeal\$
- Classified Directory
- Find A Job
- Find A Car
- Find A Rental
- Find A Home
- Find A Date
- Find Merchandise
- Celebrations
- Reader Rewards

■ Services

- Contact Us
- Subscriber Services
- FAQs
- Advertise With Us
- Lottery
- Feedback
- User Submissions
- Newspaper In Education
- Internet Directory

■ Follow Us

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- Tumblr
- Google+
- Mobile
- RSS
- Alerts

- Obituaries

- Reading Eagle Store
- Reproductions



Reading Eagle Company

345 Penn Street . Reading . PA . 19603 . 610.371.5000

[Contact us](#) | [Archives](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Privacy policy](#) | [Advertise with us](#)

©2013-2014 Reading Eagle Company, All Rights Reserved - These links are not endorsements of any products or services in such sites , and no information in such site has been endorsed or approved by this site.