Chef’s Log 16 November 2008
Wife-Away Jerk Rubbed Veal Chops

The central premise behind tonight’s dinner would have been a non-starter at a cooking school or a restaurant, and it would have been a non-starter if I had not been alone for the weekend: I like veal chops; I like the super-hot dry Jamaican Jerk rub I have prepared with dundicut peppers, so how could the combination be bad? Any normal foodie would have objected, because the heat of the rub was sure to overpower the subtle flavors of the veal. “Balance? Balance? We don’t need no stinkin’ balance!” It was great. The sub-plots worked fine, and the critics would not have protested, once they saw I was going to go through with a jerk rub on the veal: (1) oven roasted onions and potatoes with a touch of Pain is Good spicy Con Queso dip as a sauce (sort of potatoes au gratin with pain) and (2) grape tomatoes with a touch of garlic artichoke salsa. I’ve wondered about the case of South Hampton Publick House Special Reserve 10th Anniversary Ale that has been in the basement for over a year. The label was so unimpressive that I’ve hesitated to serve the beer to company, but I have been curious to see how it aged. So I guess (3) doubts about the aging of the South Hampton 10th was the final sub-plot.
The chop looked great when it hit the grill, with the vivid greens and reds of the rub contrasting with the pale meat of the chop. As the chop charred and the rub blackened it became visually striking in different ways.

The chop looked even better on the plate, flanked by the tomatoes, potatoes, and beer. The tomatoes and potatoes were complemented wonderfully by their sauces. Perhaps the beer was the surprising highlight of dinner, because of the unanticipated and wonderful way the South Hampton had aged, with notes of spice, dried fruits, and yeast. It was delightful.

I did my best to demolish the veal chop and the beer, with only mixed success.
Like Ed Marinaro on Cornell Football in 1971, the Voss knew that it wasn’t really in the play. On the rare occasions that Cornell attempted a pass, Marinaro never moved from his position in the backfield, since he knew that the pass would be dropped, the line of scrimmage would remain unchanged, and he would get the handoff on the next play. Likewise, the Voss knew that it might play some part at breakfast or lunch, but it was not in the game tonight. It did not move. The seal on the bottle was not broken.

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