Chef’s Log 9 October 2011

Pork! Pork!! Pork!!!
(That is — No More Chicken)

I have honored guests coming to dinner and I could not stand the idea of serving them, or myself, chicken one more time. Yes, my docs have instructed me to eat more chicken, or, more precisely, my docs have instructed me to eat less beef, and to eat beef less frequently, and to eat smaller portions of leaner beef when I do eat beef. All bad news. And, yes, chicken seemed like an appropriate alternative for a while. But I have had enough of eating chicken. Even the joys of photographing chicken and smoke have begun to pale.

I did use my new favorite wet rub, a Cambodian garlic ginger honey marinade, that I mostly do use on chicken. I was careful not to over-process the ingredients and not to reduce the ginger and garlic to a paste. I left an appropriate degree of *piece identity*. See the first photo, below.

This blog is more about *preparation*, rather than about the finished results. For example, the second photo to the right shows pork chops in the marinade, nicely sealed in Ziploc bags. Ziplocs are a marvelous invention. You can seal the meat in the marinade and leave it for days. As long as you turn it from time to time, everything is uniformly coated. After several days, actually, everything is uniformly and deeply flavored with ginger, garlic, honey, and fish sauce. This is a happy combination of flavors, and it becomes even more happy when the meat has received an aromatic smoking and then the surface is seared over high heat. And clean-up is easy. Just throw out the bags.

Jean’s plum cake is great when fully assembled, but it is perhaps photographically most interesting when the raw plums are covered with a thin layer of caramelized sugar. I love the spider-web thin strands of sugar that form when the hot melted sugar hits the colder air. Again, the focus is on preparation.

And we did need to eat something while waiting for the barbecue to finish. That’s what the cheese (5-year aged gouda and gorgonzola) and the chorizo sausage are for.
I love the way the smoke looks when the meat just starts cooking.

And I love the way the rack of pork looks when it finishes cooking.

And I love the way the pork looks when it is waiting for us to eat.
But yes, this was certainly too much food for the four of us who stayed for dinner!

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