

Hanna Winery – Christine Hanna,

President and author of “The Winemaker Cooks” (Chronicle Books/Sept. 2010)

Chris Hanna’s Rosemary-Crusted Standing Rib Roast with Bordeaux Gravy with Bordeaux Gravy and Sumptuous Herbed Popovers

This Christmas-dinner extravagance elicits oohs and aahs from everyone when it comes to the table. A simple rosemary, salt, and pepper paste is rubbed on the meat, which is roasted at high temperature to seal in the juices, then finished on lower heat. The drippings and roasting pan are saved to make the gravy and popovers.

This recipe serves 8, with leftovers. The meaty ribs, flavored with the rosemary paste, are wonderful the next day.

Serve with a luxuriant Bordeaux blend to stand up to the meat’s elegance. Our Hanna Bismark Mountain Vineyard Titan is a proprietary blend using all five Bordeaux varieties. The fruit is grown at our high elevation mountain vineyard on the Sonoma side of Mount Veeder.

Ingredients

- 1 standing beef rib roast, 7 to 8 lb/3.2 to 3.6 kg
- 2 tbsp finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 tbsp freshly cracked pepper
- 1 1/2 tbsp kosher salt
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Bordeaux Gravy

- Reserved roasting pan/tray, fat, and drippings from standing rib roast, above
- 1 cup Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot wine, or a Bordeaux blend
- 2 cups/480 ml good-quality beef stock
- 4 tbsp/55 g unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups/215 g chopped onions
- 1/4 cup/30 g Wondra flour

Salt and freshly ground pepper

Remove the roast from the refrigerator 1 hour before cooking in order to allow it to come to room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 450°F/230°C/gas 8. In a small bowl, combine the rosemary, pepper, salt, and oil to make a paste. Rub the paste all over the roast, including the rib side, then place the roast, bones side down, on a rack in a roasting pan/pan.

Roast the meat for 45 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 375°F/190°C/gas 5 and roast for another 45 minutes, or until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center of the meat registers 125°F/52°C for medium rare. The meat will continue cooking as it rests.

Transfer the roast to a carving board. Tent with aluminum foil and let rest for 20 minutes before carving. Reserve the roasting pan/tray to make the gravy. Pour the drippings through a fine-mesh sieve into a 4-cup/960-ml glass measure, then skim off the fat and reserve the fat and drippings.

For the gravy: Place the roasting pan/tray over two burners on the stove top and heat over medium heat. Add the wine and stock; stir to scrape up the browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Pour through a fine-mesh sieve into the defatted drippings.

In a large sauté pan melt the butter with 1/4 cup of the reserved beef fat. Reduce the heat to medium-low, add the onions, and sauté for 15 minutes, or until lightly browned.

Sprinkle the flour into the pan with the onions. Cook, whisking constantly, for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the drippings mixture and cook, whisking constantly, for 5 minutes, or until thickened. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Serves 8

Herbed Popovers

I've added add fresh herbs to my mother-in-law's recipe to update it a bit. While I like rosemary for the standing rib roast, thyme's more subtle flavor works best with the popovers. You don't need a popover pan, though your popovers will be taller if you use one. A nonstick muffin pan will do nicely. Just make sure it's truly nonstick. One year I used a brand new aluminum muffin pan and every single popover stuck to it like barnacles on a rock! Use a little fat from the drippings of your roast here to impart the most flavor.

- 1 1/2 cups/185 g all-purpose/plain flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 1 1/2 cups/360 ml milk at room temperature
- 3 large eggs at room temperature, beaten
- 1 tsp finely minced fresh thyme
- 1/4 cup reserved fat from Rosemary-Crusted Standing Rib Roast

Adjust an oven rack in the center of the oven. Preheat the oven to 425°F/220°C/gas 7. Sift the flour and salt into a large bowl. In a medium bowl, whisk together the butter, milk, eggs, and thyme. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients just until incorporated.

Add 1 teaspoon of reserved fat to each of 12 popover or muffin cups. Heat the pan in the oven until very hot, about 5 minutes.

Fill each cup half full of batter and bake for 30 minutes, or until puffed and golden. Do not open the oven door or the popovers will fall.

Makes 12 popovers; serves 6 to 8

