

**Dates Trio "California Style"**  
**Roasted Butternut Squash Soup, Smoked Sea Salt  
and Dates**  
**Mini Duck-Date Tacos on Celery Rémoulade with  
Frisee Lettuce and Cojita Cheese**

2009 First Place Appetizer  
Herve Glin, Executive Chef  
The Cork Tree Restaurant,  
Palm Desert, CA



**A: Roasted Butternut Squash Soup, Smoked Sea Salt and Dates**

Serves 4

1 lb seedless butternut squash, peeled and seeded	8 oz cold butter
1 cup chopped onions	1/2 cup smoked bacon, diced
1/2 cup fresh fennel bulb, chopped	1 cup white wine
white ground pepper	1 tablespoon fresh tarragon, chopped
1 to 2 quarts chicken broth	1 teaspoon sea salt

*Composition:*

Place 2 oz of butter in large skillet, add bacon and onion / sauté with butternut squash until golden. Add fennel and white wine / reduce liquid by half / add chicken broth. Cook 1 hour on low setting / discard fat on top. Puree all in blender / add remaining cold butter / (option: add more stock if consistency is too thick). Strain / finish with white pepper and salt to taste

**Date Confit**

Mix 1 cup white balsamic vinegar with 1/3 cup honey and 1/2 cup chopped dates. Bring to boil / cook 4 minutes on low setting / allow to cool until needed.

*Presentation:*

Place soup into large shot glass / top with dates and tarragon  
Finish with smoked sea salt / add drop of extra virgin olive oil

**B: Mini Duck- Date Tacos on Celery Remoulade with Frisee Lettuce and Cojita Cheese**

Serves 4

**Mini Duck Tacos**

Wonton skins, fried	4 oz duck confit
1/2 cup frisee lettuce	2 oz crumbled Cojita cheese

**Celery Remoulade**

1 cup celery root, peeled "julienne" style

*Dressing:* Whisk 1 cup mayonnaise, 2 tablespoons whole grain mustard, 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard, 1 tablespoon lemon juice.  
Add salt and pepper to taste / toss celery and dressing

*Presentation:*

Fill taco shell half-way with celery remoulade / top each shell with warm duck and dates  
Top frisee salad with crumbled Cojita cheese  
Place teaspoon of Kefir cheese or sour cream, using as a "stand" for the taco

**Mini Romaine Salad, Toasted Date Brioche, Chipotle-Caesar Dressing**

*Composition:*

12 mini romaine heart leaves  
4 oz Caesar dressing with 1/3 chipotle pepper in adobo sauce, finely chopped  
4 pieces Manchego cheese, finely sliced  
1/2 cup dates, finely chopped and mixed with 2 oz butter

*Presentation:*

Spread date butter on Challah bread slices / bake 4 minutes at 350 degrees / create a hole in center using cookie cutter  
Place tossed salad inside / decorate with shaved Manchego cheese