



Sacramento chef Dane Blom says he enjoys working in a region that encompasses about 1.5 million acres of farmland.

Chef appreciates life in 'America's Farm-to-Fork Capital'

Dane Blom laughs when he recounts the menu his older daughter selected for her latest birthday.

"I'm like, what kind of kid am I raising that picks sushi and gelato at 7 years old?" he says with a mixture of humor and pride.

His two daughters—the younger is 3—are growing up in a household that encourages a taste of everything. Their proximity to one of the nation's most productive agricultural regions makes the quest easier—and more delicious.

"We have this luxury that no one else has in the rest of the country," Blom says.

He's speaking as a dad but also as executive chef of Grange Restaurant & Bar, one of Sacramento's best-known farm-to-fork destinations. The Sacramento native grew up in a family that frequented the neighborhood farm stand.

"We'd go get peppers and cucumbers and tomatoes and all these things. They were the best-tasting vegetables you could possibly have," he says. "It's a

real luxury we have here, just having access to these beautiful products."

Blom says he tries to purchase most of his fresh ingredients from within a 100-mile radius, a commitment that pays off. A coveted recommendation in the Michelin travel guide notes that Grange's menu "shares a farm-focused sensibility with rustic creations."

Being a chef, Blom says, is a "really crazy life" that involves significant sacrifice.

"But through all that, it is one of the most soul satisfying. You get instant gratification by seeing people eat your food and it just checks so many boxes for me. All the nights and weekends seem to not really matter when all those other things are so positive that it just helps override some things that could be seen as negatives.

"I am in love with my craft."

Barbara Arciero
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DIXON LAMB DAUBE with spring vegetables, local polenta and chimichurri

Serves 4

Blom says this is an easy way for home cooks to impress friends. "It's just a really soul-satisfying dish that's not too heavy, but it's still able to feed a crowd of people pretty easily."

Lamb daube

3 lb. lamb shoulder
Salt, to taste
Grapeseed oil, to taste
1 carrot, large dice
1 rib of celery, large dice
1 yellow onion, large dice
3 cloves garlic, smashed
1 (750-ml.) bottle red wine
2 quarts chicken stock

Polenta

4 cups water
1 cup course ground polenta
2 tbsp. mascarpone
1 tbsp. butter

Chimichurri

1/4 cup parsley
1/4 cup cilantro
1 bunch oregano
1 shallot, fine dice
1 red Fresno chili, fine dice
1/3 cup olive oil
1/3 cup red wine vinegar

Spring vegetables

2 tbsp. butter
2 tbsp. chicken stock
1/4 cup English peas, blanched
6 baby carrots, blanched
6 spears asparagus, blanched

For lamb: Season lamb with salt. Heat a pan with oil. Once smoking, add lamb and brown all the way around. Add carrots, celery, onion and garlic. Cook until golden brown. Deglaze with wine. Reduce by half. Add stock and bring to a boil. Put in a 375-degree oven until lamb is tender, about 90 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to rest. Once rested, remove lamb and set aside. Start reducing braising liquid. Once reduced by half and starting to thicken, strain and add to a new pan. Add lamb back in and start to glaze.

For polenta: Bring water to a boil and season with salt. Whisk in polenta. Turn heat down and allow to cook for 20 to 30 minutes, continuously stirring. Add mascarpone and butter to cream out. Set aside, covered, until ready to use.

For chimichurri: Chop parsley, cilantro and oregano together until finely minced. Add to a bowl. Add shallot, chili, olive oil and vinegar to the bowl as well. Season to taste with salt.

For vegetables: Add butter and stock to a pan. Bring to a simmer and allow to emulsify. Add vegetables to glaze.

To assemble: Place a spoonful of polenta in a bowl. Add glazed lamb on top. Place vegetables on top of that and dollop chimichurri on top.



PICKLED STRAWBERRY and spring pea salad

Serves 2

"The idea of pickled strawberries may have many people scratching their heads a little bit," Blom says with a laugh. "But I love pickled fruit and I think it's a great way to showcase strawberries."

Pickled strawberries

1 cup white balsamic vinegar
1 cup water
2 tbsp. sugar
2 tsp. salt
15 strawberries

Salad

1 cup English peas, blanchéd
1 cup snap peas, trimmed and blanchéd
1 cup snow peas, trimmed and blanchéd
1 shallot, fine dice

Goat cheese mousse

10 oz. goat cheese (*chevre*)
1/2 cup buttermilk
1 lemon, zested
1/2 bunch dill, chopped

1/2 cup pancetta, rendered crispy (fat drained off)
2 tbsp. Arbequina olive oil
1 tbsp. white balsamic vinegar

For strawberries: Add vinegar, water, sugar and salt to a pan. Bring to a boil and stir continuously until sugar is dissolved. Cool over an ice bath. Once cool, add over strawberries for a minimum of 1 hour and a maximum of 4 hours.

For mousse: Add goat cheese, buttermilk and lemon zest to a food processor. Process until smooth. Add dill and pulse until incorporated. Check for salt and adjust as necessary. Can be made 24 hours in advance.

For salad: Add peas, shallot and pancetta to a bowl. Add olive oil and vinegar. Season to taste with salt. Lay a nice layer of mousse on a plate. Place pea salad on top of that. Drain strawberries from pickling liquid and place strategically on top of salad. Feel free to garnish with pea shoots.



ASPARAGUS and wild arugula salad

Serves 2

After winter's muted tones, Blom says he enjoys the burst of color spring brings to his menus. Here's a delicious example.

Pickled red onions

1 cup white vinegar
1 cup water
2 tbsp. sugar
2 tsp. salt
1 tbsp. toasted coriander
2 red onions, cut into petals
1 bunch dill

Broken olive vinaigrette

1/4 cup chopped Kalamata olives
3 tbsp. olive juice
1/3 cup sherry vinegar
1/3 cup olive oil

Deviled eggs

6 large eggs
2 tbsp. mayonnaise
1 tbsp. Dijon

Salad

8 spears asparagus, blanchéd
1/4 cup arugula
1/4 oz. pickéd parsley
1/4 oz. pickéd dill
1/4 oz. chive batons

For onions: Bring vinegar, water, sugar and salt to a boil. Toast coriander on the side in a pan to release oils. Add to pickling liquid. Once everything is dissolved and heat is shut off, add onions and dill. Let cool in fridge. Can be made in advance (the longer it sits, the better it becomes).

For vinaigrette: Add everything to a bowl and mix. Check for salt and adjust if necessary.

For eggs: Bring water to a boil. Add room-temperature eggs into boiling water and set timer for 12 minutes. When timer goes off, add eggs to ice bath. Once cool, peel eggs. Split in half and scoop out yolks. Clean whites in a bowl of water and place on a damp towel until ready to use. Place yolks in food processor with mayonnaise and Dijon. Process until smooth. Season to taste with salt and place filling in a piping bag. Set aside until ready to use, then pipe yolk mixture into halves.

For salad: Lay asparagus on a plate side by side. Mix arugula with pickéd herbs and pickled onion and lay on top of asparagus. Drizzle with vinaigrette. Add a half of a deviled egg on each side of salad.

GRILLED HAM CHOP

with spring onion, garlic creamed farro and tobacco onions



Serves 2

Instead of brining a whole ham, how about brining a few pork chops? The result: "ham chops" perfect for headlining a spring menu!

Ham chop

1/2 gallon water
1 1/2 cups brown sugar
1/2 cup kosher salt
3 tsp. pink salt
2 double-cut pork chops
2 spring onions, tops and bottoms trimmed

Farro

1 cup farro
Grapeseed oil, to taste
1 yellow onion, small dice
3 cloves garlic, sliced
1 cup cream
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup Parmesan

Tobacco onions

1 large yellow onion
1 cup buttermilk
1 cup flour
1 cup cornstarch
1 tbsp. Old Bay Seasoning
1 tbsp. paprika
Salt, to taste

For ham chop: Add water, brown sugar and salts to a container. Stir vigorously with whisk until dissolved. Add chops and let sit for 4 to 6 hours. After brined, hot smoke at 225 degrees until cooked through, about 3 hours. Let rest until ready to grill.

For farro: Add farro to a pan with oil and toast. Once toasted, add onion and garlic and cook until soft. Add cream and water and turn heat on low. Cover and cook until tender. Add cheese to thicken.

For tobacco onions: Slice onion on mandolin and soak in buttermilk. Mix all dry ingredients together. Strain onions from buttermilk and dredge in flour mix. Fry in 350-degree oil until golden brown. Drain on paper towel and season with salt.

To assemble: Grill pork chop for color. Set aside. Add spring onions on grill to cook through (some char is OK). Place farro on a plate. Slice ham chop and lay on farro. Place spring onion over ham chop and top with tobacco onions.

WATSONVILLE STRAWBERRIES and sabayon

Serves 3 to 4

This dish, which Blom calls his "favorite dessert of all time," is an easy-to-make showstopper. At home, the chef often serves it over pound cake.

Sabayon

6 egg yolks
1/2 cup sugar
2 tbsp. marsala

Strawberries

15 strawberries, stems removed and halved
2 tbsp. sugar

For sabayon: Place egg yolks over double boiler. Whisk vigorously, pulling yolks on and off heat and being careful not to scramble. Once doubled in volume, add sugar and keep whisking until pale yellow in color. Add marsala and pull off heat. Store someplace warm.

To serve: Toss strawberries in sugar and add to a bowl. Top with sabayon and serve.

