Handbook of Molecular Gastronomy
Scientific Foundations, Educational Practices, and Culinary Applications
Róisín M. Burke, Alan L. Kelly, Christophe Lavelle, Hervé This vo Kientza

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Publication details
Julien Binz
Published online on: 09 Jun 2021

How to cite: Julien Binz. 09 Jun 2021, A Note by Note Macaron from: Handbook of Molecular Gastronomy, Scientific Foundations, Educational Practices, and Culinary Applications CRC Press
Accessed on: 11 Oct 2023

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A Note by Note Macaron

Julien Binz
Restaurant Julien Binz, Ammerschwihr, Alsace, France

Ammerschwihr is a small village in the middle of an Alsace vineyard, located between France and Germany. Here, a restaurant was created in December 2015: the culinary style is modern, but based on traditional and seasonal products. For example, the egg + green asparagus, with truffle foam, the lobster with Gruyère cheese broth, the sea bass with a sauce bouillabaisse and the modernized chestnut torch are now signature dishes.

In February 2018, a special event was organized: a 100% note by note dinner for paying customers, because I wanted to understand exactly what it was and to take my cooking in a new direction. Note by note cooking has been theorized for about 14 years but seldom practiced. I decided to make tests starting from scratch in order to make brand new dishes, and I wanted to invite my guests to do the same, as they were ready to eat entirely new dishes. I did not want to demonstrate that note by note dishes are “better”, but I wanted to show that one can make a dish in an entirely differently way. I wanted to show “dishes of the future” to my guests.

About two months of daily experimentation were needed to create this new menu (on top of the regular work at the restaurant); I now feel that with a research laboratory and a special dedicated team, the possibilities are huge. As there is no book entirely focused on note by note recipes today, I made systematic tests until I got satisfactory results. The menu that we served can still be improved, but we are proud to have made it, and this is why I accepted the idea of serving it to the guests of the restaurant. We are pleased to have contributed to this exciting enterprise.

For this menu, I used ingredients such as plant proteins from peas, milk proteins, egg proteins, polysaccharides such as agar-agar, maize starch (85% pure amylopectin), carrageenans, water, sucrose and glucose, but also various emulsifiers, choosing, of course, perfectly safe food ingredients.

For the odours, I used “evocations” from the Iqemusu company: these products are odorant compounds dissolved in organic oil. This is brand new, because the cook can now create his/her own flavour, based on the mixture of many odorant compounds, as perfumers create perfumes. Instead of using ready-made flavourings, one can make an infinite number of new flavours! And the word “evocation” deserves its name: for example, only one odorant compound is in the bottle called “Amerise”, corresponding to the evocation of cherry and almond. Some of the Iqemusu “evocations” are wonderful, such as Frum (liquor, fruity, rum), Mapo (cacao, plant, fruit) or Chapre (goat cheese, leather, fat). Today, more than 30 “evocations” are available, and the number of possible odorant compounds is in the tens of thousands; this is exciting. For my menu, I used about 15 different odorant compounds. And I want to thank the Groupement d’études des protéines végétales, and the Ingredia Company, for providing me with proteins.

Note by Note Cooking Can Teach a Lot

I love fresh food ingredients, and our restaurant will not change entirely. Of course, the new techniques that were used for this exceptional dinner will be further used in some other recipes … because they are so good. And we shall use the new techniques for making dishes when guests have allergies, for example. Last week, a lactose-intolerant guest was able to taste the “revisited egg”, and she was so happy, so surprised by the new textures and perfumes. This is another advantage of note by note cooking. Let us now consider the menu.

Evocation No. 1: Craquante (Figure 134.1)
This amylopectin crackling tuile, Kroepoeck and gel (evocation grilled rice/popcorn) sponge cake (evocation nut) was served with a Crémant d’Alsace from Q.V. Paul, Bott Frères.

Evocation No. 2: Voluptueuse
This sorbet (evocation beetroot) cloud (evocation almond/cherry) was served with a note by note cocktail.

Evocation No. 3: Cremeuse
In a shell, custard (evocation cheese/egg), siphon (evocation truffles/forest). In the plate, “evocation fried egg”: egg proteins, evocation grilled rice, gel evocation fenugreek/curry, yellow evocation hay/celery, grilled emulsion, served with a Riesling lieu-dit Scherwiller, Achillée, 2016.

Evocation No. 4: Fondante
Plant proteins, evocation smoke, carrot cellulose, veil of gel (evocation roasted chicken), emulsion (evocation mushroom/
forest), emulsion grilled bread, proteins croutons. Served with a Faugères, Cuvée Amour, Prés Lasses, 2015.

**Evocation No. 5: Aerienne**

This tuile of sucrose/white (evocation foamed, evocation caramel/strawberry jam), granite (evocation coconut/milk) was served with a Muscat, Grand Grand Cru Altenberg de Bergbieten, Mochel, 2015.

**Evocation No. 6: Moelleuse**

It included a guimauve (evocation cola-lemon), a “Bonbon ultime” and a macaron (evocation cucumber/pine tree).

Here, we give only one recipe, because the technique was entirely original: the final green macaron (Figure 134.2).

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**The Recipe for the Macaron**

For the basic gel, in the middle:

- 500 g water
- 3 sheets of gelatine
- 20 g glucose powder
- 20 g sugar (sucrose)
- xanthan gum (Louis François)
- 5 g agar-agar (Louis François)
- green colorant (“pistache”, Louis François)
- Evocation Cong (Iqemusu)
- Evocation Hertzton (Iqemusu)

Boil all the ingredients together for some minutes, add the colorant and the evocations. Let it cool until jellification. Mix in order to make a soft gel.

**Gelified slice in the middle:**

To the basic gel, add the Pine evocation (Iqemusu). Pour on a table to give a thickness of 3 mm; wait until you can cut disks.

**NbN macaron:**

- 294 g water
- 40 g egg white proteins
- 80 g sugar (sucrose)
- 1 g xanthan gum (one should be careful to test before use, because depending on the various brands, different results can be obtained)
- Green colorant (Louis François)

Whip all the ingredients until the consistency of a meringue is reached, put on Teflon and store in the dehydration machine for 4 h at 60 °C.

Of course, the flavour is difficult to explain … and the quantities of the various evocations are important, but difficult to describe in a recipe.