

## *crispy duck breasts w/pear & green peppercorn sauce*

700g boneless duck breast  
1 firm-ripe pear  
190ml apple juice  
1/2 teaspoon corn flour  
2 tablespoons Calvados or Armagnac  
1 tablespoon green peppercorns packed in brine, drained and crushed lightly  
1 tablespoon duck or veal demiglace or 1/2 extra-large vegetarian vegetable stock cube  
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves or 1/4 teaspoon dried, crumbled  
Garnish: fresh thyme sprigs

Trim excess fat from duck breasts. Heat a 30cm heavy skillet over high heat until very hot. Pat breasts dry and season with salt. Put breasts, skin sides down, in skillet and reduce heat to moderate. Cook breasts 20 minutes, or until skin is crisp and mahogany-colored, removing fat from skillet as it is rendered with a metal bulb baster (or very carefully pouring it off). Turn breasts and cook about 2 minutes for medium-rare or to desired doneness. Transfer breasts to a plate and keep warm, covered loosely.

While duck breasts are cooking, peel pear and cut into 6mm dice. Pour off all but about 1 tablespoon fat from skillet and sauté pear until lightly browned, about 1 minute. In a measuring cup stir together apple juice and corn flour. To pear add Calvados or Armagnac. Stir in corn flour mixture, peppercorns, demiglace or stock cube, and thyme and simmer, stirring, 2 minutes, or until slightly thickened.

Serve duck breasts, sliced, with sauce spooned over them and garnish with thyme sprigs. Serves 4.

**PAIR WITH** *Chrismont Shiraz 2005*

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