Charred Brussels Sprout Caesar

Serves a crowd · Holiday · Serves 6–8 as a side

Ken's note: TBD

Guanciale is ideal; pancetta, lardons, or bacon all work.

Ingredients

- 6 oz guanciale (or pancetta or bacon), cut into lardons
- 2 lb Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- 1 Tbsp maple syrup
- Black pepper
- Salt

Pecan-sourdough crumb

- 1 cup torn sourdough, in small pieces
- ½ cup pecans, roughly chopped
- 1 Tbsp of the rendered pork fat, or olive oil

Caesar dressing

- 3 anchovy fillets, or 1½–2 tsp anchovy paste
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 egg yolk, or ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil (about 3 Tbsp if using mayonnaise)
- ¼ cup finely grated Parmesan
- Black pepper
- Salt

Method

1. Render the guanciale in a wide, heavy skillet until crisp. Lift it out and keep the fat. In the same pan, over medium-high heat, char the sprouts cut-side down, in batches if needed, until well browned, then toss and cook until just tender. Drizzle in the maple and toss to glaze. Season with pepper.
2. For the crumb, toast the sourdough and pecans in a spoonful of the pork fat until the bread is crisp and the nuts smell roasted. Cool.
3. Mash the anchovy and garlic to a paste. Whisk in the yolk or mayonnaise, lemon juice, and Dijon, then the oil in a thin stream until the dressing is emulsified. Stir in the Parmesan and pepper. Taste and salt at the end.
4. In a large bowl, toss the sprouts with the dressing a little at a time — you can always add more. Add the crispy guanciale and most of the crumb, and finish with the rest of the crumb on top.