

Created by: Edward F. Nesta

## Chef Missy Robbins making Pasta Sauces - New York Culinary Experience

I made delectable pasta sauces with **Chef Missy Robbins** of restaurant [A Voce](#) as part of the fourth annual [New York Culinary Experience](#) hosted by [New York magazine](#) and [The International Culinary Center](#).

On April 28, 2012, I had the opportunity to mix, stir, and taste three different pasta sauces with renowned Chef Missy Robbins as part of the two-day New York Culinary Experience hosted by New York magazine and The International Culinary Center in New York. The class featured a red sauce and two white sauces, as well as tips, techniques, and some laughter, over the course of 2 hours and 15 minutes lead by Chef Missy Robbins and her Chef du Cuisine Hillary Sterling. To read the recipes and draw on the exact measurement of ingredients we used, please see [Chef Missy Robbin's recipes](#) in the [Chefs' Recipes](#) section.



**Chef du Cuisine Hillary Sterling and Chef Missy Robbins**

As Chef Robbins commented, when she has a craving for Italian food, she craves pasta with a tomato sauce. She noted her tomato sauce is simple, but it has many layers of flavors due to the type of tomatoes she uses, the olive oil, and spices, and that it satisfies her craving.

Chef Robbins talked how using fresh tomatoes yields a refreshing and tasty sauce. Thus, the start of the tomato sauce began with each student having a bowl of Chef Robbins favorite plum tomatoes ready to be hand crushed. We donned a pair of rubber gloves and proceeded to hand crush our tomatoes. The bowls were collected and poured into a collective [large] pot that Chef du Cuisine Hillary Sterling had put olive oil and garlic cloves into; the resultant mixture was then cooked down.

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### **Bowl of Fresh Plum Tomatoes to be Hand Squeezed**

The session was interspersed with a tête-à-tête between chefs as Chef Robbins handled the majority of the discussion with the attendees and Chef Sterling handled the stove, but each had the opportunity to drop a select bit of humor on the other's cooking style.

While we waited for the tomatoes to cook, both Chefs talked about their keen focus with regards to ingredients such as kosher salt, as they both are strong proponents of kosher salt over table salt, they have their special olive oils for cooking (regular olive oil) and for finishing a dish, extra virgin olive oil. They recommended that you select your olive oil by taste, not just blindly by recommendation, as each person's taste is different.



### **Edward Nesta and Chef Missy Robbins**

Concerning cooking pasta, both chefs use heavily salted water, which is taste tested numerous times throughout the day and adjusted with more water or more salt depending on the taste. Chef Sterling let me taste the pasta water, which invoked thoughts of when I scuba dive in the ocean and the taste of salt water.

When the tomatoes were cooked, each student received a bowl full of the cooked tomato and garlic mixture. The next step was for students to pass their bowl of tomatoes through the food mill, which I readily did. We poured the mixture in the food mill and slowly finished the crushing and mixing of the tomatoes and garlic. The bowls were collected and mixed together so that International Culinary Center students who were assisting the class could vacuum pack a quart jar for each student to take home with them.

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### **Edward Processing Tomatoes through Food Mill**

Next was Chef Robbin's variation on a white clam sauce, a sauce that I love to make at home, thus I was very interested in learning variations and techniques to make this sauce. To yield a sauce with more flavors, her sauce had lemon and chili flakes added, but the unique aspect of the sauce was in how the pasta was melded into the dish.

Chef Sterling was at the stove and she talked us through mixing the sauce with the clams, butter, thyme, white wine, olive oil, garlic, chili flakes, and some of the liquid from the clam preparation. The interesting step was to pull the pasta at about 70% done and put the pasta into the sauce mixture and slowly cook the sauce and the pasta together as you continually stir, or for Chef Sterling, flip the mixture in the pan, until the pasta is thoroughly cooked and the sauce has melded with the pasta. When you plate the pasta, you finish it with a squeeze of lemon and a sprinkle of parsley. The resultant Lemon, Chili, and Clam Sauce was out of this world, with multiple dishes being passed around, the sound of forks twirling in the plates echoed throughout the kitchen. I could not wait until I was back in my kitchen implementing some of the different ingredients and techniques to my favorite recipes.



### **Chef du Cuisine Hillary Sterling Flipping Pasta in Pan**

The interpretations on the different sauces were refreshing as we sometimes are caught up in familiarization and do not extend ourselves to try something different. As both chefs noted, they continually toss around ideas to enhance the menu and to keep up with the ever-growing requirement of their customers.

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### Lemon, Chili, and Clam Sauce

Read about other classes in the [Gastronomy](#) section and interviews and recipes from the other classes in the [Chefs' Recipes](#) section.

Visit **Luxury Experience's Facebook** page to listen to interviews with the chefs and see more photos from the event. [www.Facebook.com/LuxuryExperience](http://www.Facebook.com/LuxuryExperience)

To attend the **New YorkCulinary Experience 2013**, please visit the **New Yorkmagazine** website: [www.NYmag.com/nyce](http://www.NYmag.com/nyce).

Regarding taking classes throughout the year with the excellent chef instructors at **The International Culinary Center** at their New York, California, or Italian Campuses, please visit the website: [www.InternationalCulinaryCenter.com](http://www.InternationalCulinaryCenter.com).

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