

# Beef Wellington: It's what's for dinner



Laura Vaughan at Stafford's Pier Restaurant prepares vegetable Wellington.

Stafford's Pier Restaurant executive chef Laura Vaughan was schooled on the job.

The 42-year-old Harbor Springs resident and Stanford law school graduate said she didn't go to culinary school. Her connection to the kitchen began 14 years ago when she moved to Northern Michigan. She's been at the Pier for about 11 years.

**Favorite food:** Halibut — "I like that it's like a steak, but it's light and it's good for you."

**Favorite restaurant (other than theirs):** Sage, Odawa Casino Resort, Petoskey — "I like Sage because they're challenged as well (in the kitchen). They have to come up with new things."

## A little more about puff pastry

Puff pastry is made by putting butter on top of dough, folding, rolling, chilling and repeating until there are hundreds of layers. When it is heated, the thin layers of butter explode, creating crisp, puffed layers. It's key that puff pastry remained chilled until cooking, or it will not puff up.

Source: *Practically Edible*, www.practicallyedible.com

**Favorite kitchen utensil:** Fillet knife — "It's pretty versatile. It can cut anything. It's great for skinning fish."  
**Inspiration in the kitchen:** "I like the challenge. It's crazy, fun, new recipes every week."

## Beef or Vegetable Wellington

"I like that it's a beef tenderloin and we use all natural beef. I don't like that processed (beef)."

Laura Vaughan

## Make it a meal:

**Side:** Vegetables, possibly spaghetti squash or green beans  
**Wine:** Sterling Cabernet

## Beef Wellington with Morel Cream Sauce

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 6 fillet steaks, each 6 ounces and 1 1/2 inches thick
- 2 shallots, minced
- 1 pound mushrooms, finely chopped
- 4 tablespoons heavy cream
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 pounds puff pastry
- 1 egg lightly beaten with 1 tablespoon water to form an egg wash

1. Heat large skillet over high heat and melt 3 tablespoons butter. Sauté steaks for 30 seconds per side. Remove steaks and set aside to cool completely.
2. In same skillet over high heat, melt remaining 3 tablespoons butter. Add shallots and mushrooms. Sauté until all liquid from mushrooms evaporates. Add cream, season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat to medium and sauté until mixture forms a thick puree, 3-5 minutes. Transfer to bowl or plate to cool.
3. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
4. Divide pastry into six equal portions. On a lightly floured board, roll each portion to a rectangle 6-by-12 inches and 1/4 inch thick. Place a steak on

- one side of each pastry rectangle, leaving room to fold over.
5. Divide mushroom puree among steaks, spreading evenly on top. Brush edges of pastry with egg wash and fold pastry over meat, molding to the steak's contours and sealing edges by pressing. Trim excess pastry. Decoratively flute edges with fingertips or tines of a fork. Brush tops with egg wash.
6. Transfer packages to baking sheet or dish, and bake until pastry is golden brown, 15-20 minutes.

### Sauce:

- 1 ounce blended oil
- 5 ounces shallots, minced
- 4 cups white wine, reduced by 7/8
- 4 cups chicken stock, reduced by 2/3
- 3 quarts heavy cream
- 5 cups morels, soaked in water, halved
- 2 1/2 cups morel soak water, reduced by 3/4
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 5 turns fresh ground pepper

1. Heat oil in sauté pan until almost smoking. Add morels and sauté until lightly colored.



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1. Pour into strainer to remove excess oil.
2. In heavy bottom saucepan heat oil. Add minced shallots. Cook until tender but do not color. Meanwhile, reduce chicken stock by 2/3 in another pot.
3. Add white wine to shallots and reduce by 7/8 or until just about dry.

4. Add reduced chicken stock then heavy cream. Bring sauce to a boil, then turn down to simmer. Remove any scum that collects on the top.
5. Add morel water reduction. Simmer 10 minutes or so. Add drained morels. Simmer 10 minutes. Add salt and pepper. Yield 120 ounces.

## Vegetable Wellingtons with Honey Gorgonzola Cream Sauce

- 1 full puff pastry sheet
- 4 pounds baby spinach
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 pounds cremini mushrooms
- 1 shallot
- 1/8 cup cooking sherry
- 1 pound asparagus
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. Sauté spinach in 2 tablespoons butter until wilted. Drain; set aside and cool.
2. Grind mushrooms and shallots finely in food processor. In skillet over high heat melt 2 tablespoons unsalted butter. Add sherry and shallots and mushrooms. Cook until liquid from mushrooms evaporates. Set aside and cool.
3. Steam asparagus 5 minutes or until tender. Set aside and

- cool.
4. To assemble, lay out puff pastry sheet. Take spinach and lay flat on pastry covering the full square, leaving room to fold over. Repeat with mushroom-shallot mix. Place asparagus down the center and roll pastry into a round tube. Seal ends by folding over or pinch with fork.
5. Bake at 450 degrees until pastry is golden brown, 15-20 minutes. Cut pastry into 1 inch strips. Place on baby arugula if desired and drizzle with sauce.

### Sauce:

- 1 cup honey
- 2 ounces Gorgonzola
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream



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1. Chop Gorgonzola and put in sauce pan. Add honey and heavy whipping cream. Cook on medium heat, stirring oc-

2. casionally. Reduce to half. Put through a fine mesh sieve or cheesecloth.

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