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Blackberry Tart with Rose Geranium

Elisabeth Prueitt infuses her pastry cream with fragrant rose geranium leaves (found at Star Route Farms at the Saturday Ferry Plaza Farmers' Market) and sometimes lemon verbena. The pastry cream is also delicious with no infusion at all. Use your favorite recipe for a pre-baked, all-butter flaky tart dough. Makes one 9-inch tart.

- 2 cups whole milk
- 4 large fresh rose geranium leaves
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup butter, cubed
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream, whipped
- One 9-inch pre-baked tart shell
- 2 pints blackberries
- Powdered sugar for dusting

Heat the milk, fresh leaves and salt in a saucepan just to scalding (don't let it boil). Remove from the heat and remove the leaves. In a bowl, whisk the cornstarch and sugar, add the eggs and whisk until smooth. Slowly drizzle about half the hot milk into the egg mixture, whisking constantly. Pour the egg mixture back into the pot with the remaining milk and cook on medium heat, whisking constantly, until it thickens and coats the back of a wooden spoon. Let cool for 10 minutes, add the butter and whisk until smooth. Strain if lumpy.

Cool the pastry cream (it will be the consistency of pudding) and fold 2 cups of it into the whipped cream. Spread evenly into the pre-baked 9-inch tart shell. Top with blackberries to completely cover the filling. Using a sieve, dust with powdered sugar.

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What A Tart

When Tartine Bakery (600 Guerrero St., 415-487-2600) opened its doors on the corner of Guerrero and 18th street last summer, it was the icing on the cake. With Bi-Rite and Delfina just a few doors down, a little gourmet ghetto in the Mission was complete. No one seems to have a problem squeezing into the small space for owner Elisabeth Prueitt's just-out-of-the-oven almond croissants, stunning lemon tarts strewn with flowers and the out-of-the-world breads from her dishy husband, Chad Robertson. No rest for the weary. They've just built a wine bar (with a list offering bottles from Europe and California, including a few organic wines) that will serve pressed sandwiches to go. Sidewalk seating will be available on warm days. Our only question: How about a VIP room? x



SWEETIE PIE: (top) Just one of Prueitt's stunning summer tarts. (bottom) Robertson and Prueitt, the pastry power couple.