

## Sour-Cherry-Stuffed Duck Breasts with Thyme

*Paired with 2019 Fox Den Vineyard Pinot Noir*

- Four 1- to 1 1/4-pound whole boneless Muscovy duck breasts, skin scored in a crosshatch pattern
- Kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 small shallot, minced
- 1 cup dried sour cherries (6 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup finely chopped parsley
- 1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
- Freshly ground pepper

Lightly season the duck breasts all over with salt and set them skin side down on a large baking sheet. Refrigerate uncovered until the meat looks shiny, about 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a medium skillet, melt the butter. Add the shallot and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until just starting to brown, 4 minutes. Add the dried sour cherries and sugar and cook, stirring occasionally, until the sugar is dissolved and just starting to caramelize, 5 minutes. Add the vinegar and 1/4 cup of water and cook, stirring, until the liquid is absorbed, 3 minutes. Fold in the parsley and thyme and season the stuffing with salt and pepper. Let cool completely.

Preheat the oven to 400°. Set the duck skin side down on a work surface. Spread the cherry stuffing over the breasts evenly. Fold over one side of each breast to enclose the stuffing and tie them in 5 places with kitchen twine to make 4 neat roasts.

Heat a large ovenproof skillet. Season the roasts all over with pepper and cook over moderate heat, turning occasionally, until the skin is browned and nearly crisp, 10 to 12 minutes; spoon off the excess fat in the skillet as needed.

Transfer the skillet to the oven and roast the duck for about 12 minutes, until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of each breast registers 118° to 120°. Transfer the duck breasts to a carving board and let rest for 5 minutes. Snip off the kitchen twine. Thinly slice the roasts crosswise and serve.

### **Make Ahead**

The sour cherry stuffing can be refrigerated overnight. Bring to room temperature before using.

Makes 8-10 servings.