

SAVOUR

How to tame your game

Meat from the wild can offer an interesting alternative to everyday fare

BY JENNIFER BROWN
STAFF WRITER

The annual hunting trip was a huge success, now all you need are some creative suggestions on how to prepare the stock of moose roasts and venison steaks stored in the freezer.

Even though many hunters return home with little more than a tall tale, last year almost 300,000 moose and deer tags were issued in the province. That translates into a sizable amount of wild meat headed for kitchens across Ontario.

It also means many people are confronted with the question of how to cook the melange of wild game now occupying the freezer.

The variety of game available today includes grouse, pheasant, partridge, quail, hare, moose and venison.

Venison is the meat of antlered animals such as deer, moose, elk and caribou. It is delicate in texture and has a distinctive, slightly wild taste. It has a finer texture, much leaner, but more watery than beef.

Available in season, wild game birds and animals provide a unique alternative to usual grocery store fare.

Each year, patrons of Timber Creek Lodge in Markham wait patiently for the two-week annual Game Festival which features 10 menu items catering exclusively to the tastes of the wild.

From caribou osso bucco to venison steak, buffalo, game stew and

northern duck, the restaurant offers a variety of seasonal dishes.

"We get people asking us year-round when the game festival is," said Timber Creek manager Paul Dykeman.

For those who don't hunt but love the taste of game, it's a great way to sample something different.

But for anyone who hunts or receives a gift from a successful marksman, knowing how to cook a piece of game can often present a challenge.

■ Game recipes, page 17.

Mark Holmes of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (and connoisseur of a good moose roast) describes the experience.

"It's awesome. I roll it in extra virgin olive oil and slip slivers of garlic into small holes in the roast, sear the outside in a frying pan and put it in the oven."

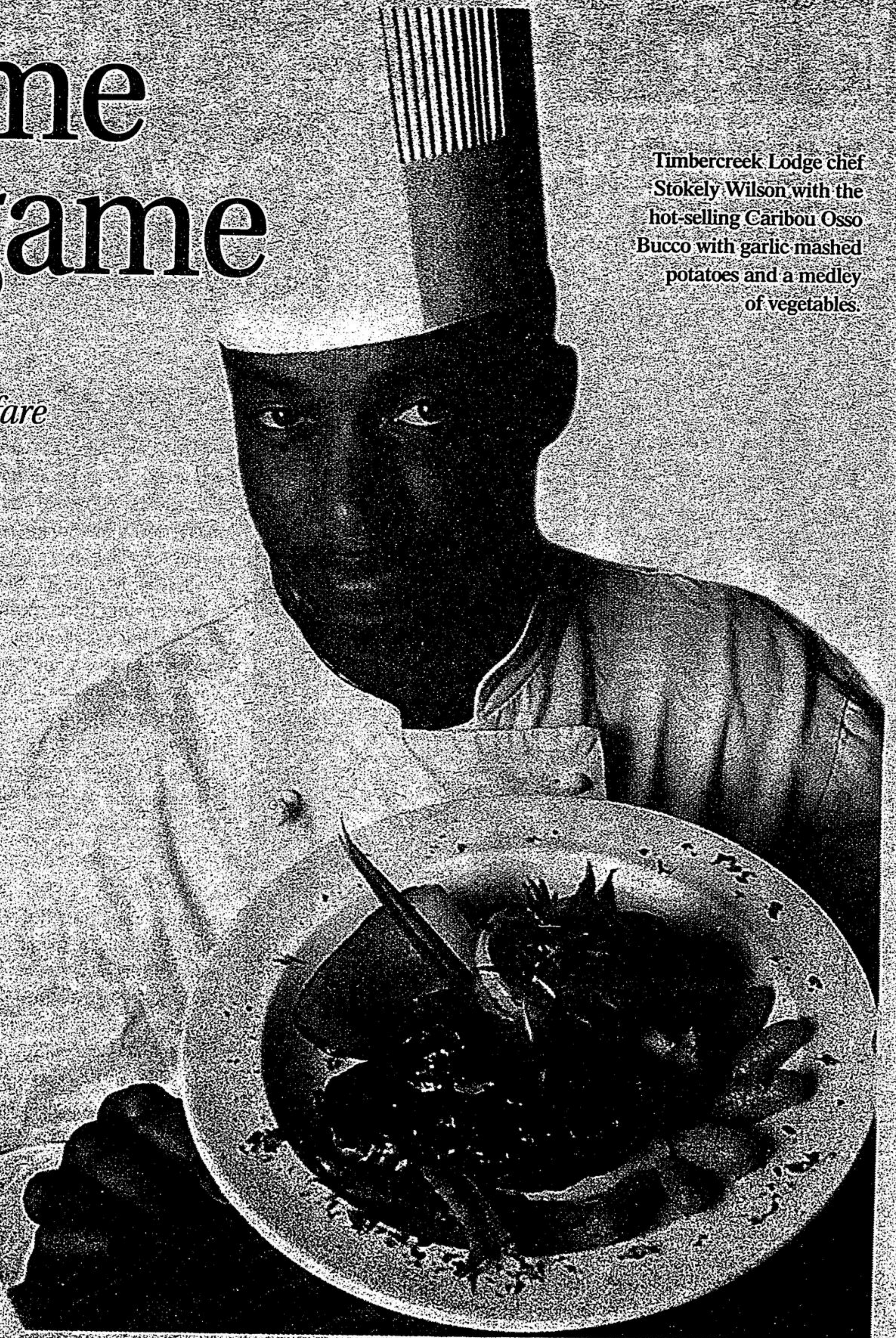
Newmarket resident and hunter Stephen Huntley has a similar recipe he says works well with venison and moose (see recipe section).

"I like it because it's a lot healthier to eat, for a lot of reasons. And it's not injected with food additives and hormones," said Huntley, vice-president of the OFAH Maple District branch.

With the current emphasis on a healthy diet, game is ideal as it is low in fat (under 10 per cent in most cases) and ideal for low-cholesterol diets. Wild meats are also frequently

See OVERCOOKING, page 17.

Timbercreek Lodge chef Stokely Wilson with the hot-selling Caribou Osso Bucco with garlic mashed potatoes and a medley of vegetables.



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