

NEW YORK POST

Belgian specialties are

By PIA NORDLINGER

Markt, the Belgian brasserie in Manhattan's Meatpacking District, boasts hundreds of beers and a vast menu of Belgian cuisine. But unless you're familiar with the variety of the brands, it can be a challenge to pair beer with food.

That's why Markt recently hosted Belgian celebrity chef Herwig Van Hove, who prepared a special four-course menu with matching beers. Among Van Hove's recipes was a salade Liegeoise, a tangy appetizer that will remain on the brasserie's menu.

The salad, which takes its name from the Belgian city of Liege, is composed of just green beans, potatoes and bacon.

"This is a rustic salad," says the



chef. "It's for a country lifestyle."

Even so, it's such a fast recipe to make, city folks can appreciate it, too. Start the potatoes boiling and you can prepare the rest of

the salad by the time they're cooked and ready to be sliced.

Van Hove, an ex-chemistry professor who hosts a cooking show on Belgian TV show, is skilled at

good for what ales you

combining beer with food.

"The beans, potatoes and bacon in this salad provide gentle tastes," he says, though the salad, he notes, has competing flavors — the smoky bacon and the sour vinegar.

Beer should be chosen accordingly.

"The complexity in the dish should match the complexity in the glass. A Stella Artois [a popular Belgian import] is too simple [for the multi-flavored salade Liegeoise]. You need something more complex, like a Leffe Blond," Van Hove says.

"The key to beer pairing," he explains, "is that you want the beer to taste better with the food than it does on its own, and vice versa."

When I tried this salad at home, I discarded too much of the bacon fat, which can give the salad a deep, meaty flavor. As a result, the dressing had a stronger vinegar taste than at the restaurant, where it was an ideal blend of sweet and sour.

Salade Liegeoise

(serves 4 as an appetizer)

2 pounds green beans	2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1 pound potatoes	2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 pound fresh bacon	1 tablespoon butter
1 cup red onion, sliced lengthwise	

1. Cut the bacon into 1/2-inch strips. Fry the bacon pieces until they are dry and crunchy. Drain off most of the bacon fat.
2. Deglaze the remaining fat in the frying pan with vinegar. Set the pan aside.
3. Boil the potatoes until almost completely cooked, and slice them into rounds.
4. Boil the green beans for about 2 minutes. Drain and plunge them into a cold-water bath.
5. Toss the beans and potatoes with onion and bacon.
6. Add the soy sauce and butter to the deglazed bacon fat in the pan. Pour over salad.
7. Serve at room temperature.