

# Time Out

## Chicago

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## At the market with Rick Gresh

The Primehouse chef kicks off our new weekly farmers'-market cooking column. Photographs by **Martha Williams**

It's only appropriate that Rick Gresh should kick off our new column with asparagus. Forget what you've heard about ramps—asparagus is the true harbinger of spring. The green (and purple) stalks are all over the markets right now, but for Gresh there's really only one option. "For some reason, Mick Klug's asparagus just shines so bright," he says. "As chefs, we go crazy about it."

Every week this season, we'll be asking chefs to head to the farmers' markets, pick out an ingredient and develop an original recipe for our readers to cook at home. Here, Gresh has used the asparagus from Green City Market in two ways—in a puree and as a bed for a savory strudel. It's a cheffy recipe for sure, but don't be intimidated—it's easier than it looks. And once you make it, you'll never go back to steamed asparagus again.

Find Mick Klug asparagus at Green City Market, Wednesdays and Saturdays 7am-1pm, May 12-Oct 30, 1799 N Clark St at Stockton Dr.



### Duet of Mick Klug Asparagus Rick Gresh, Primehouse

If you use purple asparagus, be aware that it loses color as it cooks. (In other words, it looks much better raw.)

- 1 lb green or purple Mick Klug asparagus
- 1 tbsp Kalamata olives, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tsp thyme, chopped
- 2 tbsp sherry vinegar
- 6 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 5 oz brown-butter rabbit confit, shredded
- 2 tbsp parsley, chopped
- 2 sheets phyllo dough
- 2 oz brown-butter rabbit confit fat
- 3 cups bacon fat
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 tsp chive blossoms (optional)
- 1 tsp chile oil (optional)
- 2 spring radishes, julienned

*Brown-butter rabbit confit just happened to be what Gresh had lying around in his kitchen. You're most likely to have leftover chicken thighs, which will work just as well. Alternatively, buy some duck confit at Paulina Meat Market.*



You don't have to poach the eggs in hot bacon fat if you don't want to. Just poach them in water—but throw a few strips of bacon in the water before you add the eggs.

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Bring a big pot of water to a boil and add the asparagus, blanching until just tender. Immediately transfer to a bowl of ice water to halt its cooking.
2. Trim the asparagus spears to approximately three-inch lengths. Place asparagus bottoms in a blender and puree until completely smooth. Season with salt and pepper.
3. In a bowl, combine the olives, garlic, thyme, sherry vinegar and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.
4. Mix the rabbit confit with the parsley and season with salt. Lay out one sheet of phyllo and brush with the confit fat. Place a second sheet on top and brush again. Trim the sheets into a seven-inch square.
5. Place the rabbit mix in the square, leaving approximately 1½ inches of dough exposed on each side. Fold in the top ends and roll dough into a cylinder. Brush the

- outside with fat and bake in the oven for 15 minutes.
6. While phyllo is cooking, poach the eggs. Warm the bacon fat in a heavy pot until it reaches 170 degrees. Dip a metal spoon into the bacon fat. Remove and carefully crack the eggs into the spoon. Place eggs in the fat for approximately four minutes, until they are soft poached. Remove from oil, place on a plate and season with salt. Set aside.
7. Toss asparagus spears in the olive-garlic dressing and divide into piles on two plates. Top each pile with a poached egg and a tablespoon of parmesan. Drizzle a little extra dressing around the plate. Garnish with chive blossoms.
8. Remove strudel from oven, trim the ends and cut in half. Spread a spoonful of the asparagus puree on each plate and top with strudel. Drizzle with chile oil and top with radishes.

