Medallions of Pork Tenderloin in Tarragon/Mustard Sauce

2 pork tenderloins (not frozen)
4 to 5 T Dijon mustard, creamy (no seeds)
1/2 cup dry white wine
2 shallots, minced
1/2 pint heavy cream
4 T fresh tarragon, minced, or 2 T dried
Fresh parsley
Olive oil
Coarse kosher salt
Freshly-ground black pepper
1 T fresh whole tarragon, or 1 t dried, for garnish

Prep the pork
Pork tenderloins will look like long narrow cones of meat. Wipe dry and, with a very sharp knife and your fingers, cut away as much fat, membrane and tendon as you can without destroying the tenderloin. Slice tenderloins into medallions, about 1/2” thick.

Cooking
Heat 1 t olive oil in a large cast-iron skillet; you want only the thinnest layer of hot oil on the bottom of the pan. Brown the pork over medium-high heat, taking care not to work with so many medallions as to reduce the heat; three skillet-loads should do it for two tenderloins. Season lightly with salt and freshly-ground black pepper. You want to make sure that the pork is gray-brown on the outside but still tender; add more olive oil to the skillet as necessary. Remove pork to a warm serving dish and cover.

Deglaze the pan with the wine, scraping any brown bits into the mixture. Reduce heat to low. Add the shallots and stir frequently until they’re tender; let the wine reduce by about half. Add the mustard, stirring it into the wine mixture. Then add the cream, stirring well. Continue stirring constantly, especially the sides of the skillet where the sauce will tend to stick. The sauce will reduce; let it go to about half of what it was, or slightly more if you prefer (as you reduce the sauce, it will get more concentrated). Correct seasoning with more tarragon and pepper if necessary.

When sauce is reduced to the consistency you like, return the pork to the sauce for a few minutes, still stirring constantly. When the pork is heated through, pour pork and sauce back into the warm serving dish.

Serve with crispy potatoes, green salad and a dry, full-bodied white wine. This recipe makes enough for four people who are very polite and not terribly hungry, or three people who really enjoy each other’s company, or two people who like to eat and are ready for something different. Since pork tenderloins are normally sold 2 to a package, it’s easy to multiply the recipe.

It is not difficult to grow fresh tarragon. If you decide to try, put it in an area where there are no other plants; it will get quite large and bushy.

—David Sisk