

LAMB SHANKS MARRAKESH WITH FENNEL RISOTTO

6 LAMB SHANKS (HIND LEG, IF POSSIBLE)
4 MEDIUM ONIONS
6 CLOVES GARLIC
1/2 TSP CORIANDER SEEDS
1/2 TSP FENNEL SEEDS
1/2 TSP CARDAMOM PODS
1/2 TSP CUMIN SEEDS
8 WEDGES FROM ONE PRESERVED LEMON (RECIPE UNDER
"BASICS" ON THE MEAL-OF-THE-WEEK HOME PAGE)
WHITE WINE
RICH CHICKEN STOCK OR VEAL STOCK
FRESH PARSLEY

NOTE: IF POSSIBLE, MAKE THE SHANKS A DAY AHEAD OF TIME
AND CHILL OVERNIGHT.

PRE-HEAT OVEN TO 325°

IN A STEEP-SIDED FRYING PAN, HEAT 1/2 CUP OF GRAPSEED OR
CANOLA OIL TILL SMOKING.

DRY THE LAMB SHANKS WITH PAPER TOWELS, SALT AND PEPPER.
ARRANGE IN THE PAN WITHOUT CROWDING. REDUCE THE HEAT
TO MEDIUM AND BROWN THE SHANKS ON ALL SIDES.

MEANWHILE, PEEL THE ONIONS AND CUT LENGTHWISE IN 8
PIECES. PEEL AND THINLY SLICE GARLIC CLOVES.

IN A SMALL SKILLET, TOAST CORIANDER, FENNEL, CARDAMOM,
AND CUMIN IN SEPARATE BATCHES. SHAKE THE PAN
CONTINUOUSLY FOR A FEW MINUTES UNTIL YOU SMELL THE
SCENT OF THE SEEDS.

PLACE THE TOASTED SEEDS IN A MORTAR AND PESTLE WITH A
PINCH OF COURSE SALT AND GRIND TO A POWDER. REMOVE
THE CARDAMOM HUSKS.

WHEN THE SHANKS HAVE BROWNEED, REMOVE TO A PLATE.
POUR OFF MOST OF THE FAT FROM THE PAN.

RETURN PAN TO THE HEAT. ADD 3 TBSPS BUTTER AND THE
ONIONS. COVER AND SWEAT FOR A FEW MINUTES UNTIL THE
ONIONS ARE TRANSLUCENT.

ADD THE GARLIC AND THE GROUND SPICES. STIR UNTIL YOU CAN
SMELL THE GARLIC.

REMOVE PULP FROM LEMON WEDGES. ADD RINDS TO THE PAN.

ADD THE LAMB SHANKS AND 1 CUP OF WHITE WINE. RAISE THE HEAT AND BOIL FOR 30 SECONDS. POUR IN 4 CUPS OF STOCK. BRING TO A BOIL.

COVER AND PLACE IN THE OVEN. COOK FOR ABOUT AN HOUR, TURNING OCCASIONALLY. WHEN THE MEAT IS FORK TENDER, TURN OFF THE HEAT AND ALLOW THE SHANKS TO COOL IN THE OVEN. (IF YOU COOK THEM THE DAY BEFORE, REMOVE THE LAYER OF CONGEALED FAT, THEN RE-HEAT ON TOP OF THE STOVE.)

SAFFRON RISOTTO WITH FENNEL AND LEEKS

1 LARGE LEEK
1 LARGE FENNEL BULB
1 1/2 CUPS OF ARBORIO RICE
1/2 CUP OF WHITE WINE
6 CUPS (APPROXIMATELY) OF CHICKEN STOCK
SAFFRON THREADS

TRIM OFF ROOT AND DARK GREEN LEAVES FROM THE LEEK. SLICE LENGTHWISE IN HALF. RINSE UNDER LUKEWARM WATER TO REMOVE ANY GRIT. CHOP CROSSWISE IN 1/4 INCH PIECES.

TRIM FENNEL BULB, REMOVING THE STALKS BUT SAVE THE GREEN FRONDS. SLICE LENGTHWISE, CUT OUT THE TOUGH WEDGE NEAR THE ROOT END. CUT IN 1/4 INCH PIECES.

MELT 2 TBSPS BUTTER AND A SPLASH OF OLIVE OIL IN A LARGE SAUCEPAN. (I USE A PAN WITH CURVED SIDES.)

ADD THE LEEKS AND THE FENNEL. REDUCE HEAT TO LOW. SPRINKLE WITH A GENEROUS PINCH OF SEA SALT. COVER AND COOK FOR A MINUTE OR TWO, MAKING SURE THE LEEKS DO NOT BROWN.

SPOON OFF HALF THE COOKED LEEKS AND FENNEL AND RESERVE.

GRIND 1 TSP OF SAFFRON THREADS IN A MORTAR AND PESTLE WITH A PINCH OF SALT.

BRING CHICKEN STOCK TO A BOIL. REDUCE TO A SIMMER.

ADD THE RICE TO THE SAUCEPAN AND RETURN TO THE STOVE OVER A MEDIUM FLAME. SEASON WITH SALT AND GROUND WHITE PEPPER. COOK FOR A FEW MINUTES, STIRRING, UNTIL THE RICE IS COATED WITH BUTTER AND OIL.

ADD 1/2 CUP OF WHITE WINE. STIRRING CONTINUOUSLY, COOK OFF MOST OF THE WINE.

ADD A CUP OF HOT BROTH TO THE MORTAR TO DISSOLVE THE SAFFRON. POUR IN WITH THE RICE. ADD ANOTHER CUP TO THE MORTAR, THEN TO THE RICE. CONTINUE COOKING ON A LOW FLAME, STIRRING AND ADDING MORE BROTH AS THE LIQUID IS ABSORBED UNTIL THE RICE IS AL DENTE. JUST BEFORE SERVING, STIR IN 2 TBSPS OF BUTTER AND THE RESERVED LEEKS AND FENNEL.

SPOON RISOTTO ONTO INDIVIDUAL PLATES. TOP WITH A LAMB SHANK. NAP PAN JUICES. SCATTER WITH FRESH PARSLEY AND CHOPPED FENNEL FRONDS.

SERVES 6

LOU AMDUR FROM LOU WINE SHOP RECOMMENDS

I DIG LAMB SHANKS. THEY'RE FATTY, RESPOND WELL TO LONG AND LOW COOKING, AND GIVE UP SUFFICIENT FLAVOR TO THE SURROUNDING BRAISE TO MAKE A RICH AND EARTHY PAN SAUCE. WITH THIS NORTH AFRICAN INSPIRED RECIPE, AROMATIZED BY WARMING SPICES LIKE CORIANDER AND CARDAMOM, I WANT A WINE THAT RESONATES THE SPICE TRADE SEASONING BUT ALSO OFFERS SOME NOTES OF ITS OWN.

THE OBVIOUS PATH HERE WOULD BE A RIPER ALSACE RIESLING OR A DISTINCTLY NON-FASHIONABLE, OFF-DRY MOSEL KABINETT, BUT I'D URGE YOU TO TAKE THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED AND TRY A WINE AS EXOTIC AS THE FLAVORS OF THE DISH. THE WINE I'D GRAB IS **SYLVAIN BOCK'S 2010 "FRUIT DE LA PATIENCE"**.

BOCK IS A VIGNERON WORKING IN FRANCE'S ARDÈCHE REGION. THE WEST SIDE OF THE RHONE VALLEY HAS LITTLE REPUTATION FOR PRODUCING PROFOUND WINE. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF ITS BACKWATERS STATUS, ADVENTUROUS GROWERS ARE DOING FANTASTIC WORK HERE, E.G., THE WINES OF HERVE SOHAUT. BOCK WORKED WITH RHÔNE LUMINARIES SUCH AS CUILLERON AND CHAVE. HE STARTED TO HIS OWN WINE JUST A FEW YEARS AGO.

HIS 2010 FRUIT DE LA PATIENCE IS FROM HIS FIRST VINTAGE AS A SOLO ACT. IT'S CHARDONNAY GROWN ON LIMESTONE, WHICH SPENT NEARLY THREE YEARS IN NEUTRAL WOOD BARRELS. THE WINE WAS NOT TOPPED UP, SO AS PART OF IT SLOWLY EVAPORATED, IT DEVELOPED A SURFACE FILM OF YEAST SIMILAR TO SHERRY. THE RESULT IS A CONCENTRATED, HEADY WINE (15 PERCENT ALCOHOL) BUT BALANCED, WITH A LUSCIOUS, LIGHT-SHERRIED NOTE; SALTY MINERALITY, PINEAPPLE, GUAVA, WITHOUT THE DISTRACTIONS OF OAKY VANILLA OR TOAST. VERY MUCH LIKE A SALTED MARGARITA, BUT ONE THAT WAS TAPPED RAW AND WILD, DIRECTLY FROM THE AGAVE PLANT.