

POACHED HALIBUT WITH HOLLANDAISE

2 LBS OF HALIBUT FILLETS, CUT INTO 4 PIECES
24 MUSSELS
2 CLOVES OF GARLIC
2 LEEKS
1 SPRIG OF THYME
1 BAY LEAF
2 CUPS OF DRY WHITE WINE
FRESH CHIVES

TRIM LEEK, SLICE LENGTHWISE AND RINSE UNDER WARM RUNNING WATER TO REMOVE GRIT. CHOP ROUGHLY.

TRIM AND PEEL GARLIC. SLICE IN 4 PIECES.

IN A POT LARGE ENOUGH FOR THE MUSSELS, LIGHTLY SAUTE LEEK AND GARLIC TILL YOU CAN SMELL THE GARLIC.

ADD THE WHITE WINE, HERBS AND MUSSELS.

RAISE HEAT, COVER AND COOK TILL THE MUSSELS HAVE OPENED. DISCARD ANY WHICH HAVEN'T.

WHEN THEY ARE COOL ENOUGH TO HANDLE, REMOVE MUSSELS FROM THEIR SHELLS AND RESERVE.

STRAIN THE MUSSEL BROTH THROUGH A CHEESE CLOTH OR KITCHEN TOWEL.

SEASON HALIBUT FILLETS WITH SALT AND WHITE PEPPER. ARRANGE IN A DEEP-SIDED PAN WITH A LID.

POUR IN MUSSEL BROTH AND BRING TO A LOW SIMMER. COVER AND POACH FOR 6 TO 8 MINUTES OR UNTIL A KNIFE BLADE INSERTED IN THE CENTER OF THE FISH FEELS WARM ON YOUR BOTTOM LIP.

MEANWHILE, MAKE THE HOLLANDAISE:

2 STICKS OF BUTTER
LEMON
2 EGGS
SALT AND WHITE PEPPER

MELT 1 1/2 STICKS OF BUTTER IN A SMALL SAUCEPAN. ALLOW TO STAND OFF THE HEAT FOR SEVERAL MINUTES. THE MILK FAT WILL RISE TO THE TOP. SKIM IT OFF.

SEPARATE TWO EGGS AND BEAT YOLKS WITH THE JUICE OF 1/2 LEMON IN THE TOP OF A DOUBLE BOILER OR A METAL BOWL. ADD SALT AND A FEW GRINDINGS OF WHITE PEPPER.

BRING 2 INCHES OF WATER TO A BOIL IN A MEDIUM SAUCEPAN OR DOUBLE BOILER.

ADD A FEW BITS OF COLD BUTTER TO THE EGG MIXTURE. PLACE OVER SIMMERING WATER AND STIR CONSTANTLY WITH A WIRE WHIP UNTIL THE MIXTURE THICKENS TO A CUSTARD-LIKE CONSISTENCY. IF THE EGGS ARE HEATED TOO HIGH THEY WILL CURDLE, SO KEEP TOUCHING THE BOTTOM OF THE PAN TO TEST THE TEMPERATURE. KEEP YOUR SINK FILLED WITH COLD WATER TO STOP THE COOKING IF IT GETS TOO HOT.

WHEN MIXTURE HAS THICKENED, REMOVE FROM THE HEAT. BEAT IN MELTED BUTTER IN A THIN STREAM, MAKING SURE IT EMULSIFIES BEFORE ADDING MORE. ADDING TOO MUCH TOO QUICKLY WILL CURDLE THE HOLLANDAISE.

PLACE HALIBUT FILLETS ON INDIVIDUAL PLATES. NAP WITH HOLLANDAISE AND GARNISH WITH MUSSELS. SCATTER WITH FRESH CHIVES.

SERVE WITH STEAMED NEW POTATOES AND SPINACH.

SERVES 4

JILL BERNHEIMER FROM DOMAINE L.A. RECOMMENDS

2011 LES FAVERELLES "CUVÉE NOS MUSE" BOURGOGNE BLANC IS NAMED AFTER THE VEZELAY-BASED ESTATE'S PET DOG (JUST IN CASE YOU WANTED TO KNOW!).

IT'S 100% CHARDONNAY, VINIFIED AND AGED IN STAINLESS STEEL. THERE'S A PURITY ABOUT THIS LEMON AND MINERAL DRIVEN WHITE, AND A WAXINESS TO THE TEXTURE. THE ACID AND LEMON ARE A PERFECT MATCH TO THOSE SAME ELEMENTS IN THE HOLLANDAISE SAUCE, AND THIS IS A WINE THAT WILL COMPLEMENT THE DISH RATHER THAN COMPETE WITH IT. FOR THOSE INTERESTED, THE ENTIRE TOWN OF VEZELAY FARMS ORGANICALLY, SO UNLIKE OTHER AREAS OF BURGUNDY, WHERE VINEYARDS ARE OWNED BY MULTIPLE ENTITIES, SOME OF WHOM MIGHT SPRAY CHEMICALS ON THEIR ROWS OF VINES RIGHT NEXT TO A FARMER WHO PREFERS TO FARM WITHOUT, THERE WILL NEVER BE THAT ISSUE WITH THE WINES FROM VEZELAY.