

SKATE CHEEKS WITH SPRING VEGETABLES

1 POUND OF SKATE OR HALIBUT CHEEKS
2 SMALL SHALLOTS
WONDRA FLOUR
6 SPRING ONIONS
1 SMALL FENNEL BULB
1/2 POUND OF SUGAR SNAP PEAS
FRESH CHIVES, TARRAGON, CHERVIL AND/OR PARSLEY
1 LEMON

PRESS THE SKATE CHEEKS BETWEEN DOUBLE LAYERS OF PAPER TOWELS UNTIL READY TO COOK.

PEEL AND MINCE THE SHALLOTS AND PLACE IN A SMALL METAL BOWL.

PREPARE THE SNAP PEAS. PULL OFF THE STEMS AND THE ATTACHED GREEN STRINGS LIKE A ZIPPER. CUT THE PODS DIAGONALLY INTO 1 1/2 INCH PIECES.

TRIM THE ONIONS, LEAVING A FEW INCHES OF THE GREEN STEM AND SLICE LENGTHWISE IN HALF. PEEL TOUGH SKIN OFF THE FENNEL BULB, SPLIT LENGTHWISE IN HALF. CUT INTO 1/4 INCH HALF MOONS.

HEAT 3 TBSPS OF OLIVE OIL IN A SAUTE PAN OVER MEDIUM HEAT. ADD THE ONIONS, SALT AND COOK, TURNING A FEW TIMES TILL THEY ARE SLIGHTLY BROWN ON THE OUTSIDE.

ADD THE FENNEL. REDUCE HEAT TO LOW. COOK FOR 2 MINUTES THEN REMOVE PAN FROM THE HEAT.

IN A LARGE FRYING PAN, HEAT 4 TBSPS OF CANOLA OR GRAPESEED OIL.

MEANWHILE, SPREAD ABOUT 1/2 CUP OF WONDRA ON A SHEET OF WAXED PAPER.

MELT 1/4 STICK OF BUTTER IN THE PAN WITH THE OIL. WHEN THE BUTTER HAS MELTED AND IS SLIGHTLY BROWN, DREDGE THE SKATE CHEEKS IN FLOUR A FEW AT A TIME, SALT AND PEPPER AND ADD TO THE PAN. DON'T CROWD THEM. SAUTE ABOUT 2 MINUTES A SIDE. REMOVE TO A WARM PLATE WHILE YOU COOK THE REST.

RETURN THE PAN WITH THE VEGETABLES TO THE HEAT. ADD ¼ CUP OF WATER, BRING TO A SIMMER AND ADD THE PEA PODS. COOK FOR 1 MINUTE, TURNING FREQUENTLY. SALT TO TASTE.

ADD 2 TBPS OF BUTTER TO THE SKATE CHEEK PAN. SAUTE SHALLOTS FOR 30 SECONDS. SQUEEZE IN THE LEMON JUICE AND ½ CUP OF WATER. STIR WITH A WOODEN SPOON, SCRAPING UP THE BROWN BITS IN THE PAN. WHEN THE LIQUID HAS NEARLY EVAPORATED, TURN OFF THE HEAT AND STIR IN 1 TBSP OF BUTTER.

TO SERVE, CHOP THE HERBS AND TOSS WITH THE VEGETABLES. DIVIDE INTO TWO PORTIONS. DIVIDE THE SKATE CHEEKS, DRIZZLE SAUCE FROM THE PAN OVER THE SKATE CHEEKS AND SERVE.

SERVES 2

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| SOMMELIER JOHN RECOMMENDS |
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NAVARRO, MY FAVORITE CALIFORNIA WHITE WINE PRODUCER, HAS JUST RELEASED THEIR GOLD MEDAL WINNING 2012 **WHITE ROAN**, A BLEND OF 65% ROUSSANNE AND 35% MARSANNE. THE WINE HAS THE BRIGHTNESS OF PINEAPPLE, BUT WITH A VISCOSITY WHICH GIVES IT BODY SO IT LINGERS ON THE TONGUE, WHERE YOU BEGIN THE PICK UP WET STONE, WHITE PEACH AND LYCHEE. YOU CAN ONLY BUY NAVARRO WINES DIRECTLY FROM THE WINERY IN MENDOCINO. SO WAIT FOR THEIR FREQUENT ONE-CENT SHIPPING SALES.