

enough to stand up to the flavor and mouth-feel of this preparation without getting lost.

I love this dish because it highlights the seasonal flavors of our region, from local Meyer lemons and olive oil to the fresh beans. Sheep's milk ricotta and Pecorino Pepato from Bellwether Farms in Sonoma County also add to the regional flavor. Bellwether has been producing world-class cheeses since the 80's, and their sheep's milk ricotta is nothing short of perfect, producing a cannoli filling that is at once rich and light.

Fava beans are a bit of a chore to blanch and peel, but just

over a cup of shucked beans turns into a few dozen hors d'oeuvres, and it's well worth the effort. The yield from raw beans in the pod can be a bit unpredictable, so pick up at least 2 pounds to produce the recipe below. If you can't find fava beans, blanched fresh English peas can be substituted for an equally wonderful result.

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Savory Fava Bean Cannoli with Sheep's Milk Ricotta and Pecorino Pepato

Makes 40 cannoli, serves 10 as a first course.

FOR THE PURÉE:

- 1 ¼ cups shucked fresh fava beans, outer skins still on (about 2 pounds when in the pods)
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 ½ cups Bellwether Sheep's Milk Ricotta, or whole cow's milk ricotta, drained
- 1 ½ ounces Bellwether Pecorino Pepato, very finely grated
- ½ teaspoon finely grated Meyer lemon zest
- Fine sea salt, to taste
- ½ teaspoon granulated sugar, or to taste

FOR THE SHELLS:

- 40 fresh egg roll wrappers (available at most supermarkets and Asian markets)
- 1 egg
- 4 cups vegetable oil

To prepare the filling: Prepare an ice bath in a large bowl. Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add the favas and blanch for three minutes, or until deep green through. Drain the favas and immerse them in the ice bath for 5 minutes. Peel the outer skins by nicking the skin with your fingernail and squeezing the beans out into the bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal chopping blade. Pulse the processor until the beans are very fine, scraping down the sides with a rubber spatula as needed. Add the olive oil and continue to pulse until the paste is very smooth. Add the ricotta, one half of the pecorino pepato and lemon zest and process to combine fully, but do not overmix. Season

with salt and sugar to taste, and transfer the mixture to a plastic piping bag. Refrigerate for up to three days, or freeze the mixture in the piping bag for up to one month.

To prepare the shells: Pour the oil into a 3-quart saucepan and heat to 325° Fahrenheit over medium heat. While the oil is heating, trim the wrappers into 2" by 2" squares. Beat the egg in a small bowl. Starting with one corner, roll each wrapper around a cannoli form or dowel. Dab your finger into the egg wash, and moisten the trailing corner before overlapping. Press firmly to seal. Repeat with the remaining forms, and then carefully lower the shells into the oil with a large slotted spoon. Fry the shells for 2 minutes, or until crisp and golden. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels until cool enough to handle. Carefully remove the shells and arrange on a baking tray lined with dry paper towels. Repeat as necessary with the remaining wrappers.

Note: Use either small metal cannoli forms or wooden dowels to fry these shells. We use 3/8-inch maple dowels cut to 3-inch lengths. We wrap each dowel with a six-inch square of heavy-gauge aluminum foil, twisting the ends like a candy wrapper, to provide a non-porous surface that release the shells easily.

To assemble: Cut a 3/8-inch tip on the piping bag and pipe the filling into each shell. Arrange the finished cannoli on a plate and sprinkle lightly with the reserved pecorino pepato.

Note: The purée freezes quite well for up to a month, and can be used as a simple spread for crostini, if you don't wish to fry the shells. We also use this purée as a stuffing for ravioli, cannelloni, and other fresh pastas.

Other suggestions

for lean and clean white wines for your summer enjoyment include...

Pavi, Pinot Grigio, Napa Valley 2008 \$18 100% Pinot Grigio, this wine is whole cluster pressed, 100% tank fermented, aged sur lie for three months, and sees no malolactic fermentation. Rob Lawson is the owner/winemaker.

Mahoney, Vermentino, Carneros 2008 \$18 Very true to its Italian heritage, this wine exhibits white peach and citrus flavors, a hint of floral aroma and a distinctive minerality in its finish.

La Sirena, Muscato Azul (dry Muscat Canelli), Napa Valley 2007 \$30 Made by Heidi Peterson Barrett, this wine is unusual because most Muscat grapes are made into sweet dessert wine. Not this time. Here you have all the beautiful, perfumed, floral character of the varietal Muscat Canelli, without the sugar!

Rockledge Roussanne, Saralee's Vineyard, Russian River Valley 2006 \$40 Made by up and coming winemaker Mike Hirby, this limited production wine is barrel fermented in new French oak. It is bottled unrefined and unfiltered.