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We believe fresh, good food not only feeds the body, but the mind and spirit as well."

Reynaldo Hernandez,
Co-Founder and VP,
Epicurean Group



Early Spring Greens

Thanks to the recent rains, Spring has arrived in our beautiful Bay Area. Emerald green shoots are emerging outside our windows and on our plates.

Bud break is beginning in the vineyards and my favorite springtime vegetables are starting to appear in the market: asparagus, English peas and pea shoots, rhubarb, fava beans and ramps. Lamb - and lamb's lettuce, or mache - proclaim, "It's spring!" with a tender succulence.

Lighter fare suits these brighter days and this menu makes the best of the season. Beginning with a white asparagus soup and an elegant chervil-dressed salad, lamb and peas pair perfectly, leading us to a satisfying rhubarb sabayon finish.

Share this tasty meal with your loved ones, served with one of our bright Russian River Pinots. Celebrate the season, the region—and the rain.

—**Chef Rey Hernandez**, Co-Founder and VP, Epicurean Group

SPRING MENU

Serves 8

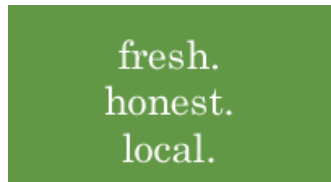
White Asparagus Soup

Faurot Ranch Organic Lamb's Lettuce with Pea Shoots, Watermelon Radish, Parsley, Fava Beans and a Creamy Chervil Dressing

Rack of Spring Lamb with Capay Farms Organic Ramps Soubise, Farro and Spring Vegetable Ragout

Poached Rhubarb with Lemon Sabayon





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White Asparagus Soup

3 quarts vegetable stock
1 1/2 pounds fresh white asparagus
2 tablespoons evaporated cane juice
Kosher salt and fresh ground white pepper
7 tablespoons of butter, divided
2 ounces fresh squeezed lemon juice
2 ounces flour
1 cup whipping cream

Directions:

Bring the vegetable stock to a boil over high heat, and then lower to a simmer. Add the cane juice. Lay each asparagus spear on a cutting board and trim 1 inch from the bottom. Peel the spear starting one inch from the top and down the length of the spear. Save the peelings and the end pieces. Tie the spears together into 4 bundles using kitchen twine. Add the asparagus peels, trimmings, 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, 3 tablespoons butter and 1 ounce of lemon juice to the simmering stock.

Add the asparagus bundles and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, or until they are just tender when pierced with the tip of a paring knife. Remove the bundles, drain and set aside to cool. Raise the heat on the stock to a low boil and reduce the volume by a third. Strain the stock, discard the trimmings and peelings and keep the stock warm.

Add 4 tablespoons of butter to a saucepan and melt, add the flour and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, being careful not to brown. Add asparagus stock 1 cup at a time, while whisking, until all is incorporated. Bring the soup to a low simmer, stirring often until thickened. Add cream and simmer for 2 more minutes. Season with Kosher salt and white pepper.

Cut the asparagus spears on the bias* into 1-inch pieces and add to the soup. Simmer for 1 minute. Remove the soup from the heat.

To serve:

Ladle soup into 8 warm soup bowls and serve immediately.

** Epicurean Tip: Bias Cut*

A bias cut exposes more surface area of the vegetable, and therefore results in a shorter cooking time. In addition to speeding preparation, a bias cut creates a more elegant presentation than a typical straight cut.

Faurot Ranch Organic Lamb's Lettuce with Pea Shoots, Watermelon Radish, Parsley, Fava Beans and a Creamy Chervil Dressing

8 cups lamb's lettuce leaves, washed and drained
2 cups pea shoots
1 bunch Italian parsley, washed, drained and leaves picked from stems
2 cups cooked, shelled fava beans
4 each watermelon radish, peeled and slice thin on a mandolin

For the Dressing

1/4 teaspoon peeled, crushed garlic
1 green onion, chopped fine
2 tablespoons fresh chervil, chopped fine
1/4 cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons yogurt
1 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper

Arrange all salad components in a rimmed platter, season with kosher salt and pepper, cover with damp paper towels and set aside.

Place all ingredients for the dressing in a small bowl. Use a hand held food processor to mix all the ingredients until smooth. Add kosher salt and pepper to taste.



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To serve:

Remove the paper towels from the greens and place the rimmed platter in the center of the dinner table. Drizzle the dressing over and toss until all ingredients are coated and mixed thoroughly. Serve family style into salad plates.

Rack of Spring Lamb with Capay Farms Organic Ramps Soubise, Farro and Spring Vegetable Ragout

For the Ramps Soubise

1 pound of ramps, bulbs only, trimmed, washed and diced small
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 cup crème fraîche
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper

Place a skillet over medium heat and add oil. When oil starts to shimmer add the ramps and cook until translucent and just starting to brown. Remove from heat and season to taste with kosher salt and fresh ground pepper. Place in a bowl and cool to room temperature. Add crème fraîche and keep place the bowl in a warm area.

For the Farro

3 cups semi-pearled farro
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1/4 cup celery, diced small
1/2 cup red onion, diced small
1/4 cup carrot, peeled and diced small
1/2 cup dry white wine
4-6 cups chicken stock
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
Heat oven to 450 degrees. Spread farro on a cookie sheet and toast in oven for 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from oven and set aside.

Heat oil in a medium pot. When oil starts to shimmer, add celery, onions and carrots and sauté until just tender. Add wine and reduce until almost dry. Add farro and 4 cups of stock and bring to a boil. Drop heat to a simmer and place a lid on the pot. Simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally until al dente. Add more stock as needed. The farro should be tender and loose when finished. Add kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste. Keep warm.

For the Spring Vegetable Ragout

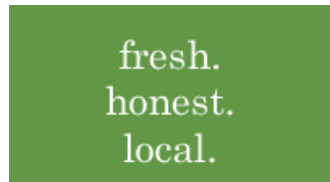
1 pound Romano beans, trimmed and cut in 1-inch pieces
2 cloves of garlic, peeled and sliced
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves, chopped coarse
1/2 pound baby carrots, washed, tops removed and peeled
1 cup vegetable stock
1 pound English peas, shelled
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper

Blanch Romano beans and carrots in boiling water to al dente. Shock, drain and set aside.

Heat oil in a skillet large enough to accommodate all vegetables over medium high heat. Add garlic and cook for 2 to 3 minutes. Add thyme and sauté until fragrant. Add all vegetables, except for peas, and vegetable stock and cook for 3 to 4 minutes until vegetables are just tender. Lower heat, add peas, and cook until they are just heated. Add kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste. Place in serving bowl and keep warm.

For the Rack of Lamb

Preheat oven to 400 degrees
4 1/2 racks of lamb (32 bones total)
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
2 ounces extra virgin olive oil (more as needed)



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Trim off silver skin and excess fat from lamb racks and season with kosher salt and fresh ground pepper. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. When oil shimmers, add lamb and sear all sides until golden brown. Transfer to a roasting pan and cook in oven for 10 to 20 minutes, or desired doneness. Medium rare will be 120 degrees internal temperature. Move the racks to a cutting board and cover. Let rest for 10 minutes before carving.

To serve:

Slice racks into individual chops and place 4 ribs per plate with Ramps Soubise on the side. Serve with Farro and Vegetable Ragout.

Poached Rhubarb with Lemon Sabayon

6 cups water
2 cups organic evaporated cane juice
2 each 1-inch wide strips of lemon peel, no pith
1 vanilla bean pod, split and seeds scraped out (reserve the pod)
3 pounds rhubarb, washed and cut into 1 1/2 inch pieces

Bring water, cane juice, lemon peel, vanilla seeds and pod to a boil in a pot that will accommodate the rhubarb. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 10 minutes. Add rhubarb and simmer until just tender, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a stainless steel bowl and set bowl in an ice bath. Stir carefully with a rubber spatula until rhubarb is cooled completely.

For the Sabayon

1/4 cup water
1/2 teaspoon lemon zest, chopped fine
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
Pinch of kosher salt
3 large egg yolks
1/3 cup plus 8 teaspoons organic evaporated cane juice
8 sprigs of fresh mint

Combine water, zest, lemon juice and salt in a stainless steel bowl and set aside. Add egg yolks and 1/3 cup cane juice to another stainless steel bowl* and whisk until frothy. Set the bowl over a pot of simmering water and continue whisking until the mixture starts to thicken. Add the lemon juice mixture to the yolks slowly while continuing to whisk. Continue until all is incorporated. Continue whisking the sabayon over the simmering water until the mixture thickens and triples in volume. Remove from heat and continue to whisk for one minute. Set aside.

** Epicurean Tip: Chefs Prefer Copper*

A special copper pot is designed for preparing sabayon. Equipped with a handle for ease of use, its deep, bowl-like shape facilitates whipping. Copper is an excellent conductor of heat, and results in an even heat distribution while cooking the sabayon over a pot of simmering water.

To serve:

Remove lemon strips and vanilla bean pod from rhubarb. Spoon rhubarb and syrup into 8 bowls and top with sabayon. Sprinkle each serving with 1 teaspoon of evaporated cane juice. Use a kitchen torch to caramelize the cane juice topping. Garnish with a sprig of mint and serve.