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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



A Culinary Tribute to Spring

While our friends back East and in the Midwest continue to suffer through an unusually long and harsh winter, here in Northern California spring has sprung!

With warm temperatures in the mid-seventies throughout much of February, it was an extremely early bud-break in the vineyards. Here, at Epicurean Group headquarters, fragrant flowering trees are blossoming, making a simple stroll down Main Street a delight. And now, with spring equinox and the lengthening days that follow, we have even more time to enjoy it.

In celebration of this glorious time of rebirth, I've crafted a menu that truly celebrates Spring's seasonal delights and highlights our sustainable farming and ranching partners: a Yukon Gold & sorrel soup, baby lamb with mint pesto, a spring onion and English pea salad and to finish, a light rhubarb and strawberry granite. Serve the lamb with a delicious Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel – it's the perfect pairing to pay tribute to spring.

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

SPRING MENU

Serves 8

Coke Farms Yukon Gold Potato and Sorrel Soup

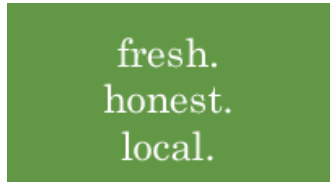
*Baby Spring Lettuces with Sweet English Peas, Spring Onions
and Champagne Vinaigrette*

*Grilled Marin Sun Farms Leg of Lamb with Mint Pesto, Fregola Pilaf,
Asparagus and Leek Sauté*

Watsonville Rhubarb and Strawberry Granité



photo: www.chowtownstudios.com



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Coke Farms Yukon Gold Potato and Sorrel Soup

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons sweet butter
1 1/2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, washed and diced small
3 large leeks, including the tender light green portions, washed and diced
2 quarts vegetable stock
4 cups sorrel leaves, washed and cut julienne
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper

Directions:

Heat a large stockpot over medium heat and add olive oil and butter. When the butter melts, add the potatoes and leeks. Cook until the leeks are translucent. Add the stock, bring to a boil and then drop to a simmer. Simmer for 15 to 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Add salt and pepper to taste and keep warm.

To serve:

Place most of the sorrel into 8 bowls, ladle hot soup on top of leaves. Place rest of sorrel on top of soup. Serve immediately.

Baby Spring Lettuces with Sweet English Peas, Spring Onions and Champagne Vinaigrette

For the Salad:

8 small bunches of baby lettuces (green oak leaf, red oak leaf, Lola Rossa, baby romaine)
washed and dried, large leaves torn in half
4 each watermelon radish, peeled and sliced thin
2 cups English peas, raw

For the Vinaigrette:

6 spring onions
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup buttermilk
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons champagne vinegar
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper

Directions:

Peel and quarter the onions and place in a non-reactive bowl. Add olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Spread on a sheet pan and roast in the oven until tender. Flip the pieces over in the pan so they brown evenly. Remove from the oven and let cool to room temperature.

Chop the onions fine and place in a non-reactive bowl. Add the sour cream, buttermilk, lemon juice and vinegar. Mix together and season with salt and pepper to taste. Hold in refrigerator.

To serve:

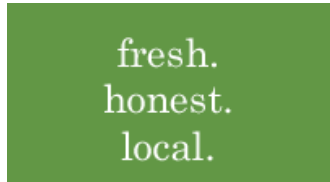
Place a mix of greens on 8 plates with the radishes. Sprinkle the peas onto each plate. Grind some fresh pepper over the greens. Drizzle the vinaigrette over each plate. Serve immediately.

Grilled Marin Sun Farms Grilled Leg of Lamb with Mint Pesto, Fregola and Asparagus and Leek Sauté

For the Pesto*:

4 cups fresh mint leaves
4 garlic cloves**
1 Meyer lemon, zested and juiced
3 tablespoons grated Asiago cheese
1 tablespoons toasted, sliced almonds
1 cup extra virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper

Combine mint, garlic, lemon zest and juice, Asiago cheese and almonds in a food processor or blender. Turn the processor on high and drizzle olive oil



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until all is incorporated and you have a smooth puree. Turn off the processor and season with Kosher salt and pepper to taste. Set aside at room temperature.

** Epicurean Tip: Keeping Mint Pesto Green*

Want mint pesto that's bright green? Just add a couple of ice cubes while pureeing the leaves to keep the mixture cool.

*** Epicurean Tip: Got Garlic Sensitivity?*

Many stomachs are sensitive to the effects of chopped garlic, even when cooked. Here are some techniques to help temper garlic sensitivity:

- 1. Use fewer cloves. Garlic has a strong flavor. Sometimes just one or two cloves can add the flavor you want and help those with a mild sensitivity.*
- 2. Remove the cloves. Try sautéing, then removing, crushed cloves in olive oil, for sauces or soups. The flavor will subtly infuse the oil and other vegetables that are cooked in it.*
- 3. Try "Elephant" Garlic. While Elephant Garlic is not a true garlic but rather, a member of the leek family, its flavor is similar to garlic. Some people find that it is more palatable in dishes where garlic is prepared raw.*

For the Lamb:

- 1 boneless leg of lamb, butterflied and cut into 2 pieces
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
- 2 red onions, cut julienne
- 6 cloves of garlic, crushed and chopped coarsely
- 1 bunch rosemary, chopped coarsely
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil

Place the lamb on a wooden cutting board and cover with plastic wrap. Use a meat hammer to pound the pieces to the same thickness. Season with salt and pepper on both sides. Mix rest of ingredients in a mixing bowl. Lay meat in large non-reactive casserole and cover with marinade. Turn the lamb over to make sure it is well coated. Marinate overnight in refrigerator.

Preheat grill. Remove lamb from marinade and allow to drain well. Place lamb on grill and cover with lid to avoid flare-ups. Cook for 5 to 6 minutes and flip to grill the other side. Cook for another 5 to 6 minutes or until meat thermometer reads 125 degrees. Take off the grill and let rest for 5 to 10 minutes.

To serve:

Carve and place on plates or platter for family style. Serve with mint pesto on the side.

Fregola Pilaf

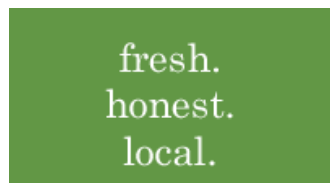
- 1 1/2 pounds Fregola*
- 2 ounces extra virgin olive oil
- 2 carrots, diced small
- 2 stalks celery, diced small
- 3 shallots, cut julienne
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed and minced finely
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 1/2 bunch Italian parsley, chopped finely

** Epicurean Tip: What in the World is Fregola?*

Fregola is a type of toasted pasta from Sardinia, similar to but slightly larger than Israeli couscous, with a delicious nutty flavor. If you cannot find Fregola in your store, substitute couscous or orzo.

Directions:

Bring 2 quarts of water to boil in a large pot. Add fregola and cook over medium heat until al dente. Drain, reserve one cup of cooking liquid, and spread pasta on a sheet pan. Mix with half the olive oil and stir until cooled to room temperature. Hold.



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Heat rest of olive oil in a sauté pan until it shimmers. Add carrots, celery, shallots and garlic. Cook on medium heat until vegetables are tender and fragrant. Drop heat to a low simmer and hold. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Keep warm until serving.

To serve:

Bring vegetables to heat over medium heat. Add fregola and raisins and heat while stirring until heated through, add reserved cooking liquid as needed to heat through and keep pasta moist. Top with chopped parsley. Serve immediately.

Asparagus and Leek Sauté

3 ounces extra virgin olive oil
4 bunches asparagus, cut in 4-inch pieces
2 small leeks, white part only, washed and cut julienne
8 cloves garlic, sliced thin
1/2 bunch thyme, leaves only
1/4 cup dry white wine
1/4 cup white balsamic vinegar
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper

Directions:

Heat oil over medium heat in large sauté pan until it shimmers. Add asparagus and stir to cook evenly and just starts to brown. Add leeks, garlic and thyme and cook until fragrant. Raise heat to high and add the wine and vinegar and cook until almost dry. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

Rhubarb and Strawberry Granité

1 1/2 cup evaporated cane juice
2 cups of water
1 pound rhubarb, trimmed and cut in 1-inch pieces
2 cups strawberries, washed, stems removed, sliced
6 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

To make a simple syrup, place cane juice in a large non-reactive soup pot with 2 cups of water. Bring to a boil on high heat and stir to dissolve the cane juice. Lower heat to medium and add the rhubarb, strawberries and lemon juice. Cook until fruit is tender. Purée with a small immersion blender and strain through a fine mesh sieve into a non-reactive baking dish. Dispose of the pulp.

Place the dish in the freezer. Use a fork to stir the mixture every 30 minutes. Scrape the edges and continue every 30 minutes until the mixture freezes and it has a slushy appearance. Depending on your freezer this could take 2 to 3 hours. Chill 8 martini glasses in the freezer.

To serve:

Scoop granité into chilled glasses and garnish with fresh mint and thinly sliced strawberries. Serve immediately.

** Epicurean Tip: Simplest Simple Syrup*

The simple syrup used for granité has many different versions. The "simplest" is to use equal parts sugar and water. Variations derive from individual tastes; adjust your syrup to your taste.