

Seared Sea Scallops with Romesco sauce, arugula and preserved lemon yogurt

Wine: Tavignano, Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi

1 lb Sea scallops (size "10/20")
14oz jar/can roasted red peppers
14oz jar/can peeled/seeded whole tomatoes
½ cup blanched/toasted hazelnuts
½ cup blanched/toasted almonds
½ cup blanched/toasted pinenuts
1 tsp. mince garlic
¼ tsp. crushed red pepper/chili flake
½ bunch rinsed/dried Italian flat leaf parsley
½ bunch washed/dried fresh mint
¾ cup red wine vinegar
2 cups (+/-) EVOO (Extra Virgin Olive Oil)
Salt(coarse Kosher) and pepper to taste
¼ lb Baby arugula

PRESERVED LEMON YOGURT

½ of washed fresh lemon, seeded, super thin wedges
1 pint non-fat plain yogurt
2 cups EVOO
¼ cup sugar
1TBSP salt(coarse Kosher)

Equipment needed:

Food processor
Rubber spatulas
Medium mixing bowls
Fine mesh strainer (optional)
Tongs
Spoons for tasting/plating
Chef's knife
Paring knife
1 small sauce pan with lid
1 medium 10" SS saute pan
1 small whisk
Cutting board

PREPARATION: The Romesco is to be prepared in the food processor in two batches to make it easier. No need to clean the container between batches. Place half of all ingredients into processor except oil. Turn processor on and see if it will incorporate ingredients. If not, start adding EVOO until nice thick homogenous mixture. Taste and add salt and pepper and adjust ingredients accordingly. Add more EVOO till desired consistency and flavor. Should be slightly thinner than room temperature ketchup. Place mixture in SS bowl and repeat with the remaining ingredients. Season to taste

For the preserved yogurt, drain the yogurt in the strainer for about 1 hour with no need to save the liquid. Heat the EVOO to a shimmer and immediately remove from heat. Whisk in the sugar and salt until dissolved and then add the lemons and cover for at least 1 hour. Making the lemons a day ahead or even a couple weeks ahead is even better. As long as what you add to the EVOO is below the oil surface it will have a very long shelf-life. Once the lemons have cooled, remove from the oil and mince on the cutting board. Add lemons to yogurt in a mixing bowl and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Final preparation would be to turn the saute pan on high as well as your exhaust system. While the pan is heating up place your arugula in a bowl with a touch of EVOO, fresh lemon juice, and salt and pepper. Toss and place some on each plate. When the pan is hot enough, place a small amount of EVOO in and swirl around to make sure it's coated and the oil is lightly smoking. Season the scallops with salt and pepper and carefully place in the pan and do not move them! As they are browning on the bottom, place a good size dollop of Romesco on the plate in front of the arugula. Flip the scallops over and remove from heat but keep in pan for about 15 seconds. A bit longer if the scallops are real big. Place the scallops a top the Romesco and with a spoon place some preserved lemon yogurt on and falling off the scallops. Serve immediately and enjoy forever!

Chef Douglas Ramler - Rated "Extraordinary to Perfection" - Zagat 2011/12
James Beard Foundation, Rising Star of American Cuisine Dinner

