

MHORFish

Scallops with fennel, peas, whisky and orange butter sauce

When fennel and peas are at their best in the garden, I use them for this dish, pulling off the pea shoots to use as a garnish and in salads.



Ingredients (serves 4):

- 8-12 hand-dived scallops, opened and cleaned
- 4 baby fennel heads from the garden or 1 large bulb, quartered
- a big handful of fresh or frozen (nearly as good!) peas
- 4 slices Parma ham, crisped in the oven
- for the Whisky and Orange Butter Sauce(Beurre Blanc):
- 1 shallot very finely chopped
- zest and juice of 1 orange
- 1 tablespoon Glengoyne 10 year old whisky (or more)
- 125g unsalted butter, chilled and cubed
- butter for frying
- fresh pea shoots, or mustard and cress (a cheap and cheerful alternative!), to garnish
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

Blanche the fennel for 2-3 minutes then drain and pat dry.

Season the scallops. Melt a good knob of butter in a frying pan, and when it has stopped foaming add the scallops. Sear on for 2 minutes on the first side, then turn over and sear for 1 minute. Transfer to a warm plate, and keep the pan.

Put the chopped shallot, orange zest and juice and whisky in a small pan and reduced to a tablespoon. Now quickly whisk in all the butter off the heat until liquid but still creamy, then pass through a strainer and keep warm in a warm water bath (don't let it get too hot or it will split).

Reheat the scallop pan, add a knob of butter and colour the fennel for a couple of minutes. Add the peas and cook for about a minute. Remove from the heat

Arrange a piece of fennel on each warm plate, top with a pile of scallops then spoon the peas around the base. Taste the butter sauce, adjust the seasoning with salt and freshly ground black pepper and a drop of whisky and drizzle around the plate.

Finish with a piece of Parma ham and a few pea shoots. Serve with a crisp side salad, or warm potatoes in the winter.