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Seared Scallops with Fennel-Leek Mash, Ratatouille, Fried Leek and Chive Oil

Can't make it to New Orleans this spring? Try this recipe created by Annie O'Hara, the Chef de Cuisine at Liliana's Restaurant. This brand-new, New Orleans-style restaurant is named for owner Dave Heide's baby daughter, Liliana.

Fennel-Leek Mash

2 T unsalted butter
1 T olive oil
2 leeks, tops trimmed, halved lengthwise and rinsed, sliced into 1/4-inch strips
1 bulb fennel, top trimmed, halved lengthwise, core removed, cut in 1/4-inch sections
2 T white wine
2 T Pernod
2 cups of your favorite mashed potatoes
1 t chopped fresh dill, chive, tarragon, flat leaf parsley
Salt and pepper to taste

Add butter and olive oil to a large sauté pan on medium heat. When the butter begins to melt, add fennel and leeks. Saute over medium heat until vegetables become soft (about 10 minutes), then add wine and Pernod. Continue to sauté until most of the liquid has evaporated and the fennel and leek are quite limp (about 10 more minutes). Season with salt and pepper. In a separate pan, heat mashed potatoes. Stir fennel mixture into potatoes and re-season. Finish by stirring in chopped fresh herbs.

Ratatouille

1 small yellow squash, cut into 1/8"-thick rounds
1 small red, yellow and orange bell pepper, julienned
2 shallots, julienned
3 T olive oil
1 T unsalted butter

1 small red onion, chopped fine
2 t minced garlic
2 T finely chopped fresh parsley leaves
1 T finely chopped fresh thyme leaves

While reserving half of the olive oil, sauté the yellow squash, shallot and garlic over medium heat until softened (about 5 minutes). Remove from pan and set aside. Add remaining olive oil, butter, onion, thyme and peppers to pan. Sauté over medium heat until softened and very vibrant in color, with liquid in pan being a bright reddish orange color (about 15 minutes). Season with salt and pepper, stir in parsley to garnish.

Serve the above with eight large, seared sea scallops. Serves 4.

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Chef Annie O'Hara

