



MUSSELS/ LOVAGE OIL & PERRY

To make the lovage oil, bring a pan of water to the boil, drop in the 100g lovage and blanch for a couple of minutes. Immediately refresh in iced water, drain thoroughly and then squeeze dry in a clean tea towel until completely dry. Place in a blender with the grapeseed oil. Blend for 10 minutes and then pass through a muslin cloth, and set aside.

To cook the mussels, clean and scrub the mussels under cold running water, making sure all the beards are removed, and set aside.

Finely dice the vegetables and garlic, heat a pan over a moderate heat, add the butter and the diced vegetables and sweat until soft. Turn up the heat and throw in the mussels, add the perry, place a lid on the pan and cook the mussels for 2 minutes. Drain in a colander, retaining the cooking liquor and discarding any mussels which have not opened.

Pass the cooking liquor through a very fine sieve back into the pan and over a high heat boil to reduce by half. Add the cream, season with salt and freshly ground pepper, turn the heat down a little and reduce by a third. Add the mussels to the reduced sauce to heat right through.

Serve the mussels in the sauce garnished with remaining fresh lovage and the lovage oil.

Serves Four

for the lovage oil:

150g fresh lovage
200ml grapeseed oil

for the mussels:

2kg mussels
3 sticks celery
2 carrots, *peeled*
3 banana shallots, *peeled*
1 garlic clove, *peeled*
50g unsalted butter
300ml perry (*pear*) cider
100ml double cream
sea salt & black pepper