

Fettuccine and Saffron Butter with Spinach and Roasted Peppers

The Greens Cook Book, p.166-167

The Saffron Butter

6 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 large shallot, finely diced
1 tablespoon marjoram or basil leaves, roughly chopped
1 tablespoon parsley leaves, roughly chopped
1/8 teaspoon saffron threads or powder soaked in 1 teaspoon hot water
Pinch cayenne pepper
Grated peel of 1 lemon or 1/2 orange
1/4 teaspoon salt

Cream the butter with the rest of the ingredients. Cover and set aside until needed.

The pasta and the vegetables

Fresh pasta or regular Fettuccine
2 bell peppers, 1 red and 1 yellow, or both one color
1-tablespoon light olive oil
1 bunch spinach
1/4 cup pine nuts
3 tablespoons virgin olive oil
1 red onion, quartered and thinly sliced
1 cup vegetable stock
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon salt
Pepper
Parmesan

1. Slice peppers in half, remove the seeds and cores, and brush both sides with the light olive oil. Bake them cut side down in a hot oven until the skins are wrinkled and loose. When they are cool enough to handle, scrape off the skins, and cut them into narrow strips.
2. Stem the spinach, and wash it well to get rid of the sand. Pull out and discard any bruised and yellow leaves; then cut it into wide strips.
3. Toast the pine nuts in a dry skillet until they are golden.
4. When you are ready to cook the pasta, heat the virgin olive oil in a skillet, and add the onion. Fry it over medium-high heat for about 1 minutes; then add the stock or water, garlic, peppers, and salt. Cook together another minute; then add the spinach. Stir with a pair of tongs until the spinal wilts; then lower the heat and add all but a tablespoon of the saffron butter. Add a little more stock or water if the first cup has evaporated, so that the melted butter and the pan juices create a sauce.
5. Add salt to the boiling pasta water, cook the pasta, scoop it out, and add it to the vegetables along with the rest of the saffron butter. Mix well with a pair of tongs, letting the butter melt in to the noodles. Season the dish with pepper, and lastly add the pine nuts and toss well.
6. Serve the pasta garnished with the cheese, and for a wine, try a crisp sauvignon blanc.