



Mussels with Saffron and Fennel

WINE PAIRING: **Blanc de Blancs 2018**



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*Recipe exclusively developed for H.J.W. Vineyards by Maggie Ruggiero
Photo by Paul Brissman*

Serves 3 to 4

3 lbs mussels*	4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
Large pinch saffron	½ cup tomato puree (passata)
¾ cup dry vermouth	½ tsp lightly crushed fennel seeds
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling	A pinch red pepper flakes
1 fennel bulb, finely chopped	¼ cup finely chopped parsley
1 small onion, finely chopped	Sourdough toast for serving

Scrub mussels under cold running water. Discard any that have broken shells or are gaping. Pull off any beards and rinse mussels well in bowl of cold water, repeating rinsing until no more sand appears in the bowl.

Sprinkle saffron into vermouth and set aside to infuse.

Warm oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add fennel, onion, and garlic, season with salt and pepper, stirring frequently, until vegetables are soft but not browning, about 5 minutes. Add tomato puree, infused vermouth, fennel seeds and pepper flakes then bring to a gentle simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, 3 minutes.

Stir in the mussels, cover the pot and cook, shaking the pot and giving a stir now and then, just until mussels are wide open, about 6 minutes. As mussels open, lift them into to a large bowl. If any mussels remain closed, discard them.

Remove the pot from heat and whisk in parsley. Return mussels to pot, stirring to coat. Divide between bowls and top with a generous drizzle of olive oil. Serve with toast for sopping up sauce.

*Mussels are best kept refrigerated, unenclosed, in their net bag set in bowl covered only with a damp paper towel, re-moisten as needed. Empty any water collecting in the bottom of the bowl.

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