

COQUILLES ST. JACQUES
with 2006 PONZI CHARDONNAY RESERVE

Everyone knows all too well the reasons old-fashioned comfort food is the current rage in American cuisine. These days even the toniest restaurants are offering familiar, non-challenging dishes, often at almost attractive prices. Menu selections feature meat pies and meatballs; lamb shanks have replaced lamb chops. Desserts run the gambit of puddings: bread, rice and tapioca. These are all good and can be delightful. I offer, however, a word of caution: please don't serve this elegant wine with chicken and dumplings! My suggestion, fashionably looking back, is Coquilles St. Jacques. Remember you—your mother, grandmother perhaps—hosting dinner parties and presenting individual servings of exotic scallop piping hot from the broiler on actual scalloped-shaped dishes? It turns out the coquille ramekins are still fun and pretty, the presentation showy and, best of all, the finished dish is lovely... especially with excellent Chardonnay such as the Reserve.

Like all "classic" dishes, such as Caesar Salad, there are variations. This *Amici* recipe tends to the "old," very rich style; there are suggestions for lightening/modernizing your preparation. Keep in mind the adage about virtue in moderation—one serving is plenty, then on to the salad... the old-fashioned theme needn't extend to tasteless iceberg.

Nancy's Serving Suggestions: Serve with a light first dish such as prosciutto and melon; the entrée followed by a platter of green beans, butter lettuce salad with balsamic pear vinaigrette, fruit dessert with biscotti and the last of the Chardonnay or sherry.

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INGREDIENTS:

<p>1 lb. sea scallops 1 c. dry white wine 2-3 fresh bay leaves 1 T. of fresh thyme 1 T. fresh Italian parsley 1 small onion ½ lb. fresh wild mushrooms, sliced, or 1 oz. dried Porcini soaked in ½ c. dry white wine ½ hour before cooking</p>	<p>2 T. butter 1/3 c. water Juice from 1 lemon, remove the seeds 3 T. butter 3 T. flour 4 egg yolks 1 c. cream 1/3 c. grated Parmigiano cheese 1/3 c. fine unseasoned bread crumbs Fine sea salt and fresh black pepper Italian parsley, chopped for garnish</p>
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TECHNIQUE:

SCALLOPS **1.** Put wine (mix with bit of water if you like), herbs, and peeled whole onion in a small sauté pan and heat. **2.** Depending on size, cut scallops into 3 pieces. Poach over medium heat for 2-3 minutes. **3.** Remove scallops to a bowl, strain the broth and reserve.

SAUCE **1.** In same sauté pan, melt butter. Add sliced mushrooms and sauté briefly. Add water, lemon juice and season with salt and pepper. Simmer gently for 5 minutes. Remove the mushroom to bowl with scallops, strain the broth and add to reserved scallop broth. **2.** Combine the 3 T. butter and flour to make a roux. **3.** Heat the combined broths over low-medium heat. Slowly add the roux, mixing continuously with a whisk until mixture becomes smooth and thick. Adjust seasoning and set aside to cool. **4.** Beat egg yolks with cream and slowly add, while stirring to sauce. Heat over low heat, or double boiler, until the mixture is smoothly thick. Again adjust seasonings. **5.** Turn off heat and fold in scallops and mushrooms. Divide the mixture onto lightly buttered ramekins. Sprinkle cheese and bread crumb mixture on tops, run under the broiler—not too close—to heat and become golden brown. Garnish with bit of parsley before serving.

NOTE: After placing scallops on ramekins, you can cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. Just before serving, heat thoroughly and brown tops. The coquilles should be served directly from broiler.

NOTE: You may substitute 1 ½ c. half and half for the egg yolks and cream. Add a little more roux—butter & flour to thicken. Tasting is important. You may want more herbs, salt and pepper, a touch of wine or good sherry.

HISTORICAL ROMANTIC NOTE: The emblem of St. Jacques, or Saint James, is the scallop shell. Travelers who make the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Northern Spain wear an identifying scallop shell. Pre-St. Jacques, Romans revered the scallop shell as a fertility symbol. Great dish, wine and dinner conversation!