

Radiant Polpette of Angry Meat with Soothing Hedgerow Herbs

Shortly after I arrived in the town of Triora, a bedevilled Ligurian settlement nestled at perilous angles above the verdant Valle Argentina, I repaired my fatigued soul and bloodied shins with a plate of these snail balls. Served with a freshly scythed salad of pimpinella, cavolo primaticcio, pissarella and cerfoglio, this light and yet heavily haunted dish is both restorative and enraging, akin to the kiss and thistle. Consumed in quantity, it is liable to turn mild men into fantasising beasts, bigots and pernicious saboteurs of otherwise clear heads. Substitutions for any of the hedgerow herbs is accepted, on the understanding that a wild and frenzied act of harvesting and collecting be observed. Men who harbour suspicions and grievance for strong-minded women may experience a nauseating lightness and loss of orientation, at which point they must sensibly vomit the bigoted corralling of their coerced minds after but one mouthful.

Ingredients (serves 3):

500 grams of wild snails, purged of impurity

A large bunch of wild hedgerow herbs such as pimpinella, cavolo primaticcio, pissarella, cerfoglio – but you can use whatever grows well in your vicinity

1 large onion

6-8 cloves of garlic

1 lemon

200ml light olive oil

100g butter

500g strong bread flour

250g fresh breadcrumbs

2 egg yolks

Method:

Purge the snails by feeding them oatmeal in an enclosed space for at least 24 hours or until they confess to all their foul deeds, meanderings and sorcery. When purged, fry in butter and garlic until soft. Put to one side and allow to cool. When cool, chop the snails until a fine dice is arrived at.

Chop the onions and garlic very finely and fry gently in olive oil and a little butter until they turn transparent. Do not burn. Leave to cool.

Combine the chopped snails with the onion and garlic mix in a large mixing bowl. Add the breadcrumbs, egg yolks, salt and black pepper and mix by hand until gathered as one. Form rounds from this mix of

approximately 3cm diameter and dust in seasoned flour. Allow the polpette to chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Fry the polpette in olive oil gently, turning regularly until evenly golden. Set aside on a kitchen cloth to drain.

Now make the salad. Wash the wild leaves. Cradle in a kitchen towel and then swing violently until dry and disorientated. Arrange leaves on a plate. Dress with a simple emulsion of light olive oil and lemon juice.

Place the polpette over the salad leaves and serve.

Accompany the polpette with slices of good upstanding wholemeal bread and an honest God fearing country red wine such as La Morta Della Strega.