



GOOD CHEMISTRY

Let Scott Cutaneo — aka Great Scott — show you how the French technique renders the best results.

WHO SCOTT CUTANEO, chef/owner
WHERE EQUUS, 1 Mill St., Bernardsville
 908.766.3737, equustavern.com

What's Cooking “What is great about this potato and leek soup’s presentation is its height,” says Cutaneo of the stacks of potatoes that form the centerpiece. “Its special taste comes from how we nurture the ingredients, which allows them to be the best they can be. When cooking this dish, it’s important to understand the chemical reactions that take place. We cook the leeks in a process called à l’Anglaise — in water salted to the taste of seawater. You want to cook the leeks in a large amount of water so the temperature never lowers to the point where you have to return it to a boil. You also should know how potatoes eat salt. If you do not season the water properly, the potatoes will become waterlogged, and you will have to add three times the seasoning to get the desired flavor.”

About the Chef Earlier this year, Cutaneo closed his acclaimed Le Petit Chateau in Bernardsville to take over the reins at Equus. The move

is the latest in Cutaneo’s illustrious career: He has been trained by the likes of Daniel Boulud of Restaurant Daniel in Manhattan and Michel Guérard of Les Prés d’Eugénie in the South of France; since 2002 has served as the fine dining consultant for the executive committees of top *Fortune* 500 companies attending the Olympic Games; and is a regular on *Fox and Friends* (watch episodes on his website, greatscottchef.com).

Olympic Exposure As fine dining consultant, Cutaneo has served international dignitaries at the Salt Lake City, Torino, Athens, and Beijing Games. He was the only American chef invited to Beijing. “It was very gratifying but a logistical nightmare,” says Cutaneo. “We had 600 cooks — none of whom spoke English. We brought in around 60 chefs from Singapore to serve as interpreters.”

New Menu The new Equus menu features upscale American cuisine with “shades of Asian and international selections,” says Cutaneo. “All the dishes on this menu are cooked with a French technique as that is the benchmark of all cooking.” **NJL**

POTATO AND LEEK SOUP

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- Peanut oil, as needed**
- 1 medium-size Idaho potato, sliced into 1/8-inch thick disks**
- 2 leeks, white stalks**
- 1 large potato, peeled and cut**
- 4 ounces salted butter**
- Pinch of fresh nutmeg**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**

GARNISH

frisée, microgreens, fried julienne leeks, sliced radishes, chives

PROCEDURE

Heat the peanut oil in a 1/2 quart pot to 325° F. Add the sliced potato disks into the oil and deep fry until golden brown. Remove onto a plate lined with paper towel to absorb excess oil. Season immediately with salt and pepper. Set aside for assembly.

Cut the whites of the leeks lengthwise, and then into one-inch pieces. Put into a bowl with some water and rinse three times to remove sand. Drain. In a large saucepot, melt the butter. Add leeks, season with salt and pepper, and a pinch of nutmeg.

Cover with parchment paper and put into 355° F oven until tender. (Make sure to periodically toss the leeks to ensure even cooking.) When finished, remove leeks from the oven and cool at room temperature. Boil the potato in salted water until tender. Drain. Place the leeks and potatoes in a blender and puree. Place back into saucepot, heat and season to taste.

TO SERVE

Stack the fried potato slices with the frisée, sliced radishes, and microgreens in between. Top with the fried julienne leeks. Put soup into a saucer and serve at the table when presented to guests (French service). Pour the soup into the bowl around the potato stack. Garnish the soup with the sliced radishes and chives.

RECOMMENDED PAIRINGS

Sullivan St. Bakery focaccia

featured recipe