Carmel Valley Ranch: Summer Sea Bass

The 500-acre resort, nestled in the Santa Lucia mountains, lies two hours south of San Francisco and is dotted with ancient oaks, fields of lavender, a vineyard, an organic kitchen garden, a great spa, multiple pools, an 18-hole Pete Dye-designed golf course and a sports center with a 25-meter pool, basketball and bocce courts and fitness and tennis centers.

Executive Chef Tim Wood and the team at Carmel Valley Ranch specialize in hyper-local, seasonal ingredients with the help of The Ranch's many artisans including Fisherman Jerry, who delivers fresh, sustainably-caught fish from the Monterey Bay. Here's is an at home recipe inspired by of one of Chef's favorite dishes, Line-caught Bass, that can be created at home using similar ingredients:

- 6 (7oz) fillets of Sea Bass if your grocer has it. Otherwise any firm, white fish (such as tilapia) is a great substitute.
- 1 sprig of fresh Thyme – even better if it comes from your garden!
- 1 teaspoon butter
- Olive Oil
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Method:
- In a large pan, sauté olive oil, salt and pepper on medium/medium-high heat
- Sprinkle salt and pepper on fish
- Add fish to the pan in batches to cook evenly and not overcrowd, approx. 4 minutes on each side
- Remove from pan and place in an oven-proof dish with thyme and butter, basting regularly for 3-6 minutes until cooked to desired doneness.

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Serve with Tomato Fennel Fondue:

- 2 oz Olive Oil
- 8 Garlic Cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 Onion, thinly sliced
- 1 Fennel Bulb, thinly sliced
- 10 Extra Ripe Tomatoes

Instructions

- Add olive oil to a large saucepan and warm slowly on medium heat
- Add sliced garlic and cook 5 minutes, stirring constantly
- Add fennel and onions and reduce to low heat for 30-40 minutes
- Add tomatoes and allow the mix to stew out for 20 minutes
- Garnish with Monterey Bay Sea Salt and a drizzle of olive oil. *If Monterey Bay Sea Salt is unavailable, chef recommends Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt