

Fig & Verjus Braised Pork Shoulder

Paired with 2019 Deviate Pinot Noir

5 pounds boneless pork shoulder
Kosher salt, to taste
2 tablespoons blended oil
2 large onions, diced
1 leek, white parts only, diced
4 garlic cloves, chopped
1 bay leaf
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
¼ teaspoon ground coriander
¼ teaspoon fennel seed, ground
1 tablespoon honey
Zest of 1 large orange
2 cups verjus blanc
4 cups pork or chicken stock
1 cup diced dried Black Mission figs

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F.

Trim the pork shoulder of any excess fat and form it into a log shape. Tie the pork shoulder with twine to ensure that it keeps its shape during cooking. Season liberally with salt.

In a large ovenproof pan, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Sear the pork on all sides until golden brown, about 8-10 minutes total. Remove the pork from the pan and set aside. Add the onions, leeks, garlic, and bay leaf to the pan and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the cumin, coriander, and fennel and stir gently until the aromas are released. Add the honey and orange zest and stir well. Deglaze the pan with the verjus and reduce the liquid by half over high heat.

Transfer the pork back to the pan and add the stock and ½ cup of dried figs. Cover the pan with the lid and place it in the oven. Roast for 1 hour and then turn the pork over. Roast for 1 more hour or until a knife easily pierces the pork. Remove the pan from the oven. Let the pork rest in the pan for at least 15 minutes. Remove the pork, slice into ¾ inch slices, and keep them warm, covered with foil in a 200 degree F oven.

Using a fine-mesh sieve, strain the sauce into a saucepan. Add the remaining figs to the sauce and reduce on high heat until the sauce has a thick consistency, about 10-12 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Serve over your choice of mashed potatoes or polenta and a side of bitter greens. Ladle the sauce over the top.

Makes 6 servings.