

# SPRING PEA SOUP WITH GARLIC CROUTONS & LEMONGRASS CREAM

While recently visiting some of our members in NYC, we enjoyed an outstanding meal at The Mark Restaurant by restaurant mogul Jean-Georges Vongerichten. Each course was a delight to the senses, the pea soup had “texture like high thread count sheets...like a lover sliding into bed.” This recipe could pair beautifully with our featured halibut entrée. Serve the soup as a beverage in a crystal shot glass before guests are seated, along with our 2016 Fascination, Sauvignon Blanc. ~ Barbie O’Brien

## **GARLIC CROUTONS**

- Ciabatta bread, crust removed, cut into 1 inch cubes, to make about 2 cups of cubes
- Sea salt and pepper
- Olive oil & Unsalted butter
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced

Toss bread cubes with salt and pepper. Drizzle lightly with olive oil and toss again. In a cast iron pan, melt a hunk of unsalted butter over medium-low heat. Add garlic. When pan is hot, add bread cubes. Cook slowly, turning the cubes as each side browns, or shaking the pan every now and then. Remove croutons when nice and golden.

## **SOUP (Serves 6)**

- 4 T lemongrass, thinly slice fat bulb end like scallion rounds
- 1 ½ cups heavy cream
- 4 fluffy tablespoons grated Parmigiano Reggiano (grated with a microplane grater)
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 large garlic cloves, crushed
- Sea salt
- 5 cups water
- Herbs: 2 sprigs parsley & 2 sprigs mint
- 2 pounds sweet peas - fresh or frozen, or combination (a cup of fresh and rest frozen) - reserve a few tablespoons of fresh peas for garnish

In a small pot, heat the cream and lemongrass. Let it gently simmer and infuse while you make the soup.

In a medium soup pot, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Add the garlic and salt, and cook until fragrant and soft, but not browned. Add the water. Bring to a boil, add the herbs and peas. Turn down to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes, or until the peas are tender.

In a blender, puree the peas, herbs and water in batches (to minimize hot splashes). Place each pureed batch in a large bowl. When done pureeing all the soup, return it to the soup pot, taste for salt, and keep warm over low heat.

Strain the lemongrass from the cream into a warm bowl. Discard lemongrass. Stir in Parmigiano, and whisk until lightly frothy.

To serve, place a spoonful of reserved peas into warmed soup bowls and ladle soup into bowls. Top each bowl with 5 croutons. Spoon lemongrass cream over soup, and pull a knife through it to make a decorative leaf pattern. If serving cold, chill soup and sauce separately in refrigerator for a few hours.