Salt and Pepper Riblets

Fall flies in with crisp air embracing harvest parties, tailgating and entertaining with rich, robust wines to match the season. For your next barbecue or fireside supper, serve tender glazed riblets (the secret is in the brining) courtesy of Willi's Seafood in Healdsburg, Calif. These piquant ribs pair perfectly with Benovia 2016 Sonoma County Zinfandel, elegant yet intense with juicy ripe blackberries, black cherries and exuberant baking spice and black pepper notes on the finish.

Serves: 4-6

Ingredients

2 racks St. Louis style ribs

Brine

1 ½ teaspoon Schezuan peppercorns
1 tablespoon black pepper
¾ teaspoon white pepper
½ teaspoon coriander seeds
2 each star anise
½ gallon water
¼ pound sugar

2 1/2 ounces salt
1 cup soy sauce
1 head garlic, cut in half
½ bunch cilantro, rough chop
½ bunch basil, rough chop
2 inches fresh ginger, peeled and cut into coins

Toast and grind all the spices. Combine all ingredients in a large deep pot and bring to a boil. Turn off and cool to room temperature. Place ribs in a deep large pan and pour the brine marinade over enough to cover the bottom of the pan.

Rib Brine Sauce

1 cup reserved rib liquid (above)
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon fish sauce
2 tablespoons olive oil
6 tablespoons honey

1 shallot, thinly sliced
2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1 Fresno chili, thinly sliced
6 basil leaves, torn

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place first 5 ingredients in a blender and combine until thick. Stir in shallot, garlic and chili. Carve ribs and place in an oiled roasting pan. Pour sauce over the ribs and stir to coat well. Roast in oven uncovered about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally until sauce reduces and ribs are glazed.

Remove from the oven and sprinkle with torn basil. *Optionally, instead of baking, you can finish the ribs in a barbecue pit over indirect heat for about 20 minutes.

Recipe by: Willi's Seafood