Mussels with Pancetta and Vermouth

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|  | **Jennifer – 4 Guys and a Tomato**  **Event:** Bainbridge Island Spouses and Guests, August 19, 2022  **Inspired by:** *Good Fish*, Becky Selengut |

This recipe is a riff on a famous New Orleans dish called Oysters Bienville. I replaced the prosciutto with iberico ham sliced off the bone because, well, why not! Each year I invite the Four Guys and a Tomato (my friends’ cooking group) to my Bainbridge Island home for a day of indulgence (and competitive showing off). I’m not content to just watch and indulge. Despite what you might think, women are just as competitive, and quite possibly superior cooks.

Ingredients: (makes 6 - 8 as an appetizer)

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| 2 | Lb | Live mussels |
| ¼ | C | Dry Vermouth or Dry White Wine |
| 2 | Oz | Pancetta, Prosciutto, or Bacon |
| ¼ | C | Finely Minced Shallots |
| 1 |  | Lemon Zest (about 2 teaspoons) plus juice for finishing |
| ¼ | t | Cayenne |
| 2 | T | Mayonnaise |
| 2 | T | Minced Fresh Italian Parsley |
| ¼ | C | Panko or Breadcrumbs |
| 2 | Oz | Grated Manchego Cheese (1/2 cup) |
|  |  | Rock Salt, for serving |

**Pairing: suggestion:** Chablis from Burgundy, France —or— Rosé

Directions:

Preheat broiler with rack in lower-middle of the oven

Scrub and debeard the mussels

Add mussels and vermouth to a covered saucepan over high heat. Cook until they open (2 to 3 minutes). Remove mussels as they open to cool. Discard any that stay closed (they were not alive when cooked). Strain the mussel liquor and reserve.

Cook pancetta over medium heat in a wide pan until they release some of their fat. Add shallots and sauté until soft (about 5 minutes). Add mussel liquor, lemon zest, and cayenne to deglaze the pan. Let the juices evaporate completely. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and fold in mayonnaise. In a separate bowl, mix the parsley and panko.

When the mussels are cool, shell the mussels and place them back on their bottom shells set on a sheet pan. Top each with a small amount of the pancetta-shallot mixture and then with some of the parsley-panko. Finish each with a sprinkle of the Manchego cheese.

Broil until brown (1 to 2 minutes).

Serve on a bed of rock salt. Add a dash of lemon juice if desired.