



## **Braised Fennel with Garlic**

Serves 12

Serve with Joseph Phelps Merlot or Freestone Vineyards Chardonnay

3 lb fennel bulbs (weigh without tops) – about 8 medium sized bulbs  
8 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
6 large garlic cloves, peeled and cut into thin slices  
1 cup water  
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Discard any hard or bruised outer layers from fennel bulbs. Trim away darkened base of fennel. Cut each bulb in half lengthwise and then cut into julienne strips between  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide.

Heat oil in a large skillet or a heavy bottomed kettle over medium-low heat. Add garlic and turn heat to low. Cook until pieces are pale blond (not longer than 8 minutes). Scoop out garlic with slotted spoon and set aside.

Turn heat up to medium high and add fennel to pan. Sauté, turning fennel pieces frequently until pieces are golden brown (about 10 minutes). Once fennel is browned, add water, sprinkle with salt and pepper and cover pan, leaving cover slightly open. Cook over medium low heat until fennel is tender (about 5 to 8 minutes). Uncover pan and boil away any liquid that is left.

Add more salt and pepper, if needed. Add garlic and stir to mix before serving.