Chocolate Croissant Bread Pudding

Prep time: 15 minutes / Stand time: 1 hour / Cook time: 40 to 45 minutes total

- 4 to 5 large croissants, cut into 1-inch cubes to measure 6 cups
- 5 tablespoons softened butter, divided
- 2 cups half and half
- 6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 3 eggs
- 2 / 3 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Powdered sugar for garnish
- Fresh mint for garnish

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spread croissant cubes on a baking sheet. Bake until lightly toasted; set aside and turn oven off. Spread 1 tablespoon butter in the bottom of an 8 or 9-inch square baking dish and add toasted croissant cubes. Heat half and half and remaining butter in a medium saucepan until almost boiling; slowly whisk in chocolate and vanilla; let cool for 10 minutes. Whisk together sugar and eggs in a medium bowl and slowly whisk in chocolate mixture. Pour over croissant cubes, making sure that all are coated with chocolate mixture. Let stand for 1 hour and preheat oven to 350°F. Bake for 35 minutes. Serve warm dusted with powdered sugar.

Makes 8 servings

Pairing Suggestion: For a dessert match made in heaven, try pairing chocolate with a Pinot Noir such as Mirassou Winery's California Pinot Noir.