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*RIZZOLI*  
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# Grilled Asparagus

## with Asparagus-Bottom Aioli

Springtime in restaurants means lots of asparagus on menus, and piles of rubber band-wrapped asparagus bottoms lingering in the kitchen. But by poaching the tough, underutilized stems of asparagus in oil and infusing the oil with leeks and garlic, you get all the flavor from these woody bits and save them from the trash or the compost. Use this simple aioli as a flavorful complement to grilled asparagus—or for poached salmon, club sandwiches, fried artichokes, French fries, or anywhere you might use mayonnaise.

**YIELD: 4 SERVINGS**

### GRILLED ASPARAGUS:

1 bunch asparagus, with 1-2 inches cut off the bottom and reserved for aioli  
2 tablespoons olive oil

### ASPARAGUS-BOTTOM AÏOLI:

1 cup olive oil

1 cup asparagus bottoms  
(from one bunch asparagus)  
4 cloves garlic  
1 cup leeks (light green and dark green parts), chopped  
1 lemon, juiced  
1 egg yolk  
Water  
Salt and pepper to taste

### TO SERVE:

1 hard-boiled egg, chopped (optional)  
Lemon slices (optional)

Grill the asparagus: toss the top part of the asparagus with olive oil. Heat a grill or grill pan to high heat. Grill the asparagus until tender using tongs to flip spears, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate and set aside.

Make the aioli: in a pot, heat oil, asparagus bottoms, and garlic gently over low heat until the asparagus and garlic are soft, about 15 minutes. Stir in leek tops for the last minute (they will turn bright green). Add the lemon juice.

Transfer the mixture to a blender and puree until smooth. Strain the asparagus oil through a fine sieve, pushing through with a rubber spatula. Allow to cool. At this point you can keep the oil in the refrigerator for 3 days. Bring the mixture back to room temperature before using to make the aioli.

To serve, whisk together the egg yolk with 1 tablespoon of water in a food processor until foamy. Slowly drizzle in the asparagus oil with the food processor running until the mayonnaise has emulsified. If it gets too thick, add a bit more water or lemon juice. Check for seasoning and serve over the grilled asparagus tops, hot or cold. Top with the chopped hard-boiled egg and serve with the lemon slices to squeeze over the asparagus, if desired.