



*Holiday Celebration Dinner*

*December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2002*

*At*

*La Palme d'Or*

*Champagne Reception:*

*Oxtail Beef Croustillant, Fried Lobster Ravioli  
Goat Cheese and Walnut Toast, Smoked Salmon and Fresh Dill  
Louis Chaurey, Brut Champagne*



*Pan-Seared Duck Foie Gras with Fresh Figs  
and Roasted Fingerling Potatoes  
Chateau Suduiraut, Sauternes, 1988*



*Braised Turbot Filet with Lemon Beurre Blanc  
Sevruga Caviar and Crustacean Sauce Reduction  
Chateau Montelena, Chardonnay, Napa 1997*



*Beef Consome with Chinese Pearl*



*Duck Confit Croustillant with Wild mushroom and Green Asparagus  
Port Wine Sauce  
J.Drouhin, Clos des Mouches, Beaune, 1990*



*Roasted Venaison Chop with Winter Black Truffle  
Apple Confit and Cranberry, Grand Veneur Sauce  
Chateau Clinet, Pomerol, 1988*



*Caramelized Baby Pear Tartelette, Infused Violet Flower Ice Cream  
P.Jaboulet Aine, Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise, 1996*



*Nignardises*

*Fonseca, Late Bottled Vintage Port, 1991*

*Cigars in Courtyard*

*Chef de Cuisine: Philippine Ruiz*

**International Wine and Food Society - Miami Branch  
Holiday Celebration Dinner, December 10, 2002  
At La Palme d'Or, Biltmore Hotel, Coral Gables  
Reported by Christopher Zoller**

Happy Holidays to All, and for all who attended, a magnificent night! For our year-end celebration this year we put on our best "bib & tucker" and took over the entire restaurant and lounge of the beautiful La Palme d'Or. Our private cocktail reception was held in the bar and featured a wonderful, newly discovered champagne: Louis Chaurey NV Brut from Reims. This excellent apéritif was accompanied by passed hors d'oeuvres of Oxtail Beef en Croustillant, Fried Lobster Ravioli, Goat Cheese and Walnut Toast, and Smoked Salmon with Fresh Dill. Although we crowded toward the entrance of the room, the excellent staff made sure all glasses were full and everyone had all that they wished to sample.

Finally we were ushered into the beautiful dining room and magical world of Chef Phillippe Ruiz. We were fully booked, but the room was set with only six tables amidst golden chandeliers and sparkling mirrors. Our President, Suhel Skaf, prevailed after great effort, to have the restaurant set large tables of ten to twelve persons so that we could maximize our camaraderie. This is perhaps one of the most elegant dining rooms in all Miami.

The first course was a fresh, large lobe of Pan-Seared Duck Foie Gras with Fresh Figs and Roasted Fingerling Potatoes (fancy French fries). Potatoes are an unusual accompaniment but worked very well. Not much needs to be done to foie gras if it is perfectly cooked except to create a luscious sauce in the pan, which of course was done. This dish was served with a wonderful Chateau Suduiraut 1988, a first growth Sauternes that was not too unctuous and provided a perfect sweetness for the foie.

The second course provided as much discussion as it did pleasure: a braised filet of Turbot with

Lemon Beurre Blanc, Sevruga Caviar and sauce of shellfish reduction. This was presented atop "Italian" cous cous, large berries of wheat. All the debate over the cous cous could not detract from the perfectly cooked fish and its delicate yet distinctive flavors. The wine pairing was Chateau Montelena Chardonnay, 1997, from Napa, California. This wine proves to be still evolving and should continue to give many more years of pleasure. A more delicate wine would have been lost in this dish.

As an intermezzo, Chef Ruiz presented Beef Consume with Chinese Pearl Barley. An interesting departure from sorbet, this soup was spiced up with anise seed to help awaken the palate, and it certainly did.

Next was Duck Confit Croustillant with Wild Mushrooms and Green Asparagus. The confit was wrapped in phyllo and served with a Port Wine Sauce. Also adorning the plate was edamame (baby soybeans) and frizzled multi-colored vegetables. Very festive! The delicious duck was classically paired with red Burgundy, a 1990 Clos des Mouches (Beaune) from Joseph Drouhin, a superb wine from a great vintage. We are again reminded that the delicate Pinot Noir grape is best served with as little handling as possible, from the vine to the table. This wine showed the terroir in its earthiness and the delicate red berry fruit flavors associated with Pinot.

For a meat course the Chef chose a Roasted Venison Chop with Winter Black Truffle, Apple Confit with Cranberry in a Grand Veneur Sauce. As if that was not enough Holiday cheer, he threw in Roasted Chestnuts! The chop was perfectly cooked and obviously farm-raised so as to be not too gamey but still distinctive. To marry all these flavors we were treated to a fabulous Bordeaux, the 1988 Chateau Clinet from Pomerol. This was probably the pairing of the night. The wine had a Rhone-like prune fruitiness that complimented the flavors of the dish and rinsed the tongue and warmed the taste buds. With this low-fat meat we did not need the heavier tannins of a more Cabernet-based wine, hence the perfect pairing with more Merlot in the blend.

Dessert continued the festive theme with a Carmelized Baby Pear Tartlette served with Ice Cream infused with essence of Violets! The tartlette was like warm marzipan, with sugary almond flavors surrounding the pear. The flavor of violets was easily recognized in the ice cream, giving the dessert a feeling of Provence. How appropriate then that we had a Muscat de Beauges-de-Venise, also of Provence. This was a 1996 from P. Jaboulet Aine and held up very well to the dessert. Beauges-des-Venise is not as viscous as a Sauternes and its light sweetness was a pleasant surprise.

Those who were able to stay enjoyed lovely Mignardises with 1991 Late-Bottled Fonseca Porto. Cigars were offered in the courtyard. Suhel Skaf, Bob Hudson, and Thorny Holle hosted this entire enchanting evening. They selected the wines from our cellar, consulted with the Chef de Cuisine Phillipe Ruiz and negotiated a beautiful event with the General Manager of the Biltmore, Mr. Dennis Doucette. It was an appropriately festive Holiday Celebration and for all "a Good Night."







