



*The International Wine & Food Society*

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**Miami Branch**

*Lebanese Dinner at*



*February 20, 2003*

*Champagne Reception  
Champagne Duval-Leroy, Brut*

*Tabbouleh  
Clos Du Bourg, Vouvray, 1993*

*Hummus Topped with Chawarma  
Hummus with Foul  
Bubba Ghanouj (Moutabal)  
San Vicente, Rioja, 1991*

*Raw Kibbeh  
Lebanese Sausages  
Kafta Kabab  
Chateau Musar, Lebanon, 1989*

*Traditional Baked Stuffed Lamb  
Teofilo Reyes, Ribera Del Duero, 1995*

*Kenafeh  
Quarts de Chaume, Dom La Roche Moreau, 1997*

*Host: Suhel Skaf*  
*Owner/Operator: Samir Al-Barq*

*"Belly Dancer": Farida*

***IW&FS MIAMI BRANCH'S 233RD EVENT  
LEBANESE DINNER AND THEME PARTY  
AT MAROOSH MEDITERRANEAN RESTAURANT  
20 FEBRUARY 2003***

Over fifty members and guests, many garbed in appropriate Middle East - Mediterranean attire, raucously enjoyed the theme party, complete with entertainment and authentic, traditional Lebanese cuisine artfully paired with appropriate wines from the Branch's cellar. Suhel and Jackie Skaf, our hosts, greeted everyone during the Duval-Leroy NV Champagne reception. Duval-Leroy is a light-styled, citrusy bubbly and appropriate pre-prandial libation for a reception. It certainly propelled the festive buzz upward in anticipation of more fun and frivolities to come.

After asking for introductions of the members' guests, Suhel spoke briefly about the history of winemaking in Lebanon. "While some believe it dates back to the Phoenicians (1200 BC), there is little doubt it was produced when Lebanon was part of the Roman Empire. During the 19th century, the Jesuits introduced French techniques, which are still the basis of winemaking today."

Tabbouleh, the regional combination of chopped parsley, tomatoes, onions, cracked wheat, olive oil and lemon juice, is a challenge for any beverage. Maroosh's version was delicious; not overly acidic, and presented on crisp romaine leaves. Suhel paired the dish with a 1993 Huet Clos de Bourg Vouvray sec that worked perfectly. Dry Vouvray's complexity and aging potential, almost equal to the legendary sweet or demi-sec vintages, is one of the characteristics of chenin blanc. 1993 was a good to very good vintage for dry Vouvrays, despite a rain-plagued harvest. The (Gaston) Huet firm is universally respected as the appellation's top producer, and this wine was a sound testament of his skills.

The next course presented a contrast of three styles of sesame oil based hors d'oeuvres: Hummus topped with warm 'fowl' (actually fava beans seasoned with lemon juice, olive oil and garlic); Hummis topped with Chatwarma, a rotisserie-pit cooked lamb marinated with Mediterranean spices and eggplant-infused Babba Ghanouj (or Moutabbal). The course was paired with a charmingly fruity and easy-to-drink San Vicente Rioja, vintage 1991.

Our next 'dish' (or interlude) featured the beautiful, charming and entertaining belly-dancing Farida. The group enthusiastically joined in keeping time to the rhythmic music and cheering those who dared joining in the act (some more than others!).

The happy and lively din in the room continued into the next course, once again a 'trio', but this time of delectable meats: Kibbeh (raw, spiced, ground lamb mixed with cracked wheat and onions - delicious!), Lebanese Sausages (seasoned with lemon juice and olive oil) and a char-grilled Kafta Kebab (ground lamb and beef mixed with parsley, onion and spices). The paired beverage was Chateau Musar 1989 from the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon via our President Suhel's personal cellar. Chateau Musar is a blend of equal proportions of cabernet sauvignon, carignan and cinsault (the latter two grapes usually found in Southern Rhone wines) produced from 30-70 year old vines. Musar is vinified and aged in wood for three years prior to bottling. The wine exhibited a brick red, mature appearance with a Chateauneuf-du-Pape styled bouquet. The taste was predominately cinsault/carignan, with the cab adding the softening tannin 'grip'. Overall, the wine showed very well with all aspects of the palette of savory flavours from the diminutive Kibbeh (if you didn't mix in any raw onion) to the spicy, lemon-laced Lebanese sausages.

The next course of food - baked, stuffed (with pignoli and almonds) lamb over rice pilaf- sated even the most ravenous of the diners. Fortunately, management was very willing to accommodate requests for take away containers in order to enjoy the course the next day. The wine choice - 1995 Bodegas Tefilo Reyes, Cosecha, Ribera del Duero - was simply outstanding! 100% Tinta del Pais grapes, from 40 year old vines, fermented in small casks and bottled without filtration is an unqualified success. A beautiful, fruity nose; jammy flavors in the mouth, very soft tannins, totally balanced and a long, lingering finish made it the 'wine of the night' for one of your interim correspondents.

The sweet finale was Kenafeh (sweet, white farmer cheese sandwiched between two layers of shredded dough, laced with rose water-infused sugar syrup and topped with ground pistachios). We opened the dinner with a chenin blanc sec; therefore, in going full circle with the theme, a chenin blanc doux was in order. The dessert was paired with a luscious, 1997 Quarts de Chaume from Domaine La Roche Moreau, which was delightful. The wine's bouquet was comparative to sweetened passion fruit, yet the taste was a kaleidoscope of tropical fruits; sweet but not cloying and sufficient acidity to be a perfect foil for the dessert. 1997 was the third year in a series of wonderful vintages for sweet chenin blancs.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed this theme party dinner format, and our President wisely chose to not interrupt the conviviality with 'winespeak'. Accordingly, if you find these notes to be a bit more wine knowledge than you normally want, rest assured that our regular correspondent, Chris Zoller, will be back at the keyboard to chronicle our next meeting in the style to which you've become accustomed.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Your Interim Scribes,  
Scott Bailey, in contribution with Suhel Skaf



