



The International Wine & Food Society

Miami Branch

Season Finale
At
Blue Door At Delano

Tuesday May 6th, 2003

Champagne Reception in the Orchard

Canapés of:

Duck Rillettes on Dried Figs

Smoked Salmon with Caviar

Spoons with Crabavocat

Schramsberg, Blanc de Blanc, Napa 1989

-Menu-

POMME D'OR

Jumbo Shrimp in a Chilled Tomato Consommé with Eggplant Confit

Pouilly Fumé, Cuveé Bois Fleury, Domaine Caillourdin, 1998

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SAINT JACQUES PASSION

Pan Seared Scallops and Green Asparagus on a Rosemary Focaccia Toast, Passion Fruit Mouseline

Dutton Ranch Chardonnay, Rutz Cellars, 1997

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MISSOBASS

Miso Marinated Filet of Striped Bass with Sautéed Shimejis,

Chinese Okra and Pearl Onions, Balsamic Red Wine jus

Griotte-Chambertin, Grand Cru, Joseph Drouhin, 1991

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VEAU MIGNON

Marinated Veal Tenderloin, Baby Potatoes and Artichokes, Sundried Tomato,

Shallots, Capers, Raisins, and Parmesan

Cos D'Estournel, Saint-Estephe, 1990

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CHOCOLAT JAMAICA

Orange Chocolate Mousse Flavored Brownie with a Grilled Brochette of Marinated Fruit

In Jamaican Rum and Jamaican Pepper

Muscat, Rosewood Vineyards, Chambers

Chef de Cuisine: Claude Troisgros

Exécutive Chef : Damon Gordon

Host : Suhel Skaf

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For the final co-ed dinner of the season host and Branch President Suhel Skaf chose the sophisticated and tres chic Blue Door at The Delano Hotel on South Beach. Suhel arranged the date to coincide with a rare visit by Chef de Cuisine Claude Troisgros, who also oversees three restaurants in Brazil. The beautiful menu evolved through many e-mails and faxes, an amazing feat.

The guests, in formal attire, were escorted through the dramatically draped hotel lobby and restaurant and out to the "orchard" for the Champagne Reception. Passed hors d'oeuvres were duck rilette on dried figs, spoons of "crabavocat" (a guacamole with crabmeat topped with smoked salmon), and goat cheese canapés. The sparkler was the crisp and delicious Schramsberg Blanc de Blanc, 1989. Napa County chardonnay juice from one of the oldest sparkling wine producers in California. Very refreshing.

The Blue Door Restaurant has a lovely, large high-ceilinged private room that was perfectly set for our party of sixty-three. Candles blazed on a large center table as a focus for our six tables. The room was as elegant as our group.

If there was one theme or pattern to this dinner it was the beauty, complexity, versatility and variety of sauces. Each dish featured its own uniquely wonderful sauce, and the wines were masterfully paired to enhance and/or balance those flavors.

The first course was called POMME D'OR, jumbo shrimp in a chilled tomato consommé with eggplant confit. There was a lot going on in this complex, lush dish. Sweet/tart flavors of honey and vinegar, jellied peas with the rich, thick eggplant in reduced tomato juice and a cool frothy top, like a salty zabaglione. And of course, there were jumbo shrimp, too! The wine was a match made in heaven, all the more amazing that it was done via e-mail. A 1998 Pouilly Fume from the

Loire Valley: Cuvee Bois Fleury, Domaine Cailbourdin. This sauvignon blanc-based wine was soft yet acidic, flowery but tart, in short a great complement to the similarly complex flavors of the dish.

Next up was **SAINT JACQUES PASSION**, pan seared scallops and green asparagus on a rosemary foccacia toast with passion fruit mousseline. This was a simple yet luxurious assemblage of horizontally sliced, perfectly seared scallops layered with asparagus spears atop the toasted foccacia. Here again the sauce was outstanding. The passion fruit lent great, citrusy acids to the dish which stood up well to the rich, heavy California Chardonnay, a 1997 Dutton Ranch from Rutz Cellars. Unfortunately at least one bottle of this relatively young wine was materized, already on its way to vinegar. Somewhere along the way it suffered from poor storage conditions. However, the other bottles were fine, displaying the classic California chardonnay characteristics of fruit, butter and oak. With some time in the glass it showed a trace of Gravenstein apples, a trait of the Sonoma County Russian River Valley appellation. Once again it was a perfect wine for the dish, and a good lesson in storage and the proper temperature for serving white wine.

The fish course was **MISSOBASS**; miso marinated filet of striped bass with sautéed shimejis, Chinese okra and pearl onions in balsamic red wine jus. This was a very Oriental dish, but finished with a classic Bordelaise sauce. The miso was used to help caramelize the fish, and the vegetables were barely cooked, along with small cloves of roasted garlic. Shimeji is the Japanese name for oyster mushrooms, and the Asian influence abounded. The delicate fish was perfectly cooked, flaky and moist, and the sauce was a reduction of both Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah with a healthy dose of butter added at the end. Chef Claude admitted that he liked the idea of a "light red wine with fish" which he remembered from his grandfather. Host Suhel did not disappoint, serving a 1991 Griotte-Chambertin from Joseph Drouhin. This Grand Cru proved to be quite controversial. Upon pouring, comments from various guests ranged from "a nose like red cabbage in a jar" to "smells like leather, or a barn", amongst others. However, the wine opened up wonderfully and showed exquisite Burgundian characteristics including great cherry fruit along with the barnyard and leather elements. It was a superb example of red Burgundy and a serious candidate for the wine of the night. Pinot Noir goes extremely well with pan-Asian flavors.

The meat course, called **VEAU MIGNON**, was a filet of marinated veal tenderloin with baby potatoes and artichokes, sundried tomato, shallots, capers, raisins and parmesan, and of course another great sauce. By now we were getting used to the chef's style of "lots going on and lots of flavors". But each element was delicate, the artichoke was just little slices of heart and there was only a light shaving of parmesan. The flavors and the rich sauce melded beautifully around the melt-in-your-mouth veal. To accompany this dish we had a 1990 Cos D'Estournel. This lovely St. Estephe showed intense dark purple color and a great nose of black currant with hints of tobacco, but was obviously still young. It was a little closed and should be revisited in five years, with potential to drink well for another twelve to twenty. Its youth is part of what made it work so well with the veal, as the tannins were soft and the fruit still fresh.

Dessert was aptly named **CHOCOLAT JAMAICAN**; an orange chocolate mousse flavored brownie with a grilled brochette of marinated fruit in Jamaican Rum and Jamaican pepper. This was truly decadent! It was both too rich and too thin; a lush rush of dark chocolate accompanied by the lightly grilled fruits and another delicious sauce of peppered rum. The pairing for this unbelievable dessert was a non-vintage Muscat from Australia. The vineyard is Rosewood and the producer is Chambers. A light, sweet wine, not too thick or unctuous, it was almost overpowered by the chocolate but very suitable for the fruit. The unique rum/pepper sauce stood on it own.

Chef Claude Troisgros came out to bask in the accolades of our group. He enjoyed sharing some of his secrets and the experience of leaving France for Brazil and winding up with a venue in Miami Beach. It was obvious that he and Suhel had been in numerous cyber conversations. Chef Claude and his Executive Chef, Damon Gordon, evidently had their tongues firmly in their cheeks when they named these plates, but not enough to damage their taste buds. The sauces were incredible. We always have something to learn about food and wine, and its great to share it with such good friends. This meal was truly outstanding, a real peak as well as a fun finale for the season. Extra thanks to Host Suhel.

Reported by Christopher Zoller, May 20th, 2003

