

*International Food & Wine Society*

*SOCO Restaurant*

*Tuesday October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003*

*Hors D'oeuvres*

*Pearl Onions stuffed with Lobster sauce*

*Tuna Tataki*

*Red Snapper Cocktail Ceviche*

*Nicolas Feuillatte, Brut, Champagne*

*Appetizers*

*Parmesan cheese basket filled with Fennel Salad, African Lobster Tail  
Cambria, Katherine's Chardonnay, California 2001*

*Second Course*

*Dover Sole served over Sea Scallops in a Livornese Sauce  
Martinelli, Sauvignon Blanc, California, 2000*

*Entrees*

*Morell Mushroom and Goat Cheese Risotto  
Sori Paitin, Barbaresco, 1994*

*Beef Tenderloin on a Perigourdine Sauce  
Silvio Grasso, Barolo, 1994*

*Dessert*

*Chocolate Soufflé*

*Churros dipped in Godiva Chocolate  
Chambers, Rosewood Vineyards (Australia), Tokay*

*Chef: Alfredo Alvarez*

*Host: Bob Hudson & Suhel Skaf*



*The International Wine & Food Society*

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**Miami Branch**

**SOCO Restaurant**

**Tuesday, October 7, 2003**

Reported by Christopher Zoller

For our 236<sup>th</sup> event and the Season Opener sixty members, spouses and guests convened at the new restaurant of Chef Alfredo Alvarez in Coconut Grove. (The name is an allusion to South Coconut Grove) The hosts, President Suhel Skaf and Board Member Bob Hudson were on hand to greet us as we arrived and supervise last-minute details. Our group dominated the space as we were treated to Nicolas Feuillatte Brut and several delightful pass-arounds. The Tuna Tataki were beautifully prepared rare slices of sushi quality tuna, seared in peppercorns for a nice cool/spice flavor to go well with the champagne. A very unusual hors d'oeuvre was the pearl onions stuffed with lobster sauce. They were milder than anticipated with a dollop of sauce that was infused with lobster roe. The Red Snapper Ceviche was extremely tart, perhaps because it was served still frenched in the citrus juice.

The room was set to its capacity with tables of eight and everyone settled in. As always when we gather after a long hiatus, it was fun to catch up with old friends after a summer of vacations and travel. After the introduction of several guests, this night was also a great opportunity to meet most of our newly elected members, who were well represented. President Suhel presented each

new member with an IWFS medallion and had a special presentation for new member and newly retired Police Chief Ned Valois, for some reason a “Davey Crockett” coonskin hat. I guess you had to be there.

The first course was a lovely presentation of a Parmesan Cheese “basket” filled with Fennel Salad and accompanied by an African Lobster Tail. The basket was crisp and tasty with a rich cheese flavor and the fennel salad was light and refreshing. The Lobster Tail was served cold and was moist and luscious. This was served with the Cambria, Katherine’s Chardonnay 2001 vintage, California appellation. The wine was oaky but tart and did not display much of the buttery flavors usually associated with California malolactic fermentation. It had adequate acids to stand up to the flavorful and rich dish.

The second course was another great inspiration: Filets of Dover Sole wrapped around large Sea Scallops served over a Livornese sauce. The fishes were perfectly cooked: moist, delicate, flaky and tender Sole and firm, meaty but not over done Scallop. The chef claimed they were sautéed, but it tasted and felt roasted. The sauce was a rich and salty combination of tomatoes, capers and Greek olives for a true Mediterranean flavor. The wine pairing chosen by Suhel and Bob for this course was truly inspired and a great treat for the diners. It was a Martinelli Sauvignon Blanc, Sonoma County 2000. At first taste the wine was crisp, lemony, but lush and quite dry but flavorful. As the course progressed the wine opened up beautifully and really showed its ability to stand up to the tomato sauce while not overpowering the delicate seafood. This varietal has long been maligned and abused, by winemakers as well as drinkers, but it can be very food-friendly, as it was here.

The next course was a Goat Cheese Risotto with Morels. It was a creamy and delicious blend of salt and sweet (the cheese?) that was perfect for showcasing the Sori Paitin 1994 Barbaresco. The wine was medium bodied, rich and dry, with great earthiness. It benefited from more and more time in the glass, and was delicious. Those who still had a little Martinelli Sauvignon Blanc discovered how great that wine is with goat cheese.

The meat course was Beef Tenderloin on a Perigourdine Sauce. Roasted whole tenderloin sliced into medallions and served with a Demi-Glace that included mushrooms, truffles, and foie gras, according to Chef Alfredo. An interesting touch was delivered to our table: roasted shallots right out of the sauté pan. Another great Italian grape, nebbiolo, was a perfect accompaniment to the dish. The 1994 Barolo from Silvio Grasso was luscious, rich and fruity with very light tannins and well balanced acids.

Dessert was a real treat, two decadent offerings. The first was described as Chocolate Soufflé, but was more cake-like. Individual cakes not served in ramekins, with deep dark chocolate flavor. The second dessert was Churros with a Godiva Chocolate dipping sauce. These deep-fried dough sticks were served warm with a light sprinkling of powdered sugar and were wonderful, with or without the melted chocolate. Last year we finished the season with a wonderful dessert wine at The Blue Door at the Delano. Obviously it was a great hit, so we brought it back here because it is a great combination with chocolate and gave us a nice feel of déjà vu. It was the Chambers Rosewood Vineyards Tokay from Australia. Sweet but not cloying, it was also dark and earthy, and provided a great finish.

Chef Alfredo is ambitious and creative and we wish him continued success with his inventive Mediterranean cuisine. His staff is quite dedicated and the wine service was well orchestrated, thanks to the watchful eye of President Suhel. Congratulations to him and Bob. This was a great season opener bringing together the three elements of a successful IWFS gathering: Friends, Wine and Food.



