

Miami Chapters

Commanderie de Bordeaux and International Wine & Food Society

Luncheon aboard the M/S Spirit

in Port of Miami, January 10, 2004

Reception

Sevruga Caviar with Yukon Gold Blinis and Toasted Brioche

Beef Tartare with Parmesan and Fresh Horseradish Sorbet

Poached Oysters in Cucumber Butter and Salmon Roe

Backfin Crab and Avocado in Arugula Nage

Roasted Scallop with Green Almonds Stew

Nicolas Feuillatte, NV Brut



Lunch

A Study in Foie Gras

Truffled Torchon, Crème Brulee and Seared Foie Gras

1989 Riesling V.T. Deiss

Petite Pumpkin Bisque with Maine Lobster Flan

1996 Meursault, Chateau De Meursault

Blue Fin Tuna Medallion and Cod Stuffed Piquillo Pepper

Fennel & Eggplant Tart

Filet Mignon of Aged Prime Beef

Agnolotti with Duck Confit and Roasted Acorn Squash, Fiddle Head Ferns

1985 Ch Pontet Canet

1985 Ch Haut Batailley

Red and Green Pear Salad with Belgian Endives and St. Agur Cheese

Vintage Sherry and Walnut Oil Vinaigrette

1985 Ch Potensac

Eight Textures of Chocolate

Fresh Cherry and Dolce Leche Cream

1996 Banyuls Domaine de la Recton

Senior Chef de Cuisine: Johann Holzfeind

Hosts: Natko Nincevic

Cyrus Marfatia

Bob Dickinson



The International Wine & Food Society

Miami Branch

In conjunction with The Commanderie de Bordeaux du Miami

*Luncheon aboard the M/S Carnival Spirit
In Port of Miami
January 10, 2004*

By Christopher Zoller

One of the most exciting experiences of the year is our annual luncheon aboard one of the luxurious ships of Carnival Cruise Lines, thanks to our host Bob Dickinson. This year may have surpassed them all. Our sold-out crowd, including guests, was treated to VIP boarding and escorted to our private Champagne Reception by an attentive and efficient staff. Copious amounts of Nicolas Feuillatte Non Vintage Brut champagne flowed as the professional waitstaff passed no less than five exquisite hors d'oeuvres, some in unique and innovative presentation. Tender and succulent poached oysters in Cucumber Butter with Salmon Roe were perfectly cooked. Roasted Scallop in a Green Almond stew was a savory mix of complementary flavors. The Backfin Crab and Avocado in Arugula Nage was a unique flavor combination with excellent texture contrasts. These were clearly not "finger food" and required the expert staff and plenty of utensils. A fabulous presentation of Sevruga Caviar was offered with a choice of the usual accouterments on either Yukon Gold Blinis or Toasted Brioche. The wonderful addition of Parmesan Cheese and a Fresh Horseradish sorbet livened up the Beef Tartare. All five were great crowd pleasers.

This year we dined in the more intimate setting of the ship's Supper Club. This is a gorgeous,

high-ceilinged, sky-lit room of smaller tables, great views and a four-piece orchestra and dance floor. Our first course was a sensational display: A Study in Foie Gras. Three wonderful interpretations in a fabulous presentation. A Truffled Torchon was just that, a pate en gelee laced with truffles with a smooth rich texture. Next was a rare treat: a foie gras Crème Brulee loaded with flavor in a creamy and unusual venue for foie gras. Finally was a generous lobe of fresh foie, perfectly seared and served with grilled pineapple. The plate was drizzled with sauces of chocolate and port and honey citrus, suitable flavors for all three preparations. The wine with this course was a superb pairing, a 1989 Riesling Vendage Tardive from Marcel Deiss of Bergheim, Alsace. (For those who care, Robert Parker rated this 92 points) From a sensational vintage, this wine had lush fruit flavors of honeyed orange, a hint of minerals, and a long rich finish. It was a great opportunity to sample it now, at 15 years of age, as it still shows signs of lasting longer.

The next course was another masterpiece of preparation, and slowly the room grew quiet as each table was served. Petite Pumpkin Bisque was individually poured at the table over a light Lobster Flan topped with lobster claw meat. The bisque was delicious, with a light touch of nutmeg and allspice and the flan was rich and flavorful. Several diners described this as “my kind of comfort food”. To accompany this dish, Bob chose a 1996 Chateau De Meursault, and excellent producer of white Burgundy, and an excellent choice for the combination of pumpkin and lobster. The wine was dry and clean and displayed the delicious varietal flavor of chardonnay while not interfering with the food.

It was wise to keep some of the Meursault for the next course: twin towers of nori- (seaweed) wrapped tuna. The fresh tuna was lightly poached with green beans, wrapped into cylinders in the nori, sliced on the bias and presented as towers. A very nice Fennel and Eggplant Tart and two sauces accompanied the tuna: red pepper and green parsley.

The next course showed the international breadth of the Carnival kitchens: Filet Mignon of Aged Prime Beef with Agnolotti of Duck Confit and Roasted Acorn Squash, with Fiddle Head Ferns. The ferns, indigenous to the Pacific Northwest, are a wonderful green vegetable choice, firm and full of wild flavor. The stuffing of duck and squash in the agnolotti was a luscious combination. The prime beef had a smoky flavor and a crunchy topping of fleur de sel. Two 1985 Bordeaux wines were poured for this course, both from Pauillac. The Pontet-Canet showed a deep dark brownish red color and a smoky nose, and a flavor of mild blackcurrant with firm tannins but pleasantly mild acidity. The Haut Bataille showed deeper ruby color and more fruit flavor. It had an elegant nose and wonderful balance. Both wines were ready for consumption.

The refreshing salad course consisted of Red and Green Pears and Belgian Endive with St. Agur Cheese in a light Vintage Sherry and Walnut Oil Vinaigrette. Another superb 1985 Bordeaux, Chateau Potensac, proved to be the best of the three. It had a rich ruby color, elegant structure, good fruit flavors with a hint of spice and a great balance of all the elements.

The dessert course was another tour de force: Eight Textures of Chocolate. This was total decadence: warm brownie in a cup, chocolate twirls with dipping sauce, Bing Cherry in white chocolate, a chocolate soup, chocolate mousse, and a tower of chocolate, all served with Fresh Cherry and Dulce de Leche Cream. Wow! As if that was not enough, we washed it down with a 1996 Banyuls, Domaine de la Recton. A pleasant alternative to Sauternes, this wine is lighter on the palate while still sweet and refreshing.

A note about service: The meal was very labor-intensive, both on the floor and in the kitchen. The waitstaff, captains and sommeliers were attentive and genuinely concerned and involved without being obtrusive. They passed the ultimate service test: upon returning from the restroom, we found a fresh folded napkin at our place.

We were honored to have Captain Marco Nogara, the Master of the Spirit join us, along with his wife. We were hosted by Natko Nincevic, Senior VP of Hotel Operations, Cyrus Marfatia, VP of Food and Beverage, and the Chef de Cuisine was Johann Holzfeind. Our sincere thanks go to the ultimate host, Bob Dickinson. Every year our groups are in his debt for this delightful, generous, and unique Carnival experience. Another great way to enjoy Wine, Food and Friends.



