



The International Wine & Food Society

Miami Branch

THE ULTIMATE STAG

APRIL 6, 2005

HOST: BOB DICKINSON

CHEF: JODI DICKINSON

An incredible setting in the sumptuous Dickinson abode was the venue for our 252nd event, "The Ultimate Stag". One of the most generous couples in the entire community, Jodi and Bob Dickinson volunteered their home, their expertise, their talents, and their larder to entertain and delight 30 members of our Branch.



The complex flavors of the dish were smooth and smoky, almost sweet, and the fish was moist with just the right amount of mustard topping. The huge, lobster-sized "Butter Poached Key West Shrimp" were warm and tender and served with a lovely light mustard sauce. They were a minimum of three bites each.

Chef/hostess Jodi had set three tables of ten on her upper terrace with beautiful Herend tableware, cut crystal water goblets and gorgeous table linens. Low centerpieces of discreet candles allowed for easy conversation with no distractions from the main event: Jodi's gourmet cooking and Bob's fine



wines. As we settled in and had a brief introduction by President John Kuczanski, we could tell the Chef was hard at work on our first course. This gave time for our first wine commentator, Bob Shackelford, to tell us about Tarlant and share some of his research, including the controversy in the wine press about just what vintage was in the bottle, the blend of grapes and his personal tasting notes.

Through one of her usual purveyors, Jodi was able to source some "Midi Pyrenees Gascon Foie Gras," which she expertly pan seared with a crisp crust and a juicy molten center. It was presented over Crispy Polenta and napped with a savory Blackberry Sauce. The sauce had lovely tart/fruit blackberry flavors that were a perfect match for the wonderful 1990 Zind-Humbrecht Riesling



Christopher Zoller
Reporter

Arriving on the magical Island of Tahiti Beach, we were greeted by one of the world's rarest Prestige Cuvees: Louis Multi Vintage by Tarlant. More than just a non-vintage champagne, this careful blend of three spectacular vintages (1988, 1989, 1990) was a work of art. Yeasty, with crisp, caramel, strawberry flavors, nutty buttery fine pinpoint bubbles and great acid and depth, it was wonderful with the passed hors d'ou-vres. They started with a classic: "Warm new potatoes stuffed with Caviar and crème Fraiche". The carefully hollowed-out potatoes were cooked just right, still firm and stuffed with gorgeous caviar and topped with a touch of the cream: lucious. Another great complement to the champagne was "Smoked Trout Cakes topped with Mustard Aioli".





Clos Windsbuhl Vendage Tardive. This wine had plenty of light mineral fruit flavors of apples and citrus, showing its Grand Cru terroir. It had a sharp edge and was not too sweet, with just the right acidity, allowing it to cut through the very rich foie and not fight with the subtle sauce. It is

very difficult to present 30 plates of foie gras, but Jodi's deft logistics allowed service to flow smoothly from table to table. On its perfect polenta platform, this dish was fabulous. Our wine commentator, Mitch Lundeen, gave us a history of Zind-Humbrecht and the small but venerated Clos Windsbuhl along with his tasting notes of a light citrusy wine with great acids and fine residual sugar.

The next course of "Oven Roasted Seabass over "Joe's" Oregon Morels in a Caviar Cream" was a thick white filet of delicious fish, cooked to perfection



with a nicely seared crust and moist and flaky flesh. Lovely succulent baby morel mushrooms, courtesy of Joe Cerniglia, were floating in warm rich cream sauce deftly flavored with caviar. The piece d' resistance was a reprise of the wonder Sevruga caviar in the form of a perfect quenelle-shaped spoonful atop the filet. For this course, Bob brought out the 1999 Kongsgaard Napa Valley Chardonnay. This

seemed to be a more restrained style for this winery, very tight, wonderfully dry with crisp acids and minerality so as to complement, not clobber the fish. Very light hints of butter and oak showed stronger in a later bottle of the 2001 vintage that came around the tables and showed more of the "California girl" qualities of Chardonnay. Overall

the 1999 appeared almost Meursault-like and worked wonderfully, especially with the great combination of salty caviar and sweet morels, an inspired creation by the Chef. President John Kuczanski gave us his compendium of researched and personal comments on the wine.



Jodi's next course, "Roasted Leek, Duck Confit and Baby Beech Mushroom Potage" was an unbelievably savory and thick broth brimming with earthy goodness and super flavors. Obviously, the roasted leeks gave it



some of its dimension, but the large chunks of twice-roasted tender duck meat took this dish to a new level. Jodi added a "Grilled Gruyere Crouton" which was the most sophisticated wedge of grilled cheese sandwich ever seen. Bob must have known that this fantastic dish called out for pinot noir, and he found an unusual and fascinating selection: 1976 Chambolle-Musigny "Les Amoureuses" from Domaine B. Serveau. This proved to be a bold but inspired choice by Bob. The vineyard is one of the few premier crus in Chambolle Musigny, and produces a distinct flavor from the terroir. The age of the wine showed early on but it still had big tannins and good fruit. With something as ephemeral as pinot noir, time is of the essence. This wine warmed up to an elegant, silky smooth, velvety soft palate of earth, leather, tobacco and barnyard notes while still showing the black cherry and blackberry fruit. It was a



wonderful surprise. Expert commentator Suhel Skaf noted the difficulty and risk in choosing older Burgundies, as the aging potential varies greatly from region to region and vintage to vintage. Some bottles will always show better than others. Overall, the wine was a great choice to complement the bold earthy flavors of this wonderful dish.

Jodi knows that one of the secrets of great cooking is great ingredients, and she wowed the crowd with “Wagyu Filet”, served au jus. Wagyu is the American version of Kobe beef, the pampered, well-fed, and massaged cow that produces melt-in-your-mouth meat. Each of the 30 filets was served with a perfect steakhouse char and was super tender with a hearty beef flavor. Bob chose two vintages of Robert Mondavi Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon for comparison and animated discussion. The 1978 was a fully resolved fruit bomb. Very feminine in style, the dominant fruit flavor was cherry-like, and the balanced components of firm tannin, good acid, and luscious fruit were perfect with every bite. The 1978 was more masculine, showing similar characteristics but larger, heavier and with a longer finish, but not as well resolved. Steve Mandy led the comments about the 1978, noting its distinct flavors and some possible bottle variation, while host Bob Dickinson offered a great description of the 1974 and its obviously attractive attributes. They both proved once again how delightfully Cabernet Sauvignon works with beef.



For one of the finest cheese courses ever presented, Jodi served four beauties: Campo di Montalban, Speziato Al Tartufo, Roaring Forties Bleu and Reggiano. All of these were quite different from the usual and a pleasant variation, each with its own unique flavor and consistency. They all went surprisingly well with Bob’s next choice: 1985 Cos D’Estournel in Double Magnum. This was a rich, substantial powerhouse of a wine. Dark ruby in color with lots of sweet black fruits and hints of minerals on the nose it had great lush berry and black cherry flavors with a touch of spice. It had a lovely long finish and appeared to be at its finest, and was truly enjoyable from this huge format.

Our first dessert (!) was a “Warm Roasted Cherry Bisque Topped with Homemade Vanilla Ice Cream”. This sweet/tart soup was thick and luxurious and the ice cream was sublime. With it we had a 1986 Sauternes-Barsac from Chateau Climens, served in 375ml.

Bottles. This highly rated wine, purportedly 100% Semillon, had a medium body with great concentration, a nose of lychee nuts and crème brulee and flavors of tropical fruits. It was deliciously unctuous without being cloyingly sweet and had a long finish, and also went extremely well with “Chocolate Chunk Cookies Warm from Jodi’s Oven”. These decadent, melt-in-your-mouth goodies were gobbled up with delight, as if we were little boys.

With or without cigars, Bob brought out a 1971 PX from Bodegas Toro Albala. This Spanish wine, from Amontillado grapes, was thick as molasses, with toffee, caramel, dark brown sugar, raisins and roasted nuts, and could have been our third dessert all by itself. It put just the right cap on a fantastic evening. Jodi introduced her cherished staff of servers and assistants to great accolades from all of us. Her home, her kitchen, her generosity and her culinary skills were outstanding. And Bob’s wine cellar proved to be almost as good a match to the fantastic foods. As Bob often says, he doesn’t make the wine, but now we all know that Jodi makes the most fabulous food in town. Thanks to both, it was a stellar example of Wine, Food and Friends.





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RECEPTION

WARM NEW POTATOES STUFFED WITH CAVIAR AND CREME FRAICHE
SMOKED TROUT CAKES TOPPED WITH MUSTARD AIOLI
BUTTER POACHED KEY WEST SHRIMP
TARLANT CUVÉE LOUIS MULTI-VINTAGE CHAMPAGNE
1988, 1989, 1990

MENU

BREAD "FRESH FROM JODI'S OVEN"

PAN SEARED "MIDI PYRENEES GASCON" FOIE GRAS
OVER CRISPY POLENTA IN A SAVORY BLACKBERRY SAUCE
1990 RIESLING CLOS WINDSBUHL V.T. ZIND-HUMBRECHT



OVEN ROASTED SEABASS OVER "JOE'S" OREGON MORELS IN A CAVIAR CREAM
1999 KONGSGAARD NAPA VALLEY CHARDONNAY



ROASTED LEEK, DUCK CONFIT AND BABY BEECH MUSHROOM POTAGE
WITH A GRILLED GRUYERE "CROUTON"
1976 CHAMBOLLE-MUSIGNY "LES AMOUREUSES" DOMAINE B. SERVEAU



WAGYU FILET
OVER A CAULIFLOWER PUREE' IN A JACK DANIELS BOURBON SAUCE
1978 MONDAVI PRIVATE RESERVE CABERNET SAUVIGNON
1974 MONDAVI PRIVATE RESERVE CABERNET SAUVIGNON



ASSORTED CHEESES
1985 CH COS D'ESTOURNEL, EN DOUBLE MAGNUM



WARM ROASTED CHERRY BISQUE
TOPPED WITH HOMEMADE VANILLA ICE CREAM
1986 CH CLIMENS, SAUTERNES-BARSAC EN DEMI'S



CHOCOLATE CHUNK COOKIES
"WARM FROM JODI'S OVEN"

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252nd Branch Event