



The International Wine & Food Society

Miami Branch



FOUR SEASONS HOTEL

Miami
JUNE 15, 2005

HOSTS: BOB MOSCHELL & JERRY STEIN



Christopher Zoller
Reporter

Our 254th Event was a coed “Purely Italian” feast at another new venue. Hosts Jerry Stein and Bob Moschell chose Marco Bax, the chef of the highly rated Aqua restaurant in the Four Seasons Hotel. They charged Chef Marco with producing an evening of Italian delicacies that they could match with Italian wines. To help choose those wines, they engaged wine consultant Juan Hernandez, who also provided wonderful commentary.



We kicked off the evening on the beautiful hotel patio, adjoining the pool, with a wonderful assortment of hors d'oeuvres. We were greeted in the tree-lined walkway by champagne servers on our way to the Antipasti Station. Three different Bruschettas included Roasted Bell Peppers, with fresh grilled flavors; Olive Tapenade, tasting earthy and salty; and Marinated Artichoke. Dry Figs marinated in Grappa were wrapped in Prosciutto di Parma for a great sweet/salt blend. Bresaola, beef rubbed with spices and air cured, was delightful with Fresh Minted Ricotta Balls. The meat is moist, lean and delicate, and also went well with the crumbled Parmigiano Reggiano, which was accompanied by Cacciatori, a tomato, onion and green pepper salsa, and Italian salami.



For hot snacks we enjoyed delicious Arancini di Riso, crispy rice balls stuffed with Smoked Scamorza cheese and very flavorful. From a chafing dish came Cod Mantecato, a lovely fish dip that went extremely well with crispy Polenta chips, shaped like French fries, but more delicate and flavorful than potatoes. All this was washed down with a unique Italian sparkling wine, the 1999 Barone Pizzini Saten Franciacorta. This was a 100% chardonnay grape (Blanc de Blanc) aged 6

months in barriques and 30 months in bottle. It was crisp and fruity at the same time, with hints of vanilla, and quite refreshing.

We were seated in our private banquet room, with floor to ceiling windows and an extremely attentive staff. Following a welcome by President John Kuczanski and introductions of guests and hosts, Bob and Jerry got down to business.





In addition to the expert our hosts secured for wine commentary; the hotel staff produced a fabulous, written Menu Description of the courses and wines. This was a wonderful innovation and a huge aid to the pleasures of the night.



Our first course was Branzino Evolution, three different presentations of this delicate Mediterranean sea bass found in the waters near Venice. The “Crispy with Marinated Tomatoes and Balsamic Jelly” was a perfectly pan-seared skin-on filet, with jelly cubes of the dark luscious vinegar of Modena. It was delicious. “Marinated with Lemon and Pink Crushed Pepper” was paper-

thin slices of ceviche, delicate and flavorful, showing the ability to cook with acids. “Tartar with Capers and Cucumbers, Mediterranean Style” was a tower of chopped raw white fish filet layered with the distinct flavors and consistencies of the capers and cukes. All in all, three great presentations, showing how adaptive and subtle this fish could be. The first white wine was the 2003 Villa Raiano Greco Di Tufo, DOCG Campania. From Grecco grapes and seeing no oak, this wine had light acids and exotic fruit flavors of apricots with honey. New to most of us (this family only started producing wine seven years ago) it went quite nicely with the three distinct dishes.



Gorgeous Handmade Raviolis stuffed with Rock Shrimp and Zucchini came atop a reduction sauce of light cream, Prosecco and Caviar. The light pasta wrapping was al dente and perfect to hold the wonderful stuffing. The sauce seemed rich and yet not heavy, with a nice salty finish from the caviar. This was a unique and fine “pasta” course. Juan brought out a slightly more serious wine, the 2003 Jermann Vinnæ Friuli. This is a blend of Riesling, Malvasia, and Ribolla Gialla grapes. The nose showed spice and tropical fruits, while in the mouth it was crisp and slightly oaky (compared to the previous wine) with good acid and depth and elegance. Another wonderful pairing.

Next up was an Italian classic, Veal Ossobuco in Gremolada with Saffron Risotto. Deep dark rich flavors of the tender, melt-in-your mouth veal from hours of braising with a rich brown tomato sauce. Gremolada, the classic Milanese topping for ossobuco, is finely chopped garlic, parsley, sage, rosemary and lemon zest, that was infused with olive oil for 6 to 24 hours and then added to the roasting sauce for



a powerful taste of freshness. This was superb, especially with the tender saffron risotto. For a wonderful tasting opportunity, Jerry and Bob found two 1995 Barbarescos produced by the Sottimano family in Piemonte, the “Curra”, and the “Cotta” (in Magnum). Two wonderful expressions of the nebbiolo grape, the “Curra” was the more feminine, with light fruit and cloves on the





nose, good structure and tannins, but with a certain coy sweetness. The “Cotta” was firmer, showing an earthy nose with fruit and spice, a heavier mouthfeel and an intense finish. A great comparison.



Chef Bax prepared one of the most fun and innovative cheese courses we have recently enjoyed. First was Ricotta “Dura” Honey, Peperoncino and Roasted Nuts. The twice-cooked sheep’s milk cheese was served in a “nest” for a crunchy contrast to the cheese’s soft texture, and the dried peppers and roasted nuts added their flavors. The Pecorino Sardo, with Dry Apricot and Balsamic Reduction, was equally inventive, contrasting the sharper hard cheese with sweet/tart sauce. In a departure from the menu,



we had Taleggio with a Ginger and Pear Compote. This soft cow’s milk cheese went nicely with the flavor fruit salsa. A lovely blend of four grapes was paired with these cheeses, 1995 La Grola Valpolicella Allegrini. Consisting of Corvina, Molinara, Syrah, and Sangiovese, this wine was fruity, but also dry, and displayed a nice minerality and spiciness.

Our dessert was Mascarpone Lime Semi Freddo with Wild Berries Sorbet and Raspberry Balsamic Reduction. The thick, rich and lusciously smooth lime and ricotta concoction had a crunchy graham crust, and the raspberry sorbet was vibrantly fresh and crisp. The little pistachio macaroon was a perfect final touch. The accompanying wine was a 2003 La Vis Late Harvest “Mandolaia”.



The grapes acquire high sugar content after drying on the vine and carry a strong nose of tropical and candied fruits. On the palate it was creamy, but light, with a sweet herbal finish

This was a wonderful experience for all. The staff of the Four Seasons took care of every detail, from our outdoor poolside reception to our private banquet room. Wine Commentator Juan Hernandez was very well spoken and extremely knowledgeable. We were all impressed when Chef Marco brought out his sizable staff and answered our many questions.

We never wanted for anything. It was a masterfully planned event, and kudos go to co-hosts Bob Moschell and Jerry Stein. In the true spirit of Italian “abondanza”, we had a hearty feast and a great time for “Wine, Food & Friends”.





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RECEPTION

ANTIPASTI STATION

COLD

BRUSCHETTAS: ROASTED BELL PEPPERS / OLIVES TAPENADE / MARINATED ARTICHOKE

PROSCIUTTO DI PARMA WITH DRY FIGS MARINATED IN GRAPPA

BRESAOLA AND FRESH MINTED RICOTTA ROLLS

CACCIATORI WITH PARMIGIANO REGGIANO

HOT

CRISPY RICE WITH SMOKED SCAMORZA CHEESE (ARANCINI DI RISO)

COD MANTECATO, POLENTA CHIPS

1999 BARONE PIZZINI SATEN FRANCIACORTA

MENU

BRANZINO EVOLUTION

MARINATED WITH LEMON AND PINK CRUSHED PEPPER

TARTAR WITH CAPERS AND CUCUMBERS, MEDITERRANEAN STYLE

CRISPY WITH MARINATED TOMATOES AND BALSAMIC JELLY

2003 VILLA RAIANO GRECO DI TUFO DOCG CAMPANIA



HAND MADE ROCK SHRIMPS AND ZUCCHINI RAVIOLI

PROSECCO AND CAVIAR SAUCE

2003 JERMANN VINNAE FRIULI



VEAL OSSOBUCO IN GREMOLADA

SAFFRON RISOTTO

1995 BARBARESCO 'CURRA' SOTTIMANO PIEMONTE

1995 BARBARESCO 'COTTA' SOTTIMANO PIEMONTE MAGNUMS



CHEESE

RICOTTA "DURA" HONEY, PEPPERONCINO AND ROASTED NUTS

PECORINO SARDO, DRY APRICOT AND BALSAMIC REDUCTION

CACIOTTA ROMANA, CRUSHED BLACK PEPPER, GINGER AND PEAR COMPOTE

1995 LA GROLA VALPOLICELLA ALLEGRINI VENETO



MASCARPONE LIME SEMI FREDDO

WILD BERRIES SORBET, RASPBERRY BALSAMIC REDUCTION

2003 LA VIS LATE HARVEST "MANDOLAIA" DOLOMITI

HOSTS: BOB MOSCHELL & JERRY STEIN

EXECUTIVE CHEF: MARCO BAX

WINE COMMENTATOR: JUAN HERNANDEZ

254th Branch Event