



## *The International Wine & Food Society*

### **Miami Branch**

# **MENDOZA** MIAMI RESTAURANT

Having properly feted the fairer sex on Valentines Day, 35 male members and guests gathered at the Bayfront venue now operated by a fantastic Argentinean entrepreneur for a wonderful stag dinner.



which were stuffed with tender ground beef and vivid spices; “Fresh Pears wrapped with Prosciutto and Arugula”, a lovely contrast of flavors and textures, the sweet pear offsetting the salty ham and the arugula lending a touch of bitter green sharpness; and “Cherry Tomatoes Stuffed with Cheese and Basil”, a nice take on a classic with a soft blend of cream and blue cheeses with chopped basil in tender tiny tomatoes. We drank the very refreshing Louis Chaurey NV Brut. As guest Ariel Solorzano commented later, this house is still owned by the same family after 100 years. The wine was very creamy with a smooth rich



FEBRUARY 15, 2006

**HOSTS: NED VALOIS  
& JOE CERNIGLIA**



**Christopher Zoller  
Reporter**

Our hosts for the evening were Joe Cerniglia and Ned Valois, who had worked very hard to get all the elements of the evening just right, and it was worth their effort.

The champagne reception was held on a spectacular waterfront patio with the lights of Miami, Key Biscayne, and South Beach glimmering off the surface of the Bay. We munched on “Mini Beef Empanadas”,



mouthfeel, a round start with hints of Northern Spy apples, and a pinot noir finish.

As we settled in to the lovely white on white dining room still with gorgeous views of the Bay, we had a chance to meet the several guests and get started on our first course: “Lobster Salad with Tri-Color Julienne Pepper, Green Apple and Lychee”. With lots of Asian influences and a tart dressing the lobster was tender and much like a ceviche. Our pairing was the 2000 Ferrari Carano Reserve Chardonnay, a big bold malolactic



fermented wine with plenty of oak and butter elements. Mitch Lundeen gave us a description of the winery and an excellent assessment of the wine's characteristics and staying power. There is still a lot of time to enjoy this rich wine.



The next course was also from the sea: "Pan Seared Herbed Sea Bass, with Orange Cipolini & Carrot Sauce and Fennel".

This was one of the best-cooked examples of Sea Bass we have had, perfectly seared on the outside and still juicy, opaque and flavorful on the inside.



It is a real tribute to the chef when the kitchen can serve 35 pieces all at once and not one was overdone. The sauce was an excellent accompaniment and the entire dish was delicious. Sticking with the chardonnay grape but heading to a Gran Cru Burgundy, we tried the 1992 Domaine Louis Latour Corton Charlemagne. Surprisingly, this wine could have benefited with more time in the decanter, as was proven later in the evening. It is a quirksome, terroir-driven white with great minerality and

good acid. The color showed the wine's age but the flavors were intact. Each of these chardonnays could have been served with either course, and they made for a great comparative tasting.

A fabulous "Magret of Duck with Mashed Sweet Potatoes, Mushrooms and Glazed Malbec Reduction" was next. Co-host Joe provided some fresh and rare mushrooms for this dish and it had excellent earthy rich flavors and a strong wine-based sauce. Duck and mushrooms pair beautifully with pinot noir,



as the hosts found a great vintage from Burgundy, the 1996 Pommard, by Faively. Again, like the whites, this Burgundy was more delicate and elegant, expressing its terroir more than its fruit, and as it opened up it complemented the dish beautifully.



To get to the meat of the evening, the chef prepared large portions of "Rib-Eye Steak, with Parsley Potatoes and Grilled Vegetables". This dish was all about the steak, cooked to order, very flavorful and apparently sourced in Uruguay, an excellent piece of meat. Cabernet Sauvignon seems to be the wine of



choice for steak and here we had an opportunity to sample two worlds: 1994 Chateau De Fieuzal and 1994 Dominus. This was a great pleasure for all of us and quite a challenge. The Dominus, from Napa Valley, is made by Christian Moieux of Bordeaux. This wine tasted of Bordeaux all the way and was strong, ripe, rich but with an earthiness and age that belied its true terroir. Many of us guessed it was the Bordeaux. Meanwhile, the de Fieuzal, from Pessac Leognan is typically a blend of 60% Cabernet and 30% Merlot with some Cab



Franc and Petit Verdot thrown in. It seemed lighter and fruitier than the Dominus. Both wines were wonderful and everyone enjoyed the expert commentary by Bob Dickinson, as he explained how the juxtaposition was possible and various reasons for the flavor components along with some history of each winery.



Forgoing a cheese course, we plunged right into “Chocolate Lanin”, an exotic display of chocolate mousse and cake and icing that sent us home with quite a buzz. Chocolate’s wine mate seems to be port and the hosts chose a 1977 Ferreira. It had the age and sweet richness to stand up to the chocolate and give it a nice edge. Bob

Hudson researched and expounded on port in general and the House of Ferreira.

Putting aside all of the great food and wine we enjoyed, this evening was one of those magical gatherings of boisterous camaraderie, good-natured kidding, lots of jokes and laughter and great fun had by all. The room roared more than buzzed and everyone came away feeling jovial and satiated.

The setting and the company were superb, and Joe and Ned deserve great thanks for this fine event.

Executive Chef Alex Rubio was introduced and peppered with several questions, showing our appreciation of his fine work and giving us some good insights to his cuisine.



The good times and companionship stressed the third part of our enjoyment of “Wine, Food, and Friends”.



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## RECEPTION

*MINI BEEF EMPANADAS*  
*FRESH PEARS, WRAPPED WITH PROSCIUTTO AND ARUGULA*  
*CHERRY TOMATOES STUFFED WITH CHEESE AND BASIL*  
*LOUIS CHAUREY CHAMPAGNE NV*

## MENU

*LOBSTER SALAD*  
*TRI-COLOR JULIANNE PEPPER, GREEN APPLE AND LYCHEE*  
*2000 FERRARI CARANO RESERVE*



*PAN SEARED HERBED SEA BASS*  
*ORANGE CIPOLINI & CARROT SAUCE AND FENNEL*  
*1992 DOMAINE LOUIS LATOUR CORTON CHARLEMAGNE*



*MAGRET OF DUCK*  
*MASHED SWEET POTATOES, MUSHROOMS AND GLAZED MALBEC REDUCTION*  
*1996 POMMARD FAIVELEY*



*RIB-EYE STEAK*  
*PARSLEY POTATOES AND GRILLED VEGETABLES*  
*1994 CHATEAU DE FIEUZAL*  
*&*  
*1994 DOMINUS ESTATE*



*CHOCOLATE LANIN*  
*1977 FERREIRA PORT*

*HOSTS: JOE CERNIGLIA & NED VALOIS*

*EXECUTIVE CHEF: ALEX RUBIO*

*261<sup>st</sup> Branch Event*