



*The International Wine & Food Society*  
Miami Branch

## **IW&FS Steak House Stag**

February 21, 2007

### **Fleming's**

Dear IW&FS Member:

You are invited to our 272<sup>nd</sup> event.

**WHERE:**

Fleming's Prime Steakhouse and Wine Bar  
2525 Ponce De Leon Blvd  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
(305) 569-7995

**WHEN:**

Wednesday, February 21, 2007  
Reception at 7:00 PM  
Dinner at 7:30 PM

**EVENT DESCRIPTION:**

This will be our Branch's first visit to Fleming's, which opened in this location last February. With a decor of dark wood, leather upholstery and soft lighting, this clubby steakhouse has a warm, upscale feel. A glance around the grand 6,700-square-foot restaurant confirms beef is the main attraction here: prime, corn-fed, USDA, aged up to four weeks, cut into portions, salted and peppered, and broiled at 1600 degrees.

Following a recent visit, Bob Hudson declared "Beautiful restaurant; great service and delicious food; the private dining room is a great size, with wine lining the wall on one side; ran into another member there, and he was pleased to hear we were going there the 21<sup>st</sup> Feb and wondered why we had not been there sooner, so I think we're in for a nice evening!"

Your hosts are Bob Hudson and Steve Blythe. Expect a delicious meal featuring lamb chops and tuna mignon, paired with great cellar wines. The generous private room permits us to confirm guests immediately, but reserve early because space is not unlimited.



*The International Wine & Food Society*  
Miami Branch

## *STEAK HOUSE STAG*



*FEBRUARY 21, 2007*

**Report by Drew & Scott Bailey**

Co-Hosts Bob Hudson and Steve Blythe greeted thirty-two members and male guests with Champagne Deutz NV, conviviality and cozy ambience in a private room at the relative newcomer steakhouse, Fleming's, for the Branch's 272<sup>nd</sup> event. The restaurant promotes itself as a wine friendly establishment; however, its' glassware selections are somewhat avant-garde, especially the Champagne 'flute'. It resembles a tall, thin 'Tom Collins' style glass that was generally well-received by the diners, as was the lemony tang, racily acidic Deutz aperitif.

Fleming's is an up-market chain that is part of the Outback Steak House corporate operation. No, we did not have 'shrimp on the barbie' nor the 'bloomin' onion'; however, raw onion inappropriately 'blossomed forth' in each of the first three courses; a 'chef's surprise' for the evening. As (unfortunately) happens occasionally, Chefs tinker with prior mutually agreed-to changes from the tasting dinner presentations to try to make it taste bolder or to look better on the plate. Fortunately, for many of our diners, pushing aside or ignoring the offending elements restored the dishes to a more mature wine-friendly style that we strive to achieve to best complement our older, mature wines being served.

First course was a spinach salad which is a challenge to match with any wine. Our hosts added the sliced Portobello mushrooms and goat cheese to make it more wine friendly. The chef partly cooperated with a mild balsamic vinaigrette, but added a slice of raw, red onion that was out of place. The pour was a very diminutive, 100% sauvignon wine; 1994 Pavillion Blanc du Chateau Margaux. The bouquet was modest at best, with a light, watery mouthfeel and a quickly-faded finish. It served its purpose; to refresh the palate.

Onward to a very delicious, aged tenderloin carpaccio, drizzled with a creamy creole mustard sauce, overburdened with a plethora of (pickled) capers, diced raw red onion and a chiffonade of raw spinach. In a fashion, sort of a de-constructed steak tartare, but without the raw egg. With further de-construction (pushing aside the onion, capers and spinach), the delicious meat and sauce were beautifully worthy of the 1996 Drouhin Beaune Clos de Mouches rouge. This Domaine wine of negotiant Joseph Drouhin was light in color, fully mature, wonderful marriage of fruit, soft tannins and refreshing acidity, mid-weight in the mouth with a lingering finish. A great start for the progression of vins rouges.

Our fish course was a 'meaty' rare-seared, nicely seasoned Tuna Mignon. Once again, a 'chef's surprise' arose in the form of an aggressively vinegary and pungent diced tomato and raw red onion sherry vinaigrette atop the entrée. A quick swipe of the knife to remove the accoutrement and move the mignon out of the tart juice saved the fish to be enjoyed with the delicious '86 Beychevelle, which showed beautifully this evening. Our hosts explained that their judgments were evenly divided on the wine pairings. They opted for the Bordeaux with the meaty fish (as is quite popular in Bordeaux but not as widely considered in the USA) and it was a very successful pairing. Many of us held onto our Bordeaux to try it also with the following course, and our table's opinions on the pairings were also evenly split.



Another word here about Fleming's corporate stemware. They present one glass – a Burgundy-styled shape – in two sizes, small and large. They used the larger bowls for all of the table wines except the sweet, which was presented in the smaller, almost snifter-like glass. A Burgundian style glass is also appropriate for Rhone wines, but most Bordelais would react negatively to drinking their wines out of another region's stemware style. No matter here; all of the wines showed nicely in the corporate glass, and I suspect that the Bordelais would grudgingly agree, especially given how delicious the Beychevelle presented this evening.

At 20+ years and evolving, the Beychevelle was 'a point', i.e. spot-on, ready to drink. The '86 vintage's fierce tannins had tamed a lot and the fruit component was surprisingly robust. Beychevelle has historically made their wines in a 'middle distance' style; it's chancy to hold them to the 'old bones' times as the British say. For those who held on to it until the very end, the wine had fully evolved just before dessert and provided a delicious 'lagniappe' for the patient. Glorious bouquet, mid-garnet color, mid-weight mouthfeel, the trademark St. Julien touch of sweetness and an elegant finish; a fine example of St. Julien Bordeaux. Co-host Steve Blythe's wine comments included interesting historical commentary regarding the property and its' label.

A word of caution here on the '86 vintage in general. Your scribe has tasted quite a number of '86's over the past year. It was a Cabernet year, a Medoc (Left Bank) year and a year of some of the fiercest tannins on record. Be patient with your Pauillacs, St. Estephes and most Medoc wines with a high proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon in the assemblage. They have many more years of cellaring ahead to evolve them to the state of this evening's Beychevelle.

The plat principal consisted of two beautifully rare, broiled, double thick Australian lamb chops plated with an un-necessary mint flavored au jus reduction sauce. Mercifully, it was on the dish before the chops were plated; therefore, the diners could segregate that foreign flavor from the delicious meat and the passed side dishes of mashed potatoes and yummy creamed spinach. The wine with the course was from a not very well known but respected appellation, Cornas, in the Northern Rhone. The area grows 100% syrah grapes, and is down river from Cote-Rotie and cross-river from Hermitage. Most of the older vintners, such as Auguste Clape and Alain Voge, use a very traditional process for maximum extraction, resulting in wines requiring long cellaring to evolve properly. Tonight's wine, a '96 vintage from the younger negotiants Tardieu-Laurent, was made in a more modern style, affording earlier accessibility but with sufficient 'stuffing' to keep one well rooted in sense of place. The wine's darker color, black fruits and 'smoked olives' nose (from co-Host Bob Hudson's witty comments) gave way to syrah's traditional peppery notes on the palate, with a lingering and satisfying finish; a delicious match for the succulent lamb.

Dessert was a traditional Crème Brulee, resplendent with lots of specks of Tahitian vanilla beans, which paired beautifully with the weightier (for a Barsac) Chateau Nairac '96 poured from both half and full bottles. Your scribes paired a glass of each, without any obvious color differences, but the wine from the demi was more evolved, the pineapple and honey flavors more complex, than the beverage in the full bottle.

Hearty congratulations are in order for our Co-Hosts, Bob Hudson and Steve Blythe, for 'calmness under fire', enduring a venue change, scheduling / date complications and ultimately 'chef's surprises' at dinner time.

As an end-note, when any of us return to Fleming's, please take into consideration that their menu offerings probably have many of these similar garnish treatments; however, they do not necessarily complicate the younger, New World fruit-bomb wines offered on their wine list. As with any traditional steak house, insist that they offer you a creditable Sauce Bearnaise and a herbed/reduction Sauce Bordelaise rather than the 'new age', 'Cal / Ital' relishes and vinaigrettes. Their kitchen staff is trying to emulate Emeril and appeal to the 'kick it up a notch' followers.



*The International Wine & Food Society*  
Miami Branch





*The International Wine & Food Society*  
Miami Branch





*The International Wine & Food Society*  
Miami Branch

# *STEAK HOUSE STAG*



*FEBRUARY 21, 2007*

## *RECEPTION*

*SPICY MUSHROOM CROSTINIS  
GRUYÈRE CHEESE PUFFS  
APPLE GORGONZOLA CROSTINIS  
DEUTZ NV CHAMPAGNE*

## *MENU*

*SPINACH & PORTOBELLO SALAD  
RED ONION BALSAMIC, PANCETTA & CRISPY GOAT CHEESE CROUTON  
1994 PAVILLON BLANC DU CHÂTEAU MARGAUX*



*TENDERLOIN CARPACCIO  
CAPER CREOLE MUSTARD SAUCE & RED ONION  
1996 JOSEPH DROUHIN BEAUNE CLOS DES MOUCHES ROUGE*



*TUNA MIGNON  
SEARED RARE WITH POPPY SEED AU POIVRE & TOMATO SHERRY VINAIGRETTE  
1986 CHÂTEAU BEYCHEVELLE*



*AUSTRALIAN LAMB CHOPS  
CHAMPAGNE MINT SAUCE, CREAMED SPINACH & MASHED POTATOES  
1996 CORNAS 'COTEAUX' - TARDIEU-LAURENT SYRAH*



*CRÈME BRÛLÉE  
CREAMY TAHITIAN VANILL BEAN CUSTARD WITH FRESH BERRIES  
1996 CHÂTEAU NAIRAC BARSAC*

*HOSTS: BOB HUDSON  
& STEVE BLYTHE*

*272<sup>nd</sup> Branch Event*