



The International Wine & Food Society
Miami Branch

IW&FS “Good Ideas” Coed

March 20, 2007

Ideas Restaurant

Dear IW&FS Member:

You are invited to our 273rd event.

WHERE:

Ideas Restaurant
2833 Bird Road
Coconut Grove, FL 33133
(305) 567-9074

WHEN:

Tuesday, March 20, 2007
Reception at 7:00 PM
Dinner at 7:30 PM

EVENT DESCRIPTION:

Ideas, opened in October, has generated considerable excitement among our members and recently garnered a top review from the Miami Herald food critic. Your hosts, Joe Garrigo and Austin Stubblefield, already have enjoyed the tasting dinner and confirmed that Ideas will deliver the high-level quality of food and service that our branch expects.

Joe and Austin found the food a superb fusion of Spanish and Mediterranean. While all of the dishes were great, Austin notes that two of the courses were real “show stoppers”-- both visually and in taste! The Spanish wines were delicious and innovatively paired in a real taste treat. The staff delivered without hovering.

Ideas’ cuisine, like its chef, hails from Castilla y León. Many of the foods are imported from this region, such as the Dorado (sea bream), a small fish with tender flesh and a succulent, meaty flavor somewhat similar to pompano, which we will be enjoying.

You will watch Chef Alvaro Beade and his kitchen crew (including extern students from Le Cordon Bleu) at work in a gleaming stainless-steel kitchen through a large picture window in the restaurant. The gastronomic goings-on form the visual focal point, and the rest of the redesigned, expansive and tastefully appointed space is lovely — bathed in beige, gracefully draped, and soothingly illuminated.



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Report by Chris Zoller

Sometimes a great notion turns into a great idea, and one good idea deserves another. In our continual quest for great venues for our monthly dinner gatherings we often have to brainstorm when we run into major obstacles. Our valiant hosts, Jose Garrigo and Austin Stubblefield, after struggling with one obstinate restaurant, took a notion from Bob Hudson and turned it into a splendid dinner at the new restaurant, Ideas. The location on Bird Rd. has been several other restaurants in the past, but the new owners, from Spain, have turned the entire building into a new and creative venue.

Our reception was held in the large and lovely second-story, with vaulted, beamed ceilings and a tasting bar and wine cellar. We were treated to Dill Salmon Mousse Canapés, a creamy blend served in puff pastry shells; Serrano Ham Croquettes, fabulous fried crisp cheese and ham bites; and Marinated Chicken Tarts, tasty shredded chicken in a pastry cup. We were plied with the crisp Deutz non vintage Champagne, which is a lovely aperitif.

Back to the ground floor, where we were delighted to see the renovations, which have expanded the kitchen, now behind a glass wall with automatic glass door for the servers, added a visible wine cellar, and lightened the whole look of the room. The restaurant is now more intimate and very well-suited to our group. After introductions by President John Kuczanski and hosts Joe and Austin, we got a nice description of the champagne (“zippy, tangy, lemony, life!”) from Bob Hudson, who was properly acknowledged by Austin for his great “idea” and helping with this wonderful event.

Our first course was a Seared Tuna Salad served with a Tomato, Olive & Mint Picatta and Crispy Onions on a light bed of greens. The perfectly cooked (rare) and tender tuna was sliced and arranged around the salad which was topped with the very tangy, salty picatta, almost like a tapanade. Joe and Austin were determined to bring out some Spanish wines for this meal and they started out with a wonderful white, an Albarino, the 2005 Pazo Pondal, from Rias Baixas. The wine was refreshingly dry but with distinct flavors and aromas of citrus, lemon and even lavender. Mike Farra gave us a great lesson in terroir and grape as he described the region near the sea coast as humid, producing a thick-skinned, low acid grape that produces this smooth and luscious wine. It is readily available in our market from many producers.

Out from the kitchen next came large martini glasses filled with Cream of Potatoes, with Portobello Mushroom and Foie Gras. This dish was wonderful. As the Chef later told us (in Spanish) this was only potato, no cream or milk added, perhaps a little broth and butter. It was served warm and was very rich. The mushrooms added a great earthy flavor and satisfying chewy chunks. It was a great blend of flavors with the delectable bits of foie gras just beginning to melt on top of the warm liquid, adding depth and delight to the mix. Joe took great delight in serving us what might be the first ever rose wine at one of our events. This type of wine is usually reserved for warm weather lunches all over the Mediterranean and here in South Florida as well, but rarely served in this context. This was a Spanish Rosado, the 2004 Fuente del Conde, Bodegas Gonzalez Lara, from Cigales. The wine had a deep raspberry color, from 80% Temperanillo grape and only 20% Verdejo, a white grape. It could have used a little more acid and citrus components to stand up to the rich dish. Joe described the region, near Castile, as one of hot summers but cold winters that produces great red wine grapes but also this, and other roses.



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In a large, shell-shaped white plate came Mediterranean Sea Bream Filet with Baby Calamari Fritters, Squid Ink and a Violet Potato Puree. The dish stood up to the dramatic presentation. For the most part our filets were well-cooked and served on a bed of squid ink sauce, which was quite thick and very pleasant, neither over-bearing nor bashful. I guess purple potatoes are not solely Peruvian, as these were prepared in a Spanish style, a very nice smooth puree of this distinctly different tuber. The bream, aka dorada, was flown in fresh from Spain, as many of our restaurants here in Miami do, and it was a delicious thin white filet, moist and light that was enhanced by the sauce. To give a different texture the wonderful crispy baby squid were a true delight, tender and tasty. Our hosts chose a wine from our cellar for this course, the 2002 Peter McCoy Sonoma County Chardonnay. This was a big year for California Chardonnay. Usually the weather in Sonoma County is much cooler than Napa, allowing the winemakers there to produce a drier, more mineral style, but 2002 was warm and wonderful. Add to that vintage the fact that McCoy brought in a top (over-the-top?) chardonnay producer from Napa to consult on this wine and we got an interesting blend of big style with Sonoma grapes. There was good minerality, sort of wet rain on limestone or river bed pebbles, but the wine had a big rich mouthfeel and a buttery oaky component. The classic chardonnay flavors of apple, pineapple and a hint of lemon were all there, but this is a full rich wine. The consultant, John Kongsgaard, is known for this style and I'm sure it was what McCoy was seeking. It worked well with the sauce, the potatoes and the calamari.

Moving on to the meat course the chef presented a Grilled Rack of Lamb with Sweet & Sour Salad and Garlic Confit. The small rack of chops was nicely grilled and well seasoned with classic hints of garlic and rosemary. The wonderful tang in the salad came from sections of grapefruit and orange and the garlic "confit" was cloves roasted into sweet caramelized tenderness. Lamb is a delight to pair with wine, as its distinct combination of game and domesticated flavors give one a large range of choice. Joe and Austin found another Spanish gem in our cellar, the 1998 Ramirez de Ganza Rioja, a Reserva. When you find a reserve wine, you at least know the winemaker thought it was extra special, and this beauty even had some age on it. It showed aromas of plums, black cherries, leather and a hint of tobacco. In the mouth those fruit flavors remained strong, and it was rich and thick on the tongue. Ariel Solorzano researched this wine for our commentary and explained although the vines averaged at least 60 years of age, the winemakers style was coming into the high tech age, as are many now in this relatively old region of Spain. Ariel explained that the first grape press allows the juice to run free, and the remaining "must" was softly pressed to create a more elegant style. With 80% Temperanillo grapes this wine had great fruit and body.

Our dessert course featured one of the most famous and favorite wines of Spain, affectionately know as "PX". The dish was a very light Chocolate Mousse with a Walnut Biscuit and a Saffron Crème Brulee. The overall feeling of the course was lightness. The cookie was delightful, like a breakfast biscuit but airy and full of walnut taste. The mousse was also airy and light, with rich chocolate flavor. Saffron is a traditional (and national) spice of Spain and here in Crème Brulee it had a nice touch, adding color and flavor to what again proved to be a light version of a rich dish. So it was not too difficult to pair this lightness with a hugely deep, dark, thick dessert wine that is especially good with chocolate but also at home with ice cream (as a topping) or cigars. Just don't leave it in the glass too long. We had the 1971 vintage. As John Kuczanski explained, the wine is made from a grape know as Pedro Ximenez by Toro Albala in Montilla. It ages extremely well and is a real treat. It also came from our cellar and we have other vintages from the '70s there as well.

As noted in the first paragraph, we struggle every year to find great restaurants or caterers to give us these wonderful experiences. It becomes increasingly difficult to provide you with variety and still reach the culinary and service heights that have become a standard of our Branch. We sometimes learn as we go along. It is difficult for restaurant kitchens to produce 54 dinners; each course perfectly turned out and perforce, served at the same time. So we give a little leeway. Where we can take control is in the wine service, and rather than rely on wait staff, we can decant our wines to prevent sediment and instruct in proper pouring techniques. Ideas will be a welcome addition to the dining scene here in Miami and we encourage you to try it on your own...and let them know we sent you. Chef Alvaro Beade is bringing us some wonderful cooking specific to his region of Castilla y Leon, and the kitchen staff is composed of ex students of Le Cordon Bleu. The service personnel were earnest, polite and professional. We all had a great time there in another gathering of "Wine, Food & Friends".



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RECEPTION

DILL SALMON MOUSSE CANAPÉS
SERRANO HAM CROQUETTES
MARINATED CHICKEN TART
DEUTZ NV CHAMPAGNE

MENU

SEARED TUNA SALAD
TOMATOES, OLIVES & MINT PICATTA AND CRISPY ONIONS
2005 PAZO PONDAL, RIAS BAIXAS, ALBARIÑO



CREAM OF POTATOES
PORTOBELLO MUSHROOMS AND FOIE GRAS
2004 FUENTE DEL CONDE, BODEGAS GONZÁLEZ LARA, CIGALES, ROSADO



MEDITERRANEAN SEA BREAM FILET
BABY CALAMARI FRITTERS, SQUID INK AND VIOLET POTATO PUREE
2002 PETER MCCOY, SONOMA COUNTY CHARDONNAY



GRILLED RACK OF LAMB
SWEET & SOUR SALAD AND GARLIC CONFIT
1998 REMIREZ DE GANUZA, RESERVA, RIOJA



CHOCOLATE MOUSSE
WALNUT BISCUIT WITH SAFFRON CRÈME BRÛLÉE
1971 TORO ALBALÁ, MONTILLA, PEDRO XIMÉNEZ

HOSTS: JOE GARRIGÓ
& AUSTIN STUBBLEFIELD

CHEF: ALVARO BEADE

273rd Branch Event