



The International Wine & Food Society
Miami Branch

Season Coed Finale

June 12, 2007

La Cofradia

Dear IW&FS Member:

You are invited to our 276th event.

WHERE:

La Cofradia Restaurant
2525 Ponce de Leon Boulevard
Coral Gables, FL 33134
(305) 914-1300

WHEN:

Tuesday, June 12, 2007
Reception at 7:00 PM
Dinner at 7:30 PM

EVENT DESCRIPTION:

Miami is the quintessential melting pot. Here we can find people, food and wine from all over the world, and nothing is what it seems. For our final coed event of the season, we are thrilled to be at La Cofradia in Coral Gables.

In a very chic Manhattan-style setting, French chef Jean Paul Desmaison, who comes to Miami by way of Peru, has created a truly International cuisine. For our special dinner, he will bring in ingredients from Oregon and Arkansas, from Antibes and Argentina, from Lisbon and Lima. He works wonders with salmon, pork and beef, and other exotic products.

To match the great dishes, your hosts Bob Dickinson and Christopher Zoller blew the doors off our wine cellar and found all 95 Parker-point and higher wines. You will be drinking a cult 2002 California Chardonnay, 1994 Phelps Insignia, a 1986 second growth Bordeaux, and a rare gem from Tuscany.

This will be an extraordinary wine-friendly repast that will be truly special. Reserve early as seating is limited.



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Reported by Christopher Zoller

For our final event of the season co-hosts Bob Dickinson and Christopher Zoller chose a relative newcomer to the local restaurant scene based on several dinners and meetings with French-Peruvian chef, Jean Paul Desmaison. The very elegant and sophisticated La Cofradia is located in a new building at 2525 Ponce de Leon Blvd. in the heart of Coral Gables, and has become a big hit for both lunch and dinner. Since it has been billed as a very wine-friendly place, we decided to really put them to the test. Reaching deep into the cellar, Bob picked some of our finest wines from three continents (more on those later) and we set about pairing them with some of Jean Paul's classic dishes. At the urging of President John Kuczanski we had a tasting dinner and were able to fine-tune this into a fantastic wine and food pairing experience.

We arrived to the very elegant dark wood, glass and high-ceiling muraled space for a reception of three fabulous hors d'oeuvres: Eggplant Carpaccio was light and full of flavor, served on a small skewer; a Lobster Napoleon consisted of lobster meat, mango and avocado piled high, sweet, smooth and savory; and Octopus in a Black Olive Sauce, perfectly chopped and cooked and served on a porcelain spoon in a fresh and rich tomato and olive Mediterranean sauce. These great presentations and flavors were washed down with Deutz Brut Champagne, non-vintage. The bubbly had a great, creamy mousse, a tart lemon/apple bite and a clean crisp finish. This wine will continue to be a welcome aperitif at our events.

Among the several things Bob and Chris had asked the staff of La Cofradia to do was serve all 64 of us in a timely manner and to make sure the pace of the evening was swift but smooth. Needless to say they did everything we asked of them, and much more. Our first course arrived promptly and perfectly cooked, not an easy chore for the excellent Grilled Wild Salmon, in a Balsamic and Thyme Sauce with Grilled Portobello Mushrooms, Caramelized Red Onions and Sautéed Broccolini. A very generous salmon filet was cooked perfectly (on the rare side, still juicy and quite pink) and the three vegetables were exceptional accompaniments: the earthy mushroom added a meaty texture, the onions provided just the right tangy sweetness and the broccolini gave a nice green crunch. More sweet, savory and herbal flavors were filled in by the delicious sauce.

The still wines from our cellar were all exceptional choices. For those who like to keep (Parker) scores, they were all 95 or 96 points by the revered critic. The pairing for the salmon course was the rich unctuous Kongsgaard Chardonnay, Napa Valley, 2002. As expected, this was a big, fat, rich, buttery chardonnay, qualities that come from the use of new French oak barrels. However the vintage gave up a wonderful medium-ripe fruit so the wine had a clean, crisp acid finish, making it perfect with the Omega-3 oils in the salmon. Mitch Lundeen expounded on the history of John Kongsgaard and the qualities of the very popular, but not widely available, wine.

After consulting and tasting the next two courses with the Chef, Bob and I felt it would be wonderful to put two great meritage wines together for a side-by-side tasting with the next two courses, so we had sommelier Kareem Zarwi pour the 1986 Pichon-Longueville Comtesse de Lalande next to the 1994 Joseph Phelps Insignia Proprietary Red Wine. These were both chosen for their respective exceptional vintages and the blending of a minimum of three of the Bordeaux red grapes. It did not hurt that Parker gives them both 96 points either! The Pichon Lalande, eight years the senior, was just ready to drink, being full bodied, well balanced and brawny and will continue to be drinking well for another 7 years.



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The Insignia was opulent, flashy, rich and concentrated and it should last another dozen years. But tonight was their night to shine. The first course was Slow Braised Pork and Grapes, featuring a Pisco based sauce and fried Sweet Potato rounds. The pieces of tenderloin were braised to a smooth soft tenderness, then sautéed for a crisp crust. The chef used the natural sweetness of the green seedless grapes to meld with the Pisco, a Peruvian liqueur, for a great sauce. Not too sweet or cloying to interfere with the wines, but just the right moisture level for the delightful meat. Crispy sweet potato chips completed the theme.

The Pichon had finally resolved most of its huge tannins and was extremely well structured. With a dark ruby/purple color and a bouquet of black currants, cedar and oak, it was surprisingly soft on the palate, very elegant and deeply concentrated. It appeared to be right at its peak. Bob Dickinson gave us a great description of this famed property, its history and terroir as well as some insight to its recent sale by Madame May Elaine de Lencquesaing with whom some of our members are well acquainted.

The second course for this pairing was Short Ribs and Polenta. What a perfect match for Cabernet Sauvignon based wines! The beef ribs were slow braised in red wine and port to a deep, dark caramelized finish and they literally melted in the mouth, tender and luscious. The creamy polenta was enhanced with a little white truffle oil for a distinct and earthy flavor. This dish was outstanding.

The 1994 Insignia hails from one of California's finest vintages and happens to be one of the best wines of that year. It was like a brawny baby brother to the Pichon, opulent and flamboyant with young concentrated fruit. Big and broad shouldered, it also had a nose of black currants plus spice, soy and smoke. On the palate the boldness extended to the huge fruit, voluptuous mouthfeel and long finish. Past President Suhel Skaf gave us a great rundown on the Phelps winery and this very special wine. These two wines were made all the more amazing by this opportunity to compare them together with wonderful, appropriate food.

Perhaps the wine and food match of the whole night was the next course. We asked the Chef for simple hard cheeses to show off another great red wine and he obliged with Manchego, Reggiano and aged Cheddar, served with delightful dried fruits, nuts and crackers. This was another change in the original plan as we found that the 1999 Falesco Montiano was too soft and supple for the big meat courses. This is one of two famous cult wines from Italy that are 100% Merlot and hail from single vineyards in the Lazio region of the northeast. It had a multi-faceted nose of chocolate, espresso, blackberries, cherries and currants. It was full bodied but with delicate multi-layered texture, rich, elegant, smooth, soft and pure flavors of dry black fruits and oak. With each bite of cheese the wine was both complemented and complementary, the two foods coming together to make a greater whole. Peter Benjamin shared his concise but informative report on this wine along with his insightful personal notes. This is what a great marriage of wine and food is all about.

Dessert was an amazing amalgam, a platter of Chocolate Marquise, Passion fruit Cheesecake, and Suspiro de Limena (lime surprise sorbet). These three great taste treats came together perfectly for the amazing Buller Premium Fine Muscat, non-vintage (96 Parker points). This superb dessert wine from Australia has a medium dark amber color and a nose showing toffee, molasses, brown sugar and hazelnuts. 100% Muscat grapes make it lighter but still it is a fortified wine with unctuous flavors, good fresh acidity and wonderful aromatics. The rich chocolate cake was deep and thick, the cheese cake was a delightful new flavor and the suspiro very refreshing. My personal notes say "...like a Rum Runner!" In his report President John Kuczanski admitted his personal fondness for sweet wines and this Muscat in particular.

This event was a real showcase for our Chef and his staff at this fantastic new restaurant. I know that many members are returning here for other great treats off of Jean Paul's exciting menu. (Wait until you try his Baby Octopus!) The service was exceptional, every course came out hot, on time and fresh; every dish perfectly cooked and awesomely flavorful and wine-friendly. We also were able to show the truly international aspect of our cellar, a tribute to Wine Committee Chairman Bob Dickinson. No where else will you get to drink such highly rated, well-aged and scarce wines than at our gatherings of Wine Food & Friends.



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LA COFRADIA

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RECEPTION

EGGPLANT CARPACCIO
LOBSTER NAPOLEON
OCTOPUS IN A BLACK OLIVE SAUCE
DEUTZ CHAMPAGNE NV

MENU

GRILLED WILD SALMON
BALSAMIC AND THYME SAUCE, GRILLED PORTOBELLO MUSHROOMS,
CARAMELIZED RED ONIONS AND SAUTÉED BROCCOLINI
2002 KONGSGAARD CHARDONNAY



SLOW BRAISED PORK AND GRAPES
BRAISED AND SAUTÉED PORK WITH GRAPES AND PISCO,
SERVED WITH FRIED SWEET POTATO ROUNDS

1986 PICHON LALANDE & 1994 PHELPS INSIGNIA
SIDE-BY-SIDE FOR 2 COURSES

SHORT RIBS AND POLENTA
BRAISED IN RED WINE AND PORT, SERVED WITH
CREAMY POLENTA AND WHITE TRUFFLE OIL



CHEESE PLATTER
MANCHEGO, REGGIANO AND CHEDDAR
1999 FALESCO MONTIANO LAZIO



DESERT PLATTER
CHOCOLATE MARQUISE, PASSION FRUIT CHEESE-CAKE AND SUSPIRO DE LIMENA
BULLER MUSCAT NV

HOSTS: BOB DICKINSON & CHRISTOPHER ZOLLER
EXECUTIVE CHEF: JEAN PAUL DESMAISON

276th Branch Event