

Magnum

0009 - Nov 2015

The Newsletter of the Montreal Branch of the International Wine & Food Society

"Food is our common ground, a universal experience" James Beard



A Message from our President

Dear Friends and Fellow Members, 2015 has been another great year for our Chapter.

The combination of tradition, innovation and the participation of all — members, Board Members -makes the Montreal Branch an extremely dynamic example for all other Chapters.

We continue to attract new members and most of our Events have been fully booked; sometimes overbooked. IWFS Montreal is well recognized by restaurant owners and chefs in the city; their appreciation of our support is demonstrated in providing us quality, quantity, and the warm welcome at our events, e.g at Damas, Chez Sophie, Laloux, M sur Masson, Laurea, Sel Gras and Pagliaccio.

We had two great Wine Tasting Events — one at the Régiment de Maisonneuve and a great trip in Prince Edward County - Thanks to our Cellar Master and the organizers of these Events. For the Wine Trip to Prince Edward County, we invited members from other Branches and had a great delegation from the Toronto Branch. We continue to modernize our operations. Annual Dues and Event Communications are now done by email; saving postage, paper and printing expenses for the Chapter. Our Wine Cellar is being centralized and the inventory will be controlled electronically. I take this opportunity to thank the members who have over the years generously, and graciously, kept wine bottles for the Branch in their cellar.

The quality of the Magnum continues to improve – thanks to its Editor. Our Editor is also Governor on the IWFSA Board maintaining the historical presence of Montreal across the World.

Many of you take the time to communicate your comments and suggestions; I do really appreciate when you reach to me or the other Board Members.

We have an exciting 2016 planned ahead (See "SAVE THE DATE, Page 16).

Louis Villeneuve

Do you know someone who may be interested in joining IWFS Montreal?

Non-members are allowed to join dinners, too!

Please contact the president at

I.villeneuve@iwfsmontreal.com

Extra copies of the Magnum are available to send by Internet or hard copy to your friends!

Please contact the Editor at

m.lazar@iwfsmontreal.com

Editor's note



You may notice that this edition is now called Fall 2015. It seems hard to make sure the Magnum gets published each May and November. We will be now publishing Spring and Fall.

I wish to thank all the contributors who make great efforts in reporting on our events. Also, thanks to Pierre-Marc, Judy Yelon and Leslie

Breitner as regular photographers. Thanks to Louis and the board for their continued support and Philip Russel from the Toronto Branch.

Please note our Fall Americas 2016 meeting in Niagara, Ontario. Hold the date – I have attended a few and I recommend without hesitation.

Mark Lazar





Forest and Stream Club June 8, 2015

- By John Breitner -



What a spectacular setting! The Forest and Stream Club sits at the very tip of the Island in idyllic environs that were immune to the inclement weather of the evening. Everyone seemed also to enjoy our Society's traditional camaraderie. For many, that was the good news. Much less of a joy were the food, wine and service – and I'd venture to say that many expected more. The apéro was from Luxembourg, a bubbly rose called Bernard-Massard Cuvée de l'Ecusson. It was pleasant, without pretensions, and well suited to accompany the canapés. The latter were not especially distinguished, however, and somewhat lacking in refinement or finesse. This characterization seemed to apply to most of the subsequent dinner, with giant asparagus smothered by almond and bacon bits, a small lobster main course that tended to be dry and without much to enhance it, and a croquette de pomme de terre that was not especially memorable. There were some high points, to be sure. The fish stew with smoked tomato crostini was quite lovely if not especially original in concept. The legumes grilles with the meat course were very pleasant, and the panna cotta dessert a real crowd pleaser. The most interesting wine of the evening was probably the Vézélay 2011 that accompanied the asparagus.



Alexander Mersereau & Barry Shiller



Leslie & Catherine Shand



Pina Mazigi & Nicole Forbes







Laurel & Norman Wolfe



À table

It had a notably individual character that stood up well to the vegetable course – not always so easy to accomplish. The Planeta La Segreta 2014 that accompanied the main course had good fruit intensity without being especially distinguished. Seconds were not offered, but were available on request. I, at least, missed having a libation other than coffee or tea to accompany the dessert, as I have been "spoiled" and led to expect this by earlier events.

As always, however, the company was most pleasant, and only a few people seemed indignant in their disappointment about the quality of the food or service. And I did hear glowing praise offered to the Vézélay as a pleasant surprise to most (this being a fairly rare appellation) and the panacotta. Happily, in the end, the setting and our good folks saved the evening and rendered it quite pleasant overall.

Editor's Note: At this President's Dinner, I had the pleasure of presenting Louis the IWFS Americas Silver Medal. This is presented by the Board of Directors of the Americas to recognize his exceptional and selfless contribution to our branch.



For those who missed out!

THE FOREST & STREAM CLUB 1800, LAKESHORE DRIVE, DORVAL - TEL: (514) 631-7101





Prince Edward County 22-24 August, 2015

- By Carola Price -



Ideally situated between Montreal and Toronto is the idyllic Prince Edward County. The farms that have dotted this landscape for generations are now sharing their area with rows upon rows of slightly acidic, small berry

beauties destined for the hands of a group of determined winemakers looking to produce some of Canada's finest wines. A curious group of Montrealers arrived one August day to see what all the fuss was about. The Toronto members that joined our bunch already knew of the profound impact these wineries have had in the Ontario market, where the LCBO has aggressively pushed local product on its clientele for the past two years. Having introduced the wines of Norman Hardie at Etat Major in April 2013 cellar master Carola Price thought it was high time to let members experience her favourite wine region in Canada. Along with fellow organizers Lou and Sylvia Vogel she created a program schedule that was vigorous and delicious for all involved.













AN IWFS WINE COUNTRY ADVENTURE PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY, ONTARIO - AUGUST 22-24, 2015 -

The weekend gave members a chance to meet owners, winemakers and sommeliers in their milieu, all working to bring the wine drinker the best possible exposure to what many still consider 'plonk'. From the reactions and pleasure on these members faces it seemed that each person found a wine that was coming home to take a rightful place in their cellar.





















For those who missed out! LONG DOG 104 BREWERS RD, MILFORD. ON TEL: (613)476-4140

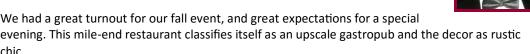






Sel Gras September 21, 2015

- By Mark Lazar -



The canapés were very tasty, but too few. We arrived at 7 10 and they were already out of the oysters. The tartar was rated well, but missing some taste.... (I do tend to refer to the survey when writing my reviews, giving a sense of the overall reception to the evening, not just my opinion). The cava was well received and I enjoyed it but not great...rated mostly a 3-4. I enjoyed the spiced first course of Chorizo glacé Au miel and this was equally enjoyed for the most part. The Syrah was "rich and forceful" but it is hard to pick a wine to fight with the spicy chorizo first course.

The second course of cold octopus, (versus warm?) was ranked a 3-4 and I think we all agreed that it could have been tastier, slightly warm and it fought with a very tasty purée, but too much on the plate starting to "stuff" the members, which will haunt later.

The cod followed and was maybe the best received dish of the evening. Crispy and tasty. Again, the sides were overwhelming In flavour and quantity. This would be an unfortunate theme of the evening. The pairing with the Saladini Pilastri, Falero 2013 was not well received. It was a good wine, but hard to match up with the purées and shiitake.

We then moved to the meats... Magret de Canard followed by Steak de Cerf. It was almost universal that both principal components the Canard and Steak were very enjoyable, but unable to be properly appreciated due to the heavily flavoured sides and large quantities. At this point of the evening, it was as if we were eating 3 full mains its competing tastes, lots of purées and not all that distinguished taste-wise one from the other. There were a lot of raised eyes from the smoked meat and pickles presented with the Steak.

The Rioja was very well received, delicious and well enjoyed by all.

The finish was a hit...the desert of Gateau triple chocolate with poached pear Au Porto was a 5 to those who stayed. Not too rich and nicely balanced with the poached pear. I loved it.

This may seem like an overly critical assessment of the evening. I know there were a lot of negative comments and people leaving early and not happy. I was not so critical and felt with some adjusting of the menu the evening would have been much more positive.

I know how hard Michelle worked to prepare for the night. It is unfortunate that the restaurant did not hold up their end, and advise Michelle that they were not up to the task of serving so many courses to 40 people and stretched it almost 5 hours. One less dish and the evening would have been very different, shorter and the kitchen less encumbered. As well, the stress on the staff was obvious and they would have been able to smile more.





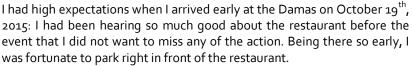
For those who missed out! SEL GRAS





Damas October 19, 2014

-by Raymond Landry-





When I came in, the people were in good spirits and laughter broke out from time to time indicating that people were already enjoying themselves. The restaurant was closed for the occasion; our dinner was held as a private event. There were two separate rooms in the restaurant. Although you could go from one room to the other for the apero, a room was assigned for the dinner where the guests would sit at the three long tables. We were 39 participants of which 11 were guests, almost one-third of the whole attendance. It was a special night in Canada that night: the federal election night. Therefore, that night, the participants elected to attend a IWFS dinner instead of watching television to be kept abreast of the results. They had the better of the two worlds: they enjoyed a wonderful meal while being kept informed about the election results thanks to a well informed guest who was shouting them to the audience as soon as there were meaningful developments.

The place was huge and the ceilings were high; so the microphones were most welcome for the staff and the participants to address the audience. Like it is the custom in Oriental cuisines, the dishes for everybody were served in the middle of the table not in individual plates. People, then, helped themselves to the treats that flowed at the tables that night. Therefore, if you wished to have more than a regular sized portion, it was possible but you had better plan ahead: there was plenty of food on the menu and you did not want to skip any item.

The waiters came to each individual table and explained in detail the particular dishes that were served; they were more than willing to answer any question that you might have had about the food or the wines. The wines were selected by the sommelier on duty at the restaurant and were coming mostly from the Bekaa valley in Lebanon. If you had a particular request, the waiters were more than willing to comply with it: a particular guest sitting in front of me had slices of lemon added to her glass of water. The staff made sure that no plate remained empty for very long; as soon as there was some room on a plate, it was immediately filled with food. We started with mezzes , which are bites of various food much like the Spanish tapas. We enjoyed especially the fattouch which was deliciously refreshing. The grilled Akkawi cheese was well seasoned with zaatar and nigella seeds. Zaatar is a mixture of herbs and spices mostly thyme, sumac and sesame seeds which is used to bring a final touch of flavor to the dish much like the ras-el-hanout in the Moroccan cuisine and the garam masala in the Indian cuisine. As far as the nigella seeds are concerned, be careful not to mix them up with black cumin which some people do. to mix them up with black cumin which some people do.

Thereafter followed the eggplant Mutabbal, the beet Mutabbal and the Mouhamarra which were all suitably complemented with a round, plump, slightly sweet pita bread which the company around me and myself found wonderfully delicious. My personal handwritten note about the beet Mutabbal: wow!

The Château Ksara Blanc de Blancs 2013 from Lebanon, a white wine, was well paired with the mezzes: airy, fresh and emitting an orange blossom scent.

I cannot comment on the humus. Being allergic to one of the ingredients, I abstained from it but the company around me and the members in the survey seem to enjoy it.

A red ruby colored wine made up of Syrah and Grenache reminiscing of a taste of spices was paired with the humus: the Émirs 2010, Clos Saint-Thomas, from the famous Bekaa valley in Lebanon.





Between the mezzes and the entrées, there was a long waiting period. We hinted that the staff had never served a large group before and they needed to catch up with the frantic number of plates to make. It allowed me the opportunity to reacquaint myself with old friends and neighbors of mine who happened to be guests that night. We enjoyed the chat and brought our lives up to date. During that recess, we were dutifully posted about the election results and, accordingly, knew about the outcome as well as any other Canadians watching the broadcast on television.

The entrées followed: first, the sea bass and then, the lamb. Comments were generally favorable about the main dishes. The sea bass had a lot of vegetables with it and the company seemed to appreciate it. However, I found personally the lamb slightly overcooked: more medium than medium rare; tablemates share that view as well as other members. It did not prevent some of them to eat around the bones like hungry dogs!

The last wine of the night was a Château Kefraya 2010, another red ruby colored wine but with a darker hue embodying more tannin with a flavor of spices and aniseeds, also grown in the Bekaa valley in Lebanon which seem to appeal to the dinner guests as well as the previous wines on the menu. The next item on the menu was the dessert: a knafé, a cheese pastry, and a baklava ice cream. If there was a course during the meal which deserved praise, that was it. Every member who bothered to fill up the survey sent after the event gave that dessert the highest rating that there is without exception: unanimously delicious. It is an unusual and uncommon occurrence when there is a general agreement all across the board about a particular food being delicious: I remember when I wrote the review for Club Chasse et Pêche: the boeuf Kobé received that outstanding distinction. Now, at the Damas, it is the knafé. The food lovers at the club may find comfort in knowing that Lesley Chesterman, in her review in The Gazette on August 21rst, 2015, was also enthralled by the dessert. What about the baklava ice cream? I had the opportunity to eat a ginger ice cream in a Japanese restaurant before but never a baklava ice cream. I wondered: is it a baklava filled up with ice cream or an ice cream with morsels of baklava in it? It was going to be the latter rather than the former. Do not tell anybody but I indulged in several servings thanks to the complicity of kind tablemates and obliging waiters. There again, I am not alone to have fell for that treat: Lesley Chesterman in her hereinabove mentioned review and Marie-Claude Lortie in her own review which was published in La Presse on September 25th, 2015 were both won over by that creative, exquisite and scrumptious dessert. I find myself in good company: our two most prominent culinary columnists in the city and several of our distinguished members!

All around, it was a fabulous night. We have many such nights at the club and which is the best is anyone's pick; however, if I trust the general comments, that night will remain memorable. Such convivial gatherings would not be possible without the coordinated efforts of all the club's volunteers and, especially, the event's organizers: Mark Lazar and Louis Villeneuve to whom special thanks are addressed. One final thought: while we enjoy that awesome food, let us not forget that the very same people who created it are in the midst of a raging civil war in their country and do not have the chance to enjoy it peacefully and amicably. It is only fitting, then, to express our wishes that the future bestows peace upon that unfortunate people so that they, too, partake in such a feast at the family table!





Il Pagliaccio November 16, 2015

- By Judy Yelon -



Held at Pagliaccio on Laurier Avenue, our November event attracted 39 signups plus four who were relegated to a waiting list. This, despite the price of \$150 per member, plus the usual club subsidies. Did the "Sophisticated North Italian" meal meet expectations? Yes and no.

Pagliaccio's premises are professionally decorated in charcoal grey with pops of red in the chairs, discreetly lit by a snowfall of hanging lights. In the surveys, the restaurant was described as "comfortable" and "pleasant" but also "tight." The space was a tad small to accommodate us. Unlike our first visit to Pagliaccio two and a half years ago, when the meal began with four hors d'oeuvres, just two were passed by the attentive staff as we stood, uncomfortably crammed between walls and tables.

Kasey Cree, a member and professional chef, noted that the parmesan toast slightly overwhelmed the herb and salt baked cherry tomato balanced on it. Platters of these were passed several times, as was the other hors d'oeuvre, a mini concoction of beet and orange on crisp endive leaves; no-one could complain they had been missed by the wait staff, though a few people commented on the lack of variety. The steady stream of bubbly white from Veneto was enthusiastically received.









Summoned to table, we found ourselves among a sympathique group of foodies eager to discuss the meal to come. Bread is not often found on IWFS tables, but tonight it made its appearance in two forms: addictive house-made grissini and petite slices of baguette. They were paired with Giachi Primolio, an assertive extra-virgin olive oil pressed from handpicked Tuscan green olives.

While we awaited the premiere entrée, Doris Manzo commented on the Vignalta Brut, pronouncing it "crisp and well-balanced." We learned, too, that it is obtainable for \$28 at the SAQ. Since the wines were coming from the resto's and not the IWFS cellar, we can safely assume that the cost to the branch tonight was much more. The sole advantage to not using IWFS wines was that the wines we were drinking are easily obtainable.

The much anticipated lobster ravioli arrived, four to a plate, swimming in butter. It was voraciously received and universally praised. Carla Costa declared it "the best pasta ever." Its liquid partner, the Tyrolean Alto Adige, "didn't take away from the ravioli," noted Maria-Elena Ouimette. A majority of responders to the survey rated it 4 or 5: delicious; but mind you, someone also called it "disgusting." It normally sells for \$20.85.

The deuxieme entree, a Tarte Tatin Cipollini, turned out to be tiny, sweet, caramelized whole onions seated atop slightly moist puff pastry. In his commentary, John Breitner called the accompanying wine, Giacomo Grimaldi Valmaggiore 2012, "a Burgundian equivalent...at an affordable price, \$25." An eloquent witness to the wine's appeal were the "nearly empty glasses on the table" at the end of this course, noted Ray Landry. It also got high marks on the survey; 98.3 percent gave it 4 or 5.

Beautiful, "moist," said Albert Beniste of the pork chops and pork belly with mash that constituted the plat principal alongside Ama Chianti Reserva 2009, which is, unfortunately, no longer available at the SAQ. A close relative, Ama Chianti Classico 2013, lists at \$27.70.

Dessert – a panna cotta flavoured with Tahitian vanilla – ended the meal on a satisfyingly sweet note. It was not accompanied by the usual dessert wine, a smart move by the organizers.

A hearty thank-you to the intrepid becs fins Louis Villeneuve and Pierre-Marc Lariviere, aided by George Remus, for guiding this dinner through the shoals of gastronomy. Not an easy task.











Laurea December 7, 2015

- By Carol Tennenbaum -



The restaurant Laurea was the perfect place to celebrate the last event of 2015. Beautiful people all dressed up for the occasion, fitted well with Laurea's superb decor. We were greeted at the bar on the lower level by the friendly and polite staff, where we were served a

glass of Raventos, a fruity sparkling white wine that paired well with all of the delicious "amuse-gueule".

All of the evening's exquisite wine pairings were suggested by chef sommelier Fred Fortin. We were in a festive mood, exchanging our appreciation of the great food, and some of us catching up after not having seen each other in a long time.

We were then escorted up the grand staircase, and seated in the dining room. We were immediately impressed with the high ceilings, open kitchen and glassed-in wine cellars.

Our first course was the foie gras terrine. Despite foie gras not being a personal favorite of mine, the presentation of this dish, together with the combination of flavors on a crispy warm brioche really impressed me to the point of wanting more. Many members agreed that the 2013 Alsace, with its slight sweetness, was an excellent pairing.



The second course was the beef tataki. The Japanese elements like the daikon radish and shitake mush-rooms really elevated its flavors. It was my favorite dish of the night and one of the best beef tataki I've had (I want the recipe...). The pinot noir was a perfect pairing.

Our third course, the black cod, got mixed reviews. While most found it perfectly cooked and the accompaniments very tasty, some found the cod slightly overcooked. With its blend of acidity and sweetness, the 2013 Picarana was a good pairing.

Following several very generous courses, we were served the veal sirloin. Many of us were quite full by then, some hardly touching the dish. The veal however, was delicious and perfectly cooked, and accompanied by an amazing mushroom ravioli that got rave reviews by all. The only downside of this course was the Chianti, which was too tannic and many simply did not like the taste.

The final course was the chocolate pana cotta dessert. It was so pretty and original. The panacotta was done to perfection, the poached pear delicious, but many of us did not enjoy the mushroom parfait. It was also a very rich dessert after such a substantial meal.

The imagination and creativity that Chef Soufiane Ghani and pastry Chef Nicolas Sénépart bring to Laurea, together with the impeccable and attentive service we were given, made for a remarkable dining experience. "

The black tie end of year IWFS event was beautifully organized by George Remus and Louis Villeneuve-thank you so much for a memorable evening.

I would like to conclude in the same way as one of my favorite food critics, Marie-Claude Lortie from La Presse, who always finishes her reviews by "Would I go back?". My answer for Laurea- I am running!











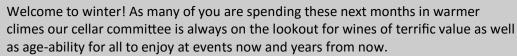






Cellar Report

- By Carola Price -





I am spending the month of January in California and enjoying many wonderful wines. Alas so many become un-affordable with our declining dollar and the transport is always in question, however it has not stopped me from looking for like minded labels in the Canadian liquor system. We are in the process of centralizing our cellar. This is a first for the Montreal Chapter and brings many questions and logistical issues to mind. Pierre-Marc is working on a computerized system that allows the event planner to take out wines with ease as well as depositing unused wines which will be marked for auction. This streamlined operation will be in place in the coming months. Those with wines in their cellar should expect a call to arrange for pick up.

With this in place I will also be able to physically see the true inventory our branch holds and assign a real dollar value to the entire cellar.

We stand at around 620 bottles and this year the goal is to use our wines at many of this seasons' events. Each event planner is pushing restaurant owners to let us use our wines and we have three in place with many more in our sights.

I look forward to hearing about your travels and wine adventures at our upcoming evenings but until then stay warm and eat and drink with passion.

Niagara, Ontario, Canada IWFS AMERICAS GREAT WEEKEND

Thursday October 13 to Sunday October 16, 2016

"IW&FS Americas Inc. and the Niagara Branch invite you to joi 120worldwide members experiencing the wonderful wines and cuisine of Niagara Canada"

HOLD THE DATE

The Great Weekends are unique and special experiences not to be missed. 1st class accommodations, events, tastings and meeting fellow members from across the Americas and the World"

isit <u>www.iwfs.org/americas</u> for more details and booking information/ Montreal members can contact Mark lazar : m.lazar@iwfs.com/

Courtesy of Wine Country Ontario

Welcome New Members!

Invite your friends as guests... Guests become members.





FUN MEMORIES FROM THE SEASON





IWFS Board of Directors 2015- 2016

President /

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Visit us on the web at: http://magnum.iwfsmontreal.com

NOTE: To contact any member through IWFS e-mail:

First Letter of First Name "dot" Last Name @iwfsmontreal.com - Easy to remember...Mark Lazar = m.lazar@iwfsmontreal.com

SAVE THE DATE FUTURE EVENTS

MONDAY **JAN 25 2016**

MKT

Host: Leslie Breitner



MONDAY MARCH 7 2016

Le Filet Hosts: Suzanne Pridham, Maty Peletz, Vania Di-Gregorio & Mark Lazar



SUNDAY APRIL 17 2016

DOCA

Host: TBA



MONDAY **MAY 16 2016**

Vertige

BORDEAUX wine tasting Host: Carolina Price



MONDAY
6 JUNE 2016
PRESIDENT'S BLACK TIE
ITHO

Hosts: Sylvia & Louis Vogel





SUNDAY
AUGUST 21 2016

Au pied de la Chute Host: Carolina Price Morin Heights

273 Route 329, Lachute, QC J8H 3W9



INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS AND ADVENTURES

DANUBE RIVER CRUISE - June, 2016

NIAGARA GREAT WEEKEND - OCTOBER 13- 16 2016

SONOMA VALLEY REGIONAL FESTIVAL - 2017 PHILADELPHIA GREAT WEEKEND - 2017

For more information go to www.iwfs.org/americas/festival-1 or contact Mark Lazar at m.lazar@iwfsmontreal.com

GREAT WINE AND FOOD COMMENTARY

VISIT THE IWFS INTERNATIONAL BLOG - blog.iwfs.org

A weekly addition is "blogged" by our Honorary President Sid Cross.

Have a look, we think you will find them interesting, informative, and will stimulate discussion.

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