

The Bluffs Food & Wine

July 2012 *gazette*



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Soirée at Big Sandy



A publication of the Council Bluffs Branch of the International Wine and Food Society

Event Report

April 14, 2012

Titanic Event at the Council Bluffs Country Club

A Titan of a Meal

by Tom Murnan



It was a dark and stormy night. No, really, it was! Unlike the night the Titanic sank, which saw glassy seas and a starlit night, tornados were coming up from the south, the Nebraska Football Spring Game was cancelled, and rain was falling aplenty. The weather channels were recommending that everybody hunker down in their basements. But if that advice had been followed, we would have missed one of the absolute best meals that I have ever eaten.

As can be seen from the menu card, there were a lot more courses available that night. The tasting menu was a new innovation in 1912, right in line with age of Conspicuous Consumption. Waiters who circulated the Saloon offered the entire menu on silver salvers. Diners could sample something from every dish should they so wish. Eleven courses were available.



Twelve intrepid souls braved the rain and half flooded parking lot to go aboard the CB Country Club for a truly memorable meal. Inspired by the hundredth anniversary of the ship's striking the iceberg on April 14, 1912 and Titanic's last meal in the First Class Saloon, executive chef Jeremy Buthe crafted a first class, gourmet meal. About half the attendees came in period costume.

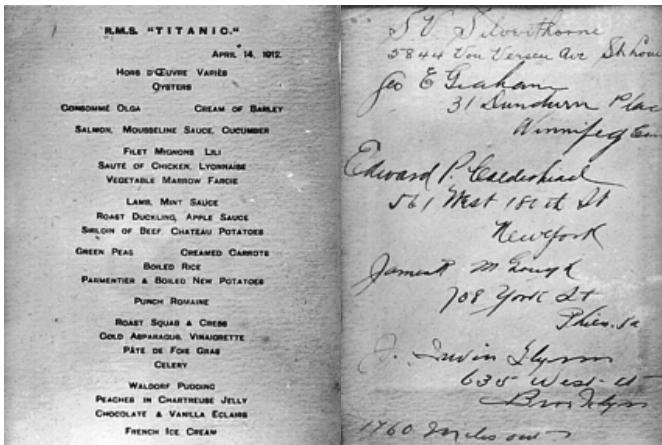
One of the interesting things about the meal is that it took its inspiration straight from the Titanic itself. **Only one** menu from the First Class Dining Saloon survived the sinking. From it, the recipes were gathered and used in our event.



President Patti and Steve Hipple with Chef Jeremy Buthe



Chef Buthe and Sous Chefs Dan Leerhoff & Jamie Fienhold



One of the interesting pieces of memorabilia is a photograph of the First Class menu from the Titanic, which is signed by people on the Titanic. Ironically, all of the fellows who signed it survived except for Mr. Graham.

There have been numerous Titanic events in 2012, one of the more interesting was held by the Hullett House hotel in Hong Kong, which also recreated the Titanic's last meal to mark the disaster's 100th anniversary. One of the most interesting aspects of this meal was that it included a bottle of champagne salvaged from the wreck. Eight diners paid HK\$15,000 (\$1,930) each for the 10-course banquet based on the original menu. The highlight was a bottle of Heidsieck & Co Monopole Gout Americain vintage 1907, brought up from the frigid depths in pristine condition in 1998 and purchased by the hotel for more than \$11,000. Even more expensive, at \$12,000.00 per person, was a Titanic recreation in Houston on 4-15-2012.

One final bit of Titanic trivia before we explore our event. According to Last Dinner on the Titanic Menus and Recipes from the Great Liners by Archbold & McCauley, the Titanic had an even more exclusive restaurant than the First Class Dining Saloon, which was found on D Deck. The à la carte restaurant was modeled after luxurious hotel restaurants. Located on the Bridge Deck and nicknamed "The Ritz," the super rich dined on even more exotic delicacies than found in the First Class Dining Saloon. Decorated in Louis XVI decor, the restaurant imitated competitor Hamburg-Amerika Line, who had given the Ritz-Carlton a concession to run the restaurant on board their ships, "catering to every aristocratic whim." "Those passengers who took and paid for all their meals here, instead of the First Class Dining Saloon, could apply for a rebate at the end of the voyage. After the sinking, several survivors did just that, confirming that the restaurant had become an immediate hit."

Returning to our IWFS-CB event, after quaffing wines that included 1997 Château Beaucastel, and eating Assorted Canapés with our selected wine NV



Soter Brut Rosé, we took photos and went to table for our second course: Poached Salmon with Mousseline Sauce and Cucumbers. The salmon was perfectly done and moist, while The Mousseline Sauce provided even more moisture and an unctuous texture. Mousseline sauce is Hollandaise sauce to which some whipped cream has been added. Calories and cholesterol were not a concern in 1912! Cucumbers served two ways (thinly sliced discs, and a julienned pile, with a single blackberry garnish) enlivened the whole dish. Marvelous! The dry and minerally 2009 Verget Chablis Terras de Pierres was a good contrast to the rich sauce. We were awed, but there was more to come.

Next came the Consommé Olga. Properly dark brown in color, and mostly broth, this course featured a deep beef broth flavor, scallops hiding at the bottom, julienne sliced carrots, cucumber and celery. My only criticism was that it was a bit too salty. The consommé was paired up with a 2009 K Vintners Viogner.



The next course had everyone in raves as the Lamb Pop with Pea Risotto, tomato and Mint Jelly arrived. (This differed from the original ship's recipe, which used leg of lamb.) This was fabulous, and I don't say that lightly. One perfectly grilled frenched rack of lamb, it was nicely rare, had a soupçon of taste of the grille char. It was a wonderfully seasoned piece of lamb that just melted in your mouth. I could think of no way to improve it. The pea risotto married perfectly, providing the starch for the course, while the tomato garnish atop provided

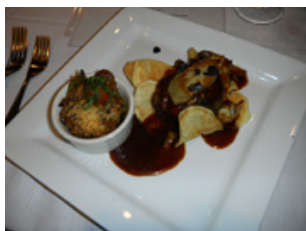
a nice acidic contrast to the richness of the meat and Arborio rice. I am not a big fan of mint jelly. I know it is the traditional accompaniment to lamb, especially on an English ship in 1912, so I tried only a little mint. It was better than I expected, however. The 2008 Hirsch Vineyards "Bohan Dillon" Pinot Noir was the selected wine. Earthy and full of plum, cherry and smoky notes, the Hirsch was a good choice to accompany the lamb.

My whole table was delighted that the courses were getting better and better. I just wish there was seconds. Superb. I did get Chef to agree to part with the recipe. More on that later.



The **Sorbet du Jour** was next. A refreshing sorbet of intense berry flavors, sitting atop a slice of lime, was the next course that cleansed the palate.

Ignoring warnings of icebergs as the evening wore on, we plunged onward, full speed ahead to the main course. This featured **Filet Lili, Château Potatoes, and Vegetable Marrow Farci**. This was quite artfully prepared and plated; it featured tenderloin topped by a slice of foie gras, black shaved truffle surtout, in a delicious dark Madeira Cognac sauce. A sauce with a fortified wine and a spirit is pretty unusual, but it was outstanding. The vegetable marrow was a stuffing in ramekin and consisted of zucchini, breadcrumbs, mushrooms, Parmesan cheese and butter, with a slice of zucchini at the bottom. It was quite savory. Our selected wine was the 2008 DeLille Cellars "Chaleur Estate" Rouge. This is a Meritage of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Somewhat young, it never the less had nice blackcurrant, cassis and herb flavors that stood up to the sauce and beef flavors. I was wondering what Château Potatoes were. They proved to be a kind of homemade potato chip, only a bit thicker. To my palate, they looked nicer as a garnish than they tasted as part of the ensemble.



Asparagus Salad with Champagne-Saffron Vinaigrette

was next. The asparagus was mixed with frisée lettuce sunflower seeds, and red and orange diced peppers. What wine to pair with asparagus, which traditionally is hard to match, not to mention vinaigrette, the enemy of wine? But the selected 2009 Marengo Moscato d'Asti "Scrapona" with its sweetness managed the job nicely. Muscat is one of the few wines that work well with asparagus. Kudos to Julie Hruban who selected it. The sweetness killed the vinegar flavors, which would interfere with the wine's enjoyment.



Finally, we finished with **Waldorf Pudding à la Mode**. A small mound of sculpted pudding was covered in a crème Anglaise sauce, topped with a sliced strawberry held together by the husk, a scoop of vanilla bean ice cream, and whipped cream garnish. The pudding consisted of dark rum, raisins, nuts and flour, with a soupçon of sea salt. Not on the carte des vins

was a club cellar selection of the 2003 Schloss Liesler Riesling **Spatlese**. It's low acid and moderate sweetness (less than the dessert) made it a good companion. There was a discussion at my table as to whether the wine should have been sweeter than the dessert. The conclusion was that in this case, the wine should be in the background: it was not the featured event. As such, it should not be sweeter than the dessert. You would have had to have a Beerenauslese or Trockenbeerenauslese to be sweeter than the dessert, but those kinds of wines typically are stand-alone wines with a lot of complexity that would be lost by eating it with a dessert. I thought the Spatlese level of sweetness just right.



In summary, we had one of the very best meals of the year, and the year has just started. It was truly A Night To Remember. If you have to go down with the ship, What A Way To Go! For all you bystanders, there have been some fabulous restaurant choices by this IWFS branch. Those of you on the sidelines, missing events, had better join in!

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Recipe from dinner on following page >>

Grilled Lamb Pop with Pea Risotto & Mint Jelly

from Chef Jeremy Buthe, Council Bluffs Country Club

The Lamb Pops

6 frenched lamb chops
chopped fresh garlic
chopped fresh rosemary
extra virgin olive oil

The Pea Risotto

1½ cups chicken stock
1 cup heavy cream
1 cup peas
2 Tbsp unsalted butter
½ cup Parmesan
¼ cup
salt & pepper

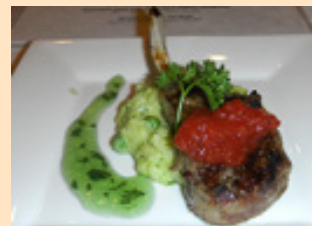
Classic Risotto

1½ cups arborio rice
1 qt chicken stock
½ cup white wine
1 medium shallot or ½
small onion, chopped
(about ½ cup)
3 Tbsp unsalted butter
1 Tbsp vegetable oil
1 Tbsp chopped Italian
parsley
Kosher salt, to taste

*including the cores is important
as this is where the most of the
natural pectin is

The Mint Jelly

4 lbs of tart apples
(i.e. Granny Smith),
unpeeled, chopped into
big pieces, including the
cores*
1½ cups fresh spearmint
leaves, chopped,
lightly packed
2 cups water
2 cups white vinegar
3 cups sugar (⅔ cups for
each cup of juice)
½ cup honey



The Tomato Jelly

1 lb chopped tomatoes
1 lb sugar (approx 2¼ cups)
juice and rind of 1 lemon
2 Tbsp red wine vinegar
2 oz ginger root
1 tsp chopped rosemary

A. Prepare both **Tomato and Mint jelly** recipes a day or two ahead. Add all ingredients and boil lightly in saucepot for an hour or until thick consistency. Then cool or can them in jars

B. Clean and french (scrape meat off the bone end) 6 lamb chops. Marinate for at least an hour with fresh garlic, rosemary, salt pepper and olive oil.

C. Prepare **Classic risotto**. Cooking time 30 minutes.

1. Heat the stock to a simmer in a medium saucepan, then lower the heat so that the stock just stays hot.
2. In a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat the oil and 1 Tbsp of the butter over medium heat. When the butter has melted, add the chopped shallot or onion. Sauté for 2-3 minutes or until it is slightly translucent.
3. Add the rice to the pot and stir it briskly with a wooden spoon so that the grains are coated with the oil and melted butter. Sauté for another minute or so, until there is a slightly nutty aroma. But don't let the rice turn brown.
4. Add the wine and cook while stirring, until the liquid is fully absorbed.
5. Add a ladle of hot chicken stock to the rice and stir until the liquid is fully absorbed. When the rice appears almost dry, add another ladle of stock and repeat the process.

Note: It's important to stir constantly, especially while the hot stock gets absorbed, to prevent scorching, and add the next ladle as soon as the rice is almost dry.

6. Continue adding ladles of hot stock and stirring the rice while the liquid is absorbed. As it cooks, you'll see that the rice will take on a creamy consistency as it begins to release its natural starches.

7. Continue adding stock, a ladle at a time, for 20-30 minutes or until the grains are tender but still firm to the bite, without being crunchy (al dente). If you run out of stock and the risotto still isn't done, you can finish the cooking using hot water. Just add the water as you did with the stock, a ladle at a time, stirring while it's absorbed.

8. Stir in the remaining 2 Tbsp butter and the parsley, and season to taste with kosher salt.

9. Risotto turns glutinous if held for too long, so don't prepare it way ahead of time. A properly cooked risotto should form a soft, creamy mound on a dinner plate. It shouldn't run across the plate, nor should it be stiff or gluey.

D. Grill lamb chops over an open broiler or char grill 2 minutes each side and let rest. **DO NOT OVERCOOK!** Lamb should be just a bit more than rare on the inside.

E. While lamb is resting finish risotto by pureeing peas in chicken stock then adding mixture to hot sauté pan. When comes to boil add al dente prepared risotto and heavy cream. Cook risotto until it becomes thick and creamy and stir throughout. Finish risotto with butter, Parmesan, chopped scallions, parsley and salt & pepper to taste.

F. Place heaping spoonful of pea risotto in the center of a plate or bowl. Crown or top the risotto with a grilled lamb pop. Top the lamb with a spoon of tomato jelly. Garnish plate with Mint jelly

Event Report

June 16, 2012

Soirée at Big Sandy

by Tom Murnan



The club made the trek to Dean Dougherty's cabin north of Ashland, NE and was rewarded with a splendid event. After nibbling on hors d'oeuvres at the **Antipasto Platter** and a short tippie of our quaffing selections, Dean took all of us out on his pontoon boat for a tour of this upscale, gated community, which is still in the process of adding new cabins. Of course, everyone (except our Captain) took their wine glasses!

Dinner was on the patio, and Dean had arranged for Chef Michael Baum from Advantage Waypoint, to prepare the meal. One of the nice things was that Chef came out and explained every course to our group of gourmets.



consisted of organic salad greens with added strawberries, candied pecans and a balsamic dressing. The shrimp presented on a sugar cane skewer. Chef explained that he prepared the grille by first spraying canola oil on the grid, so food doesn't stick or slip off. The shrimp was sprayed with Greek seasonings, and Parmesan Reggiano cheese was liberally sprinkled over the top after the second side was being grilled.



We started our alfresco feast with a **Tomato Tart**. This was like a pizza except that puff pastry was used for the crust. It was topped with organic heirloom tomatoes of various colors, and topped with Mozzarella cheese. Very tasty. A

2011 Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc accompanied the tart, which proved to be a good match. Chef Baum explained that the puff pastry is first baked, and then the other ingredients are added and placed in the oven. It looks heavy, but the puff pastry makes it a lighter dish.

Spring Salad with Grilled Skewer Shrimp was the next course. This was not your simple salad, and



The salad and shrimp was paired with a very different kind of white wine than the tart. A 2009 Semonnet Febvre "Millesieme" Chablis displayed typical French style, with its dry, mineral flavors. It paired nicely with the shrimp and salad.



The Entrée was **Herb Marinated Rack of Lamb**. Tri-color fingerling potatoes and asparagus made up the remainder of the plate. It was topped with Key Lime Hollandaise.

Again Chef Baum came out to detail the dish. Australian lamb chops were marinated 4 days earlier in an herb marinade that consisted of olive oil, fresh basil, Parmesan cheese and a lot of garlic. It was bagged and placed in the refrigerator to absorb the flavors.



The rack of lamb was cooked on a charcoal grille to a temperature of 110 to 112 degrees. It was then removed from the heat and covered in a foil tent and allowed to sit for 10 minutes. Allowing the meat to rest is important because the natural juices are moving when the lamb is on the grille. The rest allows the moisture to return to the fibers, making the whole piece moister and more juicy. Of course, it is important not to overcook as well. Please do not do the amateur move of cutting into the meat to test doneness, as the juices will pour out the cut. The marinade also provided an outer crust, which helps



the meat to retain the natural juices. The fingerlings were roasted with garlic and shallots, and the three colors made for a colorful presentation on the plate. The Hollandaise had the juice from Key Limes added to give it an added tang. The lamb had a slight taste of the grille, which only added to its deliciousness.



A 2006 Hall Cabernet Sauvignon from the club's cellar accompanied the lamb. This wine was picked as #18 in the 2010 Wine Spectator Top 100 listing. Cabernet is a classic wine pairing with rack of lamb, and this proved to be the case at the dinner.

Summer Fruit Pies and Vanilla Bean Ice Cream provided dessert. Chef explained that with baking, he likes to use raw sugar rather than the ubiquitous white sugar typically found in the grocery store. It is not too hard to find. Try the store baking section.



Raw sugar makes for a crystal crust that shimmers when it

comes out. I have been asking chefs at our events to provide a recipe. Chef Baum revealed his secret pie recipe was to go to a better grocery store, like Hy Vee, and purchase Village Pie Maker pies. In this case, it was Strawberry Rhubarb. So, that is your valuable, insider tip of the day! It was a great pie, made in Eustis Nebraska. Why spend hours pie making when you can

buy and bake them, and have everyone raving what a great baker you are?



At a brief meeting after dinner, it was announced that we had two new members: Stacie and Duke Matz. Stacie is the daughter of Dr. John Fischer, and Duke is the most recent past president of the IWFS Omaha Branch. Welcome Stacie and Duke.

After we drank through the event wines, our host graciously brought two bottles each from his own cellar: the 2005 Far Niente Napa Valley Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon, and the 2007 Nickel & Nickel, Kelham Vineyard, Napa Valley, Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon. Those around my table seemed to slightly prefer the Nickle & Nickel over the Far Niente.

Kudos to our hosts, Dean Dougherty, who provided the venue, Chef, and his daughter Kaeleen (who served as chef assistant), and John Fischer who selected the wines. At the Executive Committee a few days later, it was suggested that we make this an annual event! Dean, however, was not there to defend himself, so the motion was tabled. The Bluffs Food & Wine in our progress

We're going to play catch-up and include Event Reports of some of the past events because I feel the Gazette is the place to put them. Otherwise, they are too hard to find on the International web site (www.IWFS.org). I have only recently become a member of the Council Bluffs branch,

but I am here to tell you, that the events I have attended are second to none. These are quality meals that deserve to be promulgated. I am so proud of this branch, and just wish we could increase attendance. You are really missing something special when you don't attend.

Tom Murnan

Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events! Mark Your Calendars!

August 23 • Johnnie's Café near the stockyards. Todd & Sandy Lemke host 2 vintners who will present their wines.

September 23 • Sorensen's home in Harlan, IA. A lamb dinner. Event limited to 20 people.

Hosting an event?

Let us know when, where and a little bit about what's going on!

We would love to include YOUR event on the calendar!

email details to: stephenhipple@hotmail.com

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KEEPING In Touch!

Please notify Club Membership Chairman Diane Forristall at Diane@Forristall.us to let him know if you are interested in hosting an IWFS event.

PURPOSE: To meet communication and service needs, to broaden participation and understand and to be an information exchange for the membership of The International Wine & Food Society in the Americas.

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