

MAY PRESIDENT'S REVIEW

The Shiraz Club has had many memorable evenings and last Tuesday was one of the better ones. My wife, Anne, and I enjoyed it so much that it has instilled in me a desire to communicate to those members who were unable to attend, what the food and wine were like and also to review the restaurant that some members might wish to try some time.

The May venue

Louise Tregurtha and David Graver chose the L'Epicerie at 256 Glen Eira Road, Elsternwick as the venue for our May dinner and, as the name suggests, it is very French, and very good. The private dining room upstairs was a bit cramped when standing but once seated it was ideal.

The food and wine.

Hors d'oeuvres: -

Pissaladiere – Caramelised Onion, Anchovy and Olive Tart.

Charcuterie – Pate, Rillettes, Terinne, Cornichon.

Oysters with leek and Champagne.

You might have trouble pronouncing some of these names, but take it from me, they were all very tasty.

The wine of course was a French bubbly – Cremant de Bourgogne, NV

Entrée

Seafood Millefeuille: Puff Pastry with Mussels, Scallops and Prawns in a Bisque Sauce.

A stunning dish with the fresh seafood cooked to perfection.

Wine 1 – Red Hill Estate Pinot Grigio, 2008

Wine 2 – La Chablisienne, Chablis Le Finagle, 2006

Both wines complimented the food beautifully, although I must admit I had them in the wrong order. Wine 1 to me was a Chablis with lovely floral fragrance and a delicate middle palate and dry finish. Of course a Pinot Grigio is the Italian version of the French Pinot Gris and that must have been what threw me.

The Chablis had a much richer palate with some oak coming through and it was the slightly oily texture, which made me think it was Pinot Gris. You win some you lose some.

Main

Kangaroo Fillet: Marinated and grilled with Ratatouille, Grilled Polenta and Lemon Thyme Jus.

My first impression was beef, however, having visited the restaurant's website the day before I knew they had Skippy on their menu so it was no surprise. Consensus was on the side of the kangaroo, although I have never had this dish with a grainy texture. It looked like beef but had to be roo.

Wine 1 – Main Ridge Estate, Half Acre Pinot Noir, 1999

Wine 2 – Leasingham, Bin 61 Shiraz, 1996

Two superb wines that complimented the dish to perfection. Back in 1984 when Nat White was the first winery on the Peninsula I had the pleasure of picking his grapes at vintage. His 10-year-old Pinot was glorious, and since he makes his wine in the French style, it was at one with the food.

The Leasingham was a great wine, which was holding up well and also complimented the dish. It is nice to have a wine of this age that has not turned the corner like so many have.

Dessert

Clafoutis: Traditional Sour Cream Cherry Pudding

A great way to end a meal with everything as it should be.

Wine – Scion, Sweet Durif, 2006

This one had the pundits guessing and while it was something quite different than usual it was a good choice for this dish.

The only hiccup during the entire evening had to do with a wine that had cork problems. This led to the wine being served after the food. The waiters did their best and life went on, but I might suggest that in future all wines are opened and tested prior to the first course to avoid this happening again.

My congratulations go to Louise and David for their efforts in choosing a great restaurant and selecting the food and wine that matched superbly. A good Frenchy is hard to beat and this one is certainly up there.

Our June dinner will be hosted by Steve Pierrehumbert and Peter McMeikin and their choice of venue is Barrio Restaurant in Ivanhoe. For those of us who have been there before, you know how good it is.