



REVIEW OF CHAINE DINNER EVENT OCTOBER 01 2017

The ocean view was stunning from the windows of Oak Bay Beach Hotel's Grand Lobby which had been turned into a private dining room for thirty Chaine Members and their Partners. The hotel staff had set three round tables for ten; each one was hosted by a Victoria Conseil Member.

Michelle Le Sage, the hotel's General Manager had arranged for autumn toned wrist corsages for the ladies attending. The Victoria Bailliage provided special corsages for Mrs. Anne Batey and Mrs. Truus Biddlecombe-Sanders, whose husband, Patrick, a long-time member of the Australian Chaine, had arranged to join our event on their way back from touring Greenland and Eastern Canada.

Baron-Fuente Grande Reserve Champagne Brut NV perfectly complemented the Gougeres with chicken liver mousse and the Ahi tuna, crispy nori and smoked trout caviar which were served during the Reception. Executive Chef, Kreg Graham, introduced each course, beginning with the first, a Swimmer scallop and Uni crudo, served on the half-shell and lightly dressed with Calamansi vinaigrette. Chaine Member, Spencer Massie provided an excellent commentary on the Champagne enjoyed earlier and the Grand Bateau Bordeaux Blanc 2010 chosen to pair with the first course. This was Spencer's first time presenting the wines at a Chaine event and he provided very interesting background information on the vineyards, the wine makers and their products as the evening progressed.

The following course of a beet carpaccio featured five different coloured beets, whipped chevre, pistachio and a pomegranate reduction. The multiple coloured beets elicited a comment from our Guest, Patrick Biddlecombe, who noted that he was only familiar with the traditional red beets in Australia. A Guigal Crozes Hermitage Blanc 2015 was served with the beets, which left several empty glasses when the next course of delectable, sake brined sable fish arrived. Most of those present had not realised that the glass of Hermitage was to pair both courses and the many sad faces brightened when the staff were able to pour a little more wine into those empty glasses.

The main course of duck breast roasted with honey was a particular favourite at my table as were the accompanying chanterelle mushrooms and carrot harissa. The 2001 Barbaresco was a perfect choice to complement the duck which was a gloriously moist pink. The Chef's excellent and elegant presentation was again reflected in this and each course served during the evening.

A Fritz Kaiser le Douanier Cheese and pickled cherries preceded the dessert course. The Pastry Chef described how he produced his delicately layered stack of autumn apple flavours and textures, resting on an almond sable and topped with a small white chocolate hoop. Definitely a dessert that might have called for “seconds”, had we not been replete with all that went before it. The pairing was a Sea Cider Rumrunner which was an interesting choice though not to everyone’s taste.

Coconut, chocolate and fruit jelly mignardises, served with coffee and tea was followed by the evening’s Accolade which was given by Patrick Biddlecombe. Being a retired Executive Chef, Patrick was particularly interested in the menu’s Japanese influence, choice of ingredients and how a particular broth was made. Patrick congratulated Kreg Graham and his culinary team and expressed his appreciation to the service team for a job well done.

Ian Batey took the opportunity to thank current and past Conseil Members for their assistance and dedication during his years as Bailli of Victoria. Ian’s Chaine Rank is now Bailli Honoraire, joining an illustrious group of his predecessors who include Daniel Rigollet, Lyle Viereck and Colin Southcombe.

Ian assisted Gail Gabel, Victoria’s new Baillie, in presenting the Chaine Certificates of Appreciation to the Culinary and Service teams.

Victoria Member, Theresa Dickinson, offered a toast to “departed friends” in honour of three of our Bailliage, Iain Rennie, Colin Mantell and Elaine Curling who had passed away in recent weeks.

