

Function No. 376 – Wednesday November 29, 2023

Featured Winery: O’Leary Walker

Guest Chef: Sweta Baichoo

Wine Maker: David O’Leary

Venue: Members Dining Room

An overcast Melbourne day with drizzle set the arrival scene for today’s function with pre luncheon drinks in the Long Room for 280 members and guests. But soon the sun would be shining inwards for a memorable day of O’Leary Walker wines scripted to a culinary dance compiled by Chef Sweta Baichoo from Delaware North.

O’Leary Walker Hurtle Sparkling Chardonnay Pinot Noir NV with fine bead and balance was served on arrival. Accompanied by Coffin Bay freshly shucked oysters with mango and finger lime vinaigrette; Sweetcorn tartlet, miso, crispy leeks and furikake (Japanese rice seasoning); and finally Sticky glazed pork belly bites with toasted sesame and kimchi mayo. Delightful, moorish.

Once seated in the Members Dining Room (MDR), guests were welcomed by Chair Michael Reidy. In attendance to day from the MCC were Stuart Fox (CEO) & Geoff Roberts (Treasurer). Stuart would later present his ‘State of the Nation’ address which was most informative about the past year and the forthcoming year about the goings on at the ‘G.

A note of difference today was that the entrée base protein of Spencer Gulf Kingfish was served two ways: “Mauritian” flavours, buttermilk & curry leaves oil, compressed nashi pear and kohlrabi & served concurrently with Spencer Gulf King fish charcoal belly with wild garlic tarama (fish roe) and caviar. Matched to these two dishes were the O’Leary Walker 2013 Watervale Riesling and the 2022 DRS Cut Riesling.

The aged Riesling and the Toro (Belly) were exceptional in my opinion and achieved perfect scores. The sort of stuff that makes you sit up in your seat. Bravo! (Is that pronoun specific?)

David O’Leary then took to the microphone for the first of two sessions backgrounding us on the whites. We are indeed fortunate to have had access to the 2013.

Dry aged corn-fed Macedon Ranges Roasted duck with Medjool date & chilli, cavolo nero and a Pithivier filled spiced confit duck & “O’Leary Walker 2020 shiraz” comprised main. Accompanied by a salad of Goulburn Valley grilled peach, frisée and witlof with pecan and balsamic & blackberry vinaigrette. One last side (hmmm) of roast pumpkin, vegemite crumb, pumpkin seeds & pomegranate with mint & tahini sauce dressing rounded out main.

This was served with the 2009 Clare Shiraz and 2021 Clare Shiraz. The cut of the breast was unique and lean in fat portion, making a succulent offering that one initially ate with their eyes. Many members approached me to express their joy in drinking the 2009. Again, thanks to OLW for making such a back vintage available.

Cheese course followed after a review of the reds by David. “L’Amuse signature Gouda” friend expressed via a “Mauritian flair of rarebit crumble” with mustard seeds and red onion marmalade. A polarizing dish on our table, but the concept and originality cannot be missed. Served with 2016 Clare ‘Claire’ Shiraz, a premium wine of grace, seamless elegance and poise.

Last but by no means least a dessert of pistachio and lime cake with lime mousse, basil & lime granita topped with pistachio tuille. Presentation sublime pushing that constant outside drizzle to another venue. Matched to 2014 Cane Cut Riesling.

A recovering Chef Sweta (knee) took to the lectern where she explained the menu to a captive audience the influences for the day’s menu which involved her cultural background and working experiences distilled from a stellar career. There is more to come, we are promised and I am sure O’Leary Walker have many more vintages up their belt.

Michael Ellis

MCC LRWFS

Wine & Food Master. Function 376.