

Guild Members' February Dinner



President Ian McLeod opening the evening.

The dinner was held at Joseph Alexanders restaurant, which is a licensed restaurant that's been operating under the current owners for about 18 months in a most attractive location overlooking the Brisbane River at Milton. Our hosts for the night were JA owners Mark Kennedy and David Moore and head chef Benny Loh.

On arrival, we were ushered up to the second floor piano bar area where we were given our name tags and spent up to half an hour chatting with others while drinking some South Australian bubbly and eating Prawn Springrain, Steam Egg Salmon, Vegetarian Sushi and Duck Tartlett canapes.

We were then seated down out onto the verandah and Ian welcomed us all and advised the format for the evening, which was basically a four course meal complemented with the remainder of the bubbly, two whites and two reds. All the wines were from the Melbourne-based company Get Wines Direct (www.getwinesdirect.com) that specialises in mail order cleanskins, the wines of the night being as in the table on the right.

It did sound a bit strange when the wine waiter responded to the question about what wine was being poured with "the one on the left is a Victorian chardonnay, the one on the right is a chardonnay from the Yarra Valley." But, after all, that was all that was on the labels! One was lightly oaked and floral; the other was un-oaked and drier. Both very different.

Wine	RRP	Mail Order Price
NV South Australian Brut Cuvée	\$17	\$8
2001 Yarra Valley Reserve Chardonnay	\$30	\$12
2003 Victorian Chardonnay	\$15	\$8
2001 Barossa Nova Valley Shiraz	\$20	\$10
2002 Yarra Valley Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2002	\$26	\$12

Lots of views about the reds, and although the Shiraz had some pepper, many thought that neither wine exhibited a classic varietal style and both had a similar back palate. The Cabernet Sauvignon drew comments from just okay to very good.

For the entrée, the choices were scallops, duck and salmon, my choice being the Tempura scallops on wakami, mango, cucumber and rhubarb.



Paula Tewkesbury and Johann and Joanna Faber.

Main meal choices were snapper, chicken breast and rack of lamb, with my choice being Chicken breast stuffed with prawn and a light tumeric broth. The rack of lamb was very popular and a few red drinkers who missed out, were offered a great fillet steak in lieu.

Dinner finished with a selection of Australian cheese served with brandy sealed muscatels and lavocho.

All comments overheard were quite positive about the presentation and quality of all the dishes. However, based on my previous experience, the service and food was not up to their usual standard – unfortunately that often happens when such places cater for groups.



The pianist taking requests about 12:30am

And, they did have a special "excuse" on the night - it was the evening of our 40 degree plus day and while the air conditioning in the restaurant was working coolly, the kitchen which is not cooled reached 50 degrees and two employees collapsed creating some drama in production and service.

All in all, a great evening! At \$65 per head for a member and a guest and \$80 per head for non-members, the evening was obviously quite heavily subsidised by the Guild.

Thanks guys!!