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MALIBU CELEBRITY VINTNER DINNER AT TRA DI NOI MALIBU

Elegant Living Magazine co-sponsored the first in a series of celebrity vintner dinners held at Tra di Noi Ristorante in the Malibu Country Mart. Jane Seymour attended the event along with the owners of Chrome Hearts, the jewelry store in Malibu that carries some of Seymour's diamond Open Hearts necklaces. Tra di Noi owner Antonio Alessi hosted the party, joking with Seymour and her husband, producer/director James Keach, throughout the night's festivities.

Francesco Velasco, the chef-partner of Tra di Noi Ristorante roasted Italian chestnuts for the evening and served them with braised short ribs and risotto. Chef Velasco is passionate about Malibu and all of the treasures it has to offer. He regularly works with Malibu farmers, vintners, and even other chefs to bring his guests the most exciting meals Malibu has to offer. An avid biker and hiker, Velasco even forages the hillsides of Malibu for dandelion greens, prickly pear cactus fruit, wild fennel, and figs. To learn more about Velasco and his passion for Malibu's foodie treasures, visit www.francescovelasco.com.

Velasco invited Chef Matt Zubrod, a one-time competitor on the Food Network's Iron Chef America, to come over for the night from his executive chef post at Malibu & Vine Bar & Grille at Malibu Golf Club (www.malibuandvine.com). Zubrod whipped up wonderful baked crab-cake pyramids, lobster pops, and other passed hors d'oeuvres that paired well with wine. Velasco and Zubrod sautéed and braised vegetables brought over by farmer Larry Thorne from his family farm in Zuma Canyon. Thorne trucked over his steampunk-style gelato machine and cranked it up outside to the delight of guests.

The featured Malibu vintner for the night was Jim Palmer who owns Malibu Vineyards (www.malibu-vineyards.com). Palmer brought along his award-winning wines including a blend of Sangiovese, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc that he named Vortex; a Syrah; and a Meritage. Palmer spoke about each varietal that he brought and the challenges/rewards of growing grapes at 1200 feet in Malibu. Chef Velasco has been pairing his Italian dishes with Palmer's wines for years. The two also often discuss grape-growing techniques for Chef Velasco's upcoming line of his own wines.

This invitation-only dinner series will continue every month at Tra di Noi in Malibu (www.tradinorestaurants.com) leading up to the Malibu Vintners Fundraiser Ball taking place in June 2013. Each month a different Malibu vintner will be featured. A multi-course wine-pairing dinner will be prepared by Tra di Noi chef-partner Francesco Velasco and Malibu & Vine chef Matt Zubrod. The chefs and Tra di Noi owners have their own few tables of reserved guests including a surprise celebrity or two. The featured vintners are given reserved spaces for their best clients. And Elegant Living Magazine has reserved a table at these prestigious dinners for its readers and guests. Please contact Publisher Camille Bovee about snagging a seat at the next event. Email Camille Bovee, Publisher Elegant Living Magazine at info@elegantlivingmagazine.com. Please visit the publications website: www.elegantlivingmagazine.com



L-R James Keach and wife actress Jane Seymour with Tra di Noi Owner Tarcisio Mosconi



Tra di Noi Owner, Tarcisio Mosconi with Realtor Irene Palmer



Troy Angwin shaking hands with Exec. Chef Francesco Velasco



L-R: Sarah Alessi, Antonio Alessi's longtime friend Samir and Antonio Alessi, Owner Tra di Noi Malibu



A bit of mingling before dinner is served



Owner Antonio Alessi enjoying some male bonding



Owner of Tra di Noi Antonio Alessi, Executive Chef Francesco Velasco and Owner Tarcisio Mosconi



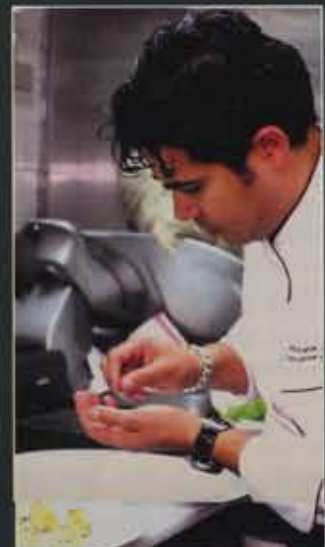
Owner Tarcisio Mosconi conversing with guest



Exec. Chef Francesco Velasco having fun with the guest



Realtor Irene Palmer and husband Jim Palmer who was the guest vintner for the evening



Exec. Chef Francesco Velasco preparing gourmet hors d'oeuvres in his kitchen



Camille Bovee, Co-Host and Publisher of Elegant Living Magazine toasting guest at her table



Display of Elegant Living Magazines

Chef Francesco the Winemaker

Tra di Noi
Ristorante

Francesco Velasco, the chef-partner of Tra di Noi Ristorante in Malibu and Tra di Noi Focacceria in Beverly Hills has a deep affection for Malibu. He surfs in her waves, rides his mountain bike along her hills and canyons, and forages for wild-growing herbs in her parkland. He'll open his second Malibu restaurant, called Mangia Italian Eatery Beach Cafe, this year. While cooking and pairing foods with wine in Malibu, Francesco has also gotten to know Malibu's farmers and vintners. He's learned about the new Saddlerock-Malibu AVA (American Viticultural Area) from Lisa and Ron Semler of Malibu Family Wines who secured this new designation. Emilio Estevez and his fiancée Sonja Magdevski explained to Francesco how the Pinot Noir grapes on their land near the coast called Casa Dumetz need constant pruning in order to yield the most fruit.



The general manager of Michael's restaurant in Santa Monica, Chas McCarty taught Francesco that Syrah grapes grow well in the drier Malibu hilltops where the ocean mist doesn't rise high enough to keep the vines chilled and moist. McCarty's dad Michael was one of the first modern vintners in Malibu, planting vines above Carbon Beach way back in 1985 around the time that vintner George Rosenthal got his start. Jim Palmer of Malibu Vineyards taught Francesco how to tell when the grapes are ready for crushing by watching the bees gather on the clusters. And Chef Francesco has barrel-tested wines at many points in their development to see how the grape juice changes during each stage into something smooth and drinkable.

Francesco's dream is to purchase a ranch in Malibu where he can plant his own organic vines—Chardonnay below 1000 feet, Bordeaux and Pinot Noir in the temperate zone, and Sangiovese and Cabernet higher up on the crest. But in the meantime, Francesco has created his own wine label marked with a colorful, brush-stroked "F." He works with other Malibu vintners to bottle his own blend that he calls a Super Malibu. It's a pun on the Super Tuscans of Italy—big red wines that are blended in non-traditional ways. He's also in the process of making a white wine from Chardonnay grapes, and a rosé from Cabernet grapes, all grown in Malibu. Alessi-Velasco Family Wines will be producing them.



To learn more about Chef Francesco's restaurants and wines, visit www.francescovelasco.com