

There must be at least one hundred ways to start this article, but I'll just come right out and say it: The Charity Dinner that I attended on October 4th at Alexander's Restaurant was Simply Awesome.

The dinner was held to benefit relief efforts following the recent hurricanes that caused so much damage to Hilton Head Island. Sommelier Brian Couey and Chef Sean Carroll put their creative energies to work and came up with a dinner that was a genuine treat for all who attended. Brian wanted to feature Cakebread Wines for the event and Sean saw this as an opportunity to showcase some of his recipes that would match those wines well.

(Sean has been at the restaurant only six months. He wants to keep his cuisine "local." What he means by local is "within a 200 mile radius of the restaurant.")

Our host for the Dinner was Alexander's Restaurant Manager, Mr. Guillermo Carrera. Each course was narrated by Chef Sean and the wine that accompanied the course was introduced by Mr. Glenn Harvey from the Cakebread Distributor. Let's take a look and see what happened.

The first course was Smoked Almond Baked Brie with Spiced Apples and Cinnamon Toast. The wine selected to accompany the Brie was Cakebread Cellars Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley, 2016. The Sauvignon Blanc is a blend of 90% Sauvignon Blanc and 10% Semillion.

The second course was Butternut Squash Soup with Creme Fraiche, Candied Pecans, and Duck Confit 'BBQ' Chive Oil. The wine was A Cakebread Cellars Chardonnay, Napa Valley, 2015. This must have been a perfect match since many guests paused to remark how much they enjoyed it.

The third course was A Roasted Diver Scallop with Lobster Succotash, Black Bow-Tie Pasta. The wine served was Cakebread Cellars Two Creek Vineyard Pinot Noir. (My own Opinion: A match made in heaven)

Course number four was a Braised Beef Short Rib accompanied with a Root Vegetable

Ratatouille, Broccolini, Foie Gras Beignet, and Ancho Cherry Bordelaise. The wine selection was a Cakebread Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley 2014. This wine was the surprise of the night. Here was a Premier Cabernet only three years old and the tannins had mostly been absorbed. I was expecting to taste a young wine and instead I enjoyed a wine that tasted very mature. If wine is your hobby, you have to learn to expect these pleasant surprises once in a while.

Dessert was an Ice Cream Sandwich topped with Caramel Apple Gelato, Kahula Caramel, a thin Brownie, and White Chocolate Powder. Not your average everyday Ice Cream Sandwich. It was -☺- this term again - Simply Awesome, and the Coffee served with it was just super.

I almost forgot. Upon arrival at the restaurant, guests were asked to assemble in the bar, located next to the dining room. Management had arranged for each guest to be served a glass of Sparkling Wine called Bouvet. This wine is from the Loire in France. It is a blend of 86% Chardonnay and 14% Chenin Blanc. It was a nice touch and set the evening off in the right direction.

At the end of the day, I have to ask myself what makes an event like this a success. The answer is the people -☺- their genuine enthusiasm for the event and their willingness to bend over backwards to make a guest comfortable. I experienced this kind of hospitality on October 4th, and it compels me to recommend the restaurant to others.

To learn more, visit www.alexandersrestaurant.com

WINESPEAK

Okay, I admit it. I am a Cakebread Geek. Anytime I hear the word Cakebread I perk up and wish for a glass of their Single Vineyard Chardonnay. I strongly endorse Brian Couey's selection of Cakebread Wines for his wine list at Alexander's. Cakebread opened their doors for business in 1974 by producing approximately 300 cases of wine. Every year thereafter was

better than the year before because they kept their eyes on quality and customer satisfaction. I have been a member of their White Wine Club for 11 years and have yet to receive a clunker.