

A Taste of Provence

By Judith Kellogg, *Vice Chargée de Presse*

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, VICE CONSEILLER CULINAIRE Eric Leterc—executive chef at the Pacific Club in Honolulu—produced a Christmas feast about which members of the Kauai/Oahu Bailliage still dream. Thus, it stood to reason that we thought of him during the early planning stages of our annual “extraordinaire” dinner, in which a chef is given *carte blanche* to devise his own high-end fantasy menu and asked to pay special attention to perfect wine pairings. On May 2, Chef Leterc once again created a culinary masterpiece. This time, however, he transported us to Provence in springtime, in all its aromatic lushness.

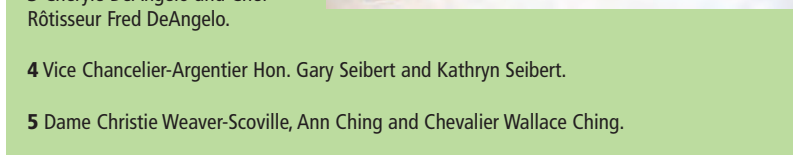
Chef Leterc began his distinguished career at the age of fourteen in his native France. Since then, he has held important positions in some of the best restaurants in France and the United States. His accomplishments include cooking for two French presidents and overseeing Bill Gates’s wedding dinner at the Manele Bay Hotel on Lana’i.

During our Provence-themed event, Chef Leterc made us feel like pampered dignitaries. At the reception, he piqued our appetites with ratatouille on toast and foie gras on onion tart with anchovy, thyme, and garlic. These starters were accompanied by Louis Roederer Brut Champagne Brut Premier N.V.

Dinner began with savory seared scallop in bouillabaisse with olive tapenade, complemented by Calera Pinot Noir 2005. The next course of frogs’ legs sautéed in olive oil, butter, lemon juice, and garlic was matched with Philippe Colin Chassagne-Montrachet 2004. We were then treated to succulent roasted St. Paul Island lobster tail over fennel mousse and black olive pasta, served with Capichera Vermentino 2003.

Frosted Pernod infused with anise seeds and vanilla beans provided a lively intermezzo. Arriving next was seared garlic-crusting ostrich filet drizzled with lavender honey. This dish was nicely balanced by Château Mont-Redon Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2001. For the entrée, we enjoyed luscious braised beef in a red wine reduction with vegetable *tian* and rosemary polenta cake. Domaine Tempier Bandol Cuvée Spéciale la Tourtine 2003 married smoothly with the main course. The meal closed with pear poached in wine and filled with crème brûlée. This treat was enhanced by Château Bastor-Lamontagne Sauternes 2001.

It is hard to imagine that the French presidents or Bill Gates enjoyed a finer feast than we did—it would be difficult to improve upon Chef Leterc’s elegant interpretations of Provençale cuisine. ☒



PHOTOS BY NORA MEIJDE-GENTRY

1 Executive Chef/Vice Conseiller Culinaire Eric Leterc and wait-staff.

2 Chevalier Allan Gifford, Bailli Mark Monoscalco and Vice Conseiller Gastronomique Mirella Monoscalco.

3 Cheryle DeAngelo and Chef Rôtisseur Fred DeAngelo.

4 Vice Chancellor-Argentier Hon. Gary Seibert and Kathryn Seibert.

5 Dame Christie Weaver-Scoville, Ann Ching and Chevalier Wallace Ching.