

ITALIAN AND FRENCH *Gourmet Adventure*

By Mirella Monoscalco, *Vice Conseiller Gastronomique*

ON MAY 18, MEMBERS OF THE KAUAI/OAHU BAILLIAGE WERE treated to a remarkable gastronomic experience at Elua Restaurant in Honolulu. *Elua* means “two” in Hawaiian, and the venue fittingly features two of Hawaii’s most beloved chefs: Donato Loperfido, who hails from Puglia, Italy, and Philippe Padovani, from Marseilles, France. One might assume that two world-class Mediterranean chefs in the same kitchen would result in an explosive ego clash. However, if food could sing, a feast by these two powerhouses would sound like an operatic extravaganza.

Rather than trying to blend their two styles, the chefs alternate preparations, thereby showcasing their distinct gifts. Chef Loperfido is known for creating sophisticated Italian dishes, while Chef Padovani imbues refined French cuisine with regional Hawaiian flavors. Their culinary talents are enhanced by Owner Keith Kiuchi’s attention to fine wines.

Eagerly anticipating the unique culinary adventure in store for us, we were greeted with stems of Luretta Principessa Sparkling Brut N.V. from Italy’s Emilia-Romagna area. Among the delicious hors d’oeuvres were Crottin de Chavignol cheese ravioli, smoked salmon with *salpicón* avocado, and artichoke hearts and asparagus on toasted canapés.

Six amazing courses followed. Bailli Mark Monoscalco provided commentary on each dish, and Owner Kiuchi talked about his wine choices. The first course of grilled eggplant filled with stracciatella cheese had been hand made by Chef Loperfido. It was paired with Raptor Ridge Rosé Willamette Valley 2007. We then enjoyed asparagus-tip soup with roasted langoustines, complemented by Patz & Hall Chardonnay Zio Tony Ranch Russian River 2006.

Squid-ink risotto with seafood-stuffed calamari was accompanied by Suavia Soave Classico 2006 from the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region in northern Italy. Another Willamette Valley wine—Raptor Ridge Pinot Noir Shea Vineyard 2006—was ideally matched with squab served over foie gras with earthy mushrooms. After the entrée of rabbit loin wrapped in pancetta with truffle-butter sauce, married with Abbazia Di Novacella Lagrein 2006, we delighted in the sweet finale. Ravioli of almond cream and seasonal fruits with warm citrus-Polynesian vanilla soup was complemented by Château Tirecul la Graviere Monbazillac Cuvée Madame Bergerac 1997.

At the end of the evening, Bailli Monoscalco presented gifts of wine decanters to both chefs, a commemorative Chaîne plate to Mr. Kiuchi, and pins to the staff. We gleefully departed, keenly aware that we had just experienced an extraordinary dinner. ☒



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1 Chef Philippe Padovani, Kristi Komeya, Dame Gladys Vernoy, Dame Victoria Cowan and Chef Donato Loperfido. **2** Owner Keith Kiuchi and Bailli Mark Monoscalco. **3** Chevalier Gérard Haeringer, Dame Victoria Cowan, Lisa Haeringer and Chevalier Tom Raunig. **4** Touri Parsa, Don Parsa, Chef Rôtisseur Guido Ulmann, Vice Conseiller Gastronomique Mirella Monoscalco and Raynette Kaspar. **5** Crottin de Chavignol cheese ravioli.

PHOTOS BY BRUCE LIEBERT