

A Fabulous Feast



On the fifth of August, the W Retreat Koh Samui co-hosted a fabulous wine dinner with exclusive wine distributor Fin. Fin, a supplier of boutique wines unavailable on a retail level, invited Thailand's most notable publications to the affair. With 2 Magazine, Thailand Tatler, Bangkok Post, GlamorTV, and Samui Lifestyle scattered around the long, family-style wooden table of W's premier concept restaurant Namu, Jan Ganser and Benjawan Wisootsat of Fin guided the group through a tour of innovative Asian cuisine meticulously paired with highlights of the world's most unique wines. The six course menu teleported guests to Korea, Japan, China, France, Italy, and Germany, as Chef Matthew Woolford bases Namu around the notion of anticipating the cultural evolution of traditional Asian cuisine over the years.

Upon arrival to the beachfront bar SIP, attendees mingled over flutes of Gonet-Medeville Premier Cru Extra Brut Rosé hailing from the coveted Champagne, France region. As the scent of red currants, raspberries, and strawberries had successfully wafted from the glasses to the ocean air, the party moved indoors, where the rosé acted as the ideal accompaniment to Chef Matthew Woolford's Toro tuna tartar adorned with feta cheese, shiso and sautéed capers. The crisp freshness and intense notes of fruit highlighted the succulent flavors of the starting dish. The 2010 Viognier of Azienda Madonna del Latte Orvieto from Umbria, Italy made its way to greet all guests for the second course, with an aroma of fruits and roses; in showcasing the hint of acidity and light bitter finish came South Australian Hamachi sashimi with leeks, chili, and mint. The clean flavor profiles of the dish blended elegantly with the fragrant and straightforward in taste wine.

As a mid-meal showstopper, Fin's Jan Ganser introduced the elusive 1598 Fürst Wallerstein edition privée, a beer specially brewed by the Princes of Germany for personal purposes now seeing a limited run. As Germany's most sought after drink due to its embodiment of the key components that most beer connoisseurs live for, the extraordinary brew harbors quality ingredients and a deep-seated tradition. This full-bodied and exceptionally complex beer featured hints of various berries and fresh cherries; the taste proved to be balanced, powerful, and undoubtedly unique. Though most diners would have simply been pleased by the glass of the Wallerstein family creation, Chef Matthew Woolford paired an equally as succulent presentation with a beautifully prepared foie gras. Wrapped in kataifi, Middle Eastern shredded filo dough, the lightly fried delicacy came accented with a subtle mustard miso emulsion.

Assuming nothing could compare to the previous course, the service staff placed plates of insatiable Blackmore sirloin, in a teriyaki style, paired with tenderly braised wagyu cheek. To accompany this full-bodied meal was a full-bodied wine from a winery the diners had just recently become familiar with – the Sucano Cabernet Franc of the Azienda Madonna Del Latte Orvieto of Umbria Italy; the powerful aroma of black berries, coffee, cocoa, pepper, and sage reflected the flavors of the dish harmoniously. In a pleasant surprise of spice, the chii gye of smoked lamb shank, tendons, daikon, truffle, and perfectly cooked scallop reawakened all of the room's palates just before it takes that usual fifth course lull. The tart taste of plum of the old vine carnigan/Grenache of Domaine Le Roc Des Anges Côtes du Roussillon Villages Reliefs 2009 of France acted as the ideal light bodied wine to counteract the explosion of flavor of the chii gye.

From the variety of sweet fortified wines, the Domaine les terres de Fagayra Maury Op. Nord 2009 came served alongside rose marinated strawberries, delectable torched sabayon, and almond ice cream. Combined with the black raspberries and peony notes of the juicy dessert wine, a created taste of all-around black cherry at every bite and with each sip was truly remarkable. The pairing proves that while some wines have the uncanny ability to bring out flavors otherwise gone unnoticed, others can transform taste completely. Fin hosted the event as a showcase for what is to come, as the wine distributor will now offer "Fabulous Weekends"; the weekends will consist of luxury hotel stays, meals, and spa sessions paired with wine tastings. Due to the hardwork of Jan Ganser, Benjawan Wisootsat, W Marketing Director Christian Humbert, and the latest W addition, new General Manager Nicholas Downing, the who's who of Thai publishing left the affair raving for more.