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Rising Stars Revue by StarChefs.com

Posted by Ravenous Couple at 11:42 AM



To benefit Project Angel Food and recognize the many culinary rising stars of Los Angeles and San Diego, StarChefs.com threw an amazing food and wine gala at the Fairmont in Santa Monica last night. We were lucky to be invited because StarChefs.com used the poutine photo we took at Animal in the program. As you know, we're a long distance couple I had to attend for Kim--I wish she could have been there, so it was really hard to go alone. :) But I was was glad to see plenty of great LA bloggers including The Food Addicts, Teenage Glutster, Food GPS, Street Gourmet LA, My Last Bite, Mattatoulli, e*starLA, and SauceLA enjoying the great food, wine and drinks, and live music. It was a night to celebrate the food and accomplishments of rising star chefs so with out further delay...

The first great bite of the night was Walter Mantzke formerly of Church and State, served his famous roasted bone marrow with radish salad and crostini. Fatty marrow and refreshing crisp radish--what a fantastic combination. Could have eaten dozen of these.



Another favorite was none other than Top Chef winner and Dining Room at the Langham chef Michael Voltaggio's "beef and cheddar," a succulent slice of sous vide wagyu beef that just melted in your mouth. The photo is horrible and you can't appreciate how well marbled the beef was but trust me--it was absolutely decadent.



Not to be outdone by the decadence of waygu beef and bone marrow, Ray Garcia of Fig upped the ante with bacon wrapped bacon with brandywine tomatoes and cocktail avocados. Yes, you read that right--bacon wrapped bacon--enough said!



Just as elegant as the chef herself, Kuniko Yagi of Sona had a wonderful seared foie gras with Okinawa black sugar and green tea mochi. A sweet and rich combination that was delicious!



Continuing with the offals, chef Rory Hermann of Bouchon Bistro, Los Angeles delighted guests with perfectly crisp veal sweetbreads and accompanied by tender roasted veal ribeye. By this point, I had to loosen my belt a notch.



Favorite cocktail of the night was the Barbacoa by mixologist Julian Cox of Rivera. Talk about complex, it had spicy notes of bell pepper and chipotle combined with saltiness of the beef jerky. Amazing. Other great dishes were the jerked pork belly with scotch bonnet jelly by chef Jason Knibb of Nine-Ten in San Diego as well as serrano wrapped monkfish from Ken Takayama of Mellisse.



The winning dish of the night as voted by the diners was this dessert that looked more like abstract art--by Jordan Kahn formerly of XIV. I don't know the name as he switched to this from what was printed in the program, but it was a cube of white chocolate filled with different layers of delicious surprises tucked inside. Food as art exemplified perfectly.



Just as delicious and welcoming due to the richness of the dishes was the Kalamansi Gelee, Lychee-Shiso Sorbet, and White Chocolate-Coconut-Soy-Milk-Soup by Adrain Vasquez of Providence. The name is a mouthful, but a very happy mouthful as it was so refreshing and flavors and textures were smooth.



A night of rising stars wouldn't be complete without perhaps the biggest star in the culinary world, Thomas Keller. He was here supporting Rory Hermann of Bouchon Bistro and all the rising star winners. There were so many other great dishes and chefs, I couldn't capture them all so check out the StarChefs.com site.

Ironically, since we're doing this long distance relationship we haven't been to a single one of these restaurants with exception of Animal. It's hard to enjoy all these great restaurants in Los Angeles and San Diego when she's in Arizona. Hopefully when Kim moves back to LA this summer we'll try all these great restaurants and talents of these chefs. Thanks to Luce of StarChefs.com for the invitation and congratulations to all at StarChefs.com for a fantastic and memorable event.