

"tampa bay's best"

wining & dining

Wine in the Woodlands

By Pat Brooks

East Lake Woodlands Wine Society began in 2002 with a small nucleus of people interested in tasting a unique selection of wines and learning about them in a friendly social atmosphere.

Member Relations Director Paul Ketzenbarger says each

monthly wine event provides an element of education for about a hundred members. "We make a concerted effort to make it fun; we don't want that stuffy wine snob image! We welcome everybody from novice to connoisseur: grab a glass, start drinking and see what this stuff is like!"

Membership privileges include complimentary admission to four wine tastings yearly and a 20 percent discount on six wine-pairing dinners hosted by industry experts.

Wine Revelations offers delivery of wines rarely sold on the retail market to your door.

Member's Reserve is an exclusive online store offering limited-production wines, special purchases and preferred pricing.

When not bringing wine to members it takes them to the wine with off-premise excursions such as a bus trip to the Suncoast Showcase at the Ritz-Carlton in Sarasota.

The most recent wine event at East Lake Woodlands was hosted by Cork & Olive, a dynamic young company whose co-founder, Michael Probst, believes wine does not have to be expensive to be delicious.

Corporate Accounts Manager Deborah Augenti says Cork & Olive is conceptually innovative and growing fast. "We import wines from small European producers hand-picked for



quality and value, rarely seen by Americans unless traveling in Europe. We do corporate and home events, and lease out stores for private evening events. We're bringing the lifestyle to everyone!"

A sparkling Prosecco served at the reception by distributor and presenter J.C. Milam preceded three courses featuring nine remarkable wines.

A light-bodied, crisp Sauvignon Blanc from Chile, and a buttery Chardonnay from the Piedmont region of Italy, accompanied Executive Chef Frederic Reiser's char-grilled tilapia salad with a grapefruit-honey dressing.

Crimson Chateau Le Cleret Bergerac was paired with braised Italian pot roast, wild mushroom risotto and asparagus tips.

Meticulous selection of grapes accounts for the expensive price tag of Italy's Borgovecchio Amarone; glasses of the silky, full-bodied blend of dark berries and mild spices were raised for a round of applause.

Beeren auslese means "individually selected grapes". The Huxelrebe Beeren Auslese was served with dessert.

German Muller-Thurgau Eiswein (*ice wine* made by picking grapes that are frozen on the vine and pressed before thawing) was a rich, flavorful conclusion.

"We seek the magic of little surprises," Paul explains. "Beef may be beef, sauces may be sauces, but paired with different wines there are new flavors to discover, limitless possibilities. And you can sit down with strangers and emerge from the evening with new friends; food and wine are a great catalyst!"

For information on East Lake Woodlands Wine Society and upcoming events, visit www.eastlakewoodlandsc.com or call Gail Pelto at (727) 784-8576. tbb

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