

# **BARCELONA TRIP MARCH 14th 1999**

## **'FOUR GO MAD IN BARCELONA'**

### **TALAIA MAR -HARBOUR LOCATION ON OLYMPIC PORT**

Tel 93 221 90 90

#### **Monday 15th March -Lunch**

The four of us, with no expectations, had a superb lunch. This was one off the most interesting meals in a long time.

- Cava aperitif** - Tapas served /Na marinated in soy, presented on cocktail sticks
- Cockles Vinaigrette
  - Olive cake
  - Curried Rice Krispies
  - Baby Clams with a Tomato and Chilli Vinaigrette

#### **White Wine**

- For Lunch** - **Albarino Fillaboa 1997-Rias Baixes 3000pts**

- 1st Course - Char grilled Globe Artichoke Bottom with a slice of bone marrow in the centre topped with Salmon Eggs.  
A truly brilliant eats, with the flavour of the artichoke changing dramatically from being Char-grilled. The eggs explode in the mouth, blending with the succulent marrowbone. I really enjoyed this for openers; we were on for a good lunch.

- 2nd Course - Sorbet of Roquefort, Fromage Raise Parmesan.  
An incredible combination of flavours, initially the Roquefort has a light mousse-like quality, with a little crushed Walnut for texture. A little Olive Oil separates the two sorbets, the texture of which were like no other that I have ever tasted. The Fromage Fraise was soft and delicate with a little Apple for texture and sweetness. Separated again by another Olive Oil of a different Ph value, and the strong and pungent Parmesan Sorbet, which was excellent.

- 3rd Course - Broad Beans with Chinese Noodles, and a dressing of Roasting Juices, which had a hint of Mint and possibility of Liquorice and Caraway, although we could not all agree. Good flavours the beans were great, not a show stopper but pleasant.

- 4th Course - Foie Gras marinated or cured on sliced Apple with a parfait of Foie Gras. Caramelised Rice paper, which had a hint of Praline, with a sprig of Thyme meat reduction plus a hint of Balsamic.

- 5th Course - Octopus Tentacle with Squid Ink, and Mange Tout.  
The Octopus was very visual, which the Girls did not care for, but this made the presentation visually stunning. The octopus itself had been beaten and brined and was the most tender that I have eaten, flavours were excellent and texture meaty in the extreme with an unusual softness to it, I enjoyed and ate

Helens and Gabbi's.

- 6th Course - Fillet of Hake seared and presented on Aubergine Mousse, with a Jus of Tomato, Olive Oil and Saffron. This was a good solid dish with the flavours you expect from traditional Catalan food. The Fish itself was perfectly cooked. (I still think it was Sea Bass).
- Red Wine - Remelluri 1995 Rioja Reserva (Tempanillo, Grenache, Granaca) 3400pts
- 7th Course - Leg of Rabbit Confit wrapped in Caul Fat, stuffed with a Garlic Farce, a light sauce of Chicken Roasting Juices with a Sweet Potato Yam-like Vegetable. The weakest of all the dishes, with the Garlic totally overpowering the Rabbit. The sauce was also heavily reduced, a disappointment.
- 8th Course - Ice Cream of Sweetcorn with Tomato, Crème Fraiche, Melba Toast infused with Thyme served with a purée of Blackberry. A really unusual combination, which actually worked when you allowed your mind to let you. A winner for me, not for Helen.
- 9th Course - Dried Pineapple, Herb Ice Cream with Lychees, Fruit Coulis of Mango and Pomelo. Again a difficult combination but pleasant Herb Ice Cream. Very good.

Having not had enough to eat Mr Heathcote asks for another dessert!!!!

- 10th Course - Dried Aubergine, Aubergine Mousse, Lime Sorbet, Cane Jelly Pistachio Nuts Segments of Orange and Orange Zest.

A bridge to far even I was nearing capacity!

If this was a Ferran Student what was the Master going to be like? We looked forward to El Bulli with anticipation.

A good walk round the Port, a trip round the Aquarium and another memorable siesta brought us to Monday evening. Obviously feeling hungry after such a light lunch we set off in search of the best Tapas bar in Barcelona 'Cal Pep'.

Tel 310 79 61

### **Monday 15th March, Dinner**

After a little searching we found this well secluded Tapas Bar. An absolute hive of activity. Deciding to take the casual route we waited patiently as the owner shuffled the clients about to find four well deserved bar stools. Four ice-cold beers were delivered and the show began. The whole atmosphere here was unforgettable. A neat bar with all the food cooked to order under the watchful eye of the Patron, commands shouted and food began.

#### TAPAS IN ORDER OF DELIVERY

- Catalan Bruchetta - Tomatoes, Garlic on sliced Baguette some how better than most.
- Deep Fried  
Bell Peppers - These tiny sweet bell peppers were brilliant and the odd chilli one meant this Russian Roulette of Gastronomy was good fun and more iced cold beers were needed.
- Baby Clams - Cooked in a bouillon with chopped Black foot Ham, shallots, Coriander, Garlic and Parsley and a good dose of white wine.
- Razor Shall Clams - Lightly cooked, excellent and tender. Not the Girls favourite so plenty for Paul and my goodself.
- Baby Squid - Sautéed with Garlic, Tomatoes Herbs and wine real traditional Catalan Flavours.
- King Prawns - Sautéed with whole cloves off garlic, great. Could have done with a few more.
- Pork Belly - Cooked salted served with Chickpeas and spinach really rustic good flavours.
- Dorade - With Sautéed Potatoes, garlic Olive Oil and herbs one of the tastiest fish dishes I have had in many a moon.
- Clams Again - With wine and ham
- Char-grilled Squid - Garlic Olive Oil

Two large Torres 10 year old. 4 Espresso Coffees, and a move to the back slots to let more expectant customers through. An absolutely brilliant night of real Spanish food in a great environment. If we ever return to Barcelona this ones on the list.

Not bad days Gastronomy. We wandered around the Port in search of the music bars, a touch of dancing and back up the Ramblas for Brandies in the Place de Riel.

## Wednesday 17th March 1999

The journey begins with picking up our hire car and heading out of Barcelona to Roses, in search of El Bulli.

EL BULLI

(Ferran Outrageously Soler)

Cala Montjoi, Roses, Girona

Tel 972 150 457

Cava apéritif, Fino Sherry for me before embarking on the 26 different flavours of the night.

### TAPAS ' EL BULLI'

1. A vermouth cocktail made with Campari and the Juice of Pink Grapefruits, slightly sweetened and frothed with Egg whites. A pleasant and refreshing start based on a Classic Bancroft cocktail!
2. Lotus Flower Dried and salted
3. Pumpkin Seeds Caramelised
4. Mango Twists dried
5. Pork Livers with Pine Nuts
6. Dried Monkfish Strips Salted
7. Tomato Sorbet
8. Croquettes of Chicken - Really good enclosed Croquettes that exploded when bitten.
9. Poached Quails Egg, lightly Caramelised with Sea Salt. An unusual combination which Paul and I really enjoyed.
10. Pitta Bread, fried and filled with warm Olive Oil - Good .

Course 1 - Cold Pea Soup, served in a tall Glass presented with instructions to drink in one.

Hot Pea Soup of a velvety texture on the top. Drinking through the hot soup to encounter a warm Pea soup with a good hint of mint and the cold pea soup with flavours of mandarin. Good flavours.

Course 2 Polenta Granite in set Yoghurt with Truffle Oil.  
The iced Polenta was like sawdust, so much so, that you only realised it was frozen when you ate it. This was all an unusual combination, which had its merits, but this was getting seriously technical.

Course 3 Tagliatelle of Clear Chinese Noodles serve with warmed Egg Yolk, White Truffle and Fine Chopped Black Foot Ham.

This dish was a good eat despite being cold. It all worked well in principle; it was

only a step change from its classic influence.

- Course 4 Broad Beans enclosed in Clear Noodle Pate, in the shape of a small Samosa with a hint of mint and Grilled Potato, barrel shaped, tiny scoured and coloured.
- Course 5 Fresh Asparagus with warm Mayonnaise and Caramelised Blood Oranges, with sugar and salt. A great combination, ate well, texture on the mayonnaise was extraordinary.
- Course 6 Pineapple Crêpe with seared Fennel and Orange Zest.  
The pineapple was cut as thin as paper, poached to soften and caramelised then used as the crêpe.
- Course 7 Ravioli of Cuttle Fish with a hint of Ginger and Coconut on Bean Sprouts.  
This dish was presented with instruction that we had to eat the Ravioli in one, placing it in your mouth and biting in one, an explosion of coconut milk was released and slithered down your throat, a good technical dish and flavours.
- Course 8 Shelled Langoustine Tails in a set clear Fish Jelly, with warm Bisque just over the surface.  
  
Textures here were a bit slippery but Fish flavours were very evident, perhaps the Langoustine Tails could have been more substantial.
- Course 9 Red Mullet topped with slivers of Tripe and Cuttlefish. The combination worked well .
- Course 10 Breast of Duck, Seaweed Salt, Turnip and Spinach, Seaweed and Wild Mushroom Roasting Juices.
- Course 11 Coffee Jelly lightly set, White Chocolate Mousse, White Chocolate Frothed Lychee Sorbet.  
  
This dish was presented in a beautiful bowl Tulip shaped in lime Green. It ate a dream, good textures and complimentary flavours which was also pleasantly refreshing.
- Course 12 Red Fruit Jelly, Blackberries, Red Fruit Berries, Basil, Mint and a reduction of Balsamic.  
  
We again had instructions to eat the dish from the top downward bringing the flavours to the fore. Not a million miles away from many of our own summer creations.

## **PETIT FOURS**

1. Mint leaf set between tempered Chocolate
2. Mini Cornets Raspberry Sorbet
3. Chocolate Truffles
4. Chocolate coated Sunflower seeds dusted with sugar and salt.
5. Clear Sugar crystals set like a lolly with Citrus zests
6. Fresh Fruit Kebabs
7. Praline Snaps Pistachio Nut
8. Lemon Jellies, Nut Centre
9. Mosaic of Crème Pate

Brilliant presentation with racks and containers for each item, if we only had the money.

## **WINES DURING THE MEAL**

- Guitian 1996 - Spanish wine made from the Godella Grape, full fruited and good a first, the nose had a slight Voigner nose with hints of Peach and Tropical tones. The wine deteriorates in the glass, which was surprising.
- Remelluri 1995- Full on Spanish Chardonnay with great character, huge full flavours toasty, vanilla but not over Oaked, with excellent fruit.
- Pagos Viejos  
Reserva 1995 - A real disappointment. This Rioja was short on length and fruit, and in our opinion needed more time.

The meal now finished the Guided tour of the Kitchens was organised and what a memorable look round it was.

This Kitchen would have been at home on the 'Star Ship Enterprise'. No ovens or grills, no section refrigeration. Light, with a glass wall onto floodlit rock slate walls. Marble and stainless steel abound. Even a tree growing through the pastry section, and the Bulls head on the main pass. You can even take a drink watching the full brigade of 45 chefs work there *MAGIC*. Also a Kitchen table can be had by prior arrangement.