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THE ALGARVE RESIDENT (11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2013) BY: PATRICK STUART

### Plansel wine evening at Leão de Porches

Last Tuesday, January 8, saw a full house at the charming Leão de Porches restaurant in Porches for a special dinner featuring the wines of Alentejo winery Quinta da Plansel.

The winemaker and co-owner of the quinta, Dorina Lindemann, found time from her hectic schedule, travelling the world to promote her wines on international markets, to join restaurateur Bianca Salden and present them to guests with a menu of pairing dishes specially created by chef George Tannock and his team.

Upon arrival, guests were served the winery's unusual Espumante as an aperitif, a pink sparkler of considerable body and structure, followed by their mainstream white, Plansel Selecta Branco, to accompany chef George's winter salad of calf's sweetbread.

Restaurateur Bianca Salden (left) with winemaker and co-owner of Quinta da Plansel, Dorina Lindemann

This is a fruity but unusually crisp and dry white by Alentejo standards that married perfectly with the starter. Next came a stunning dish of slow-cooked skate in cockle butter sauce, again matched to perfection with Plansel's white Reserva, another unusual wine that defines the style and individualistic approach of this winemaker.

This is a varietal made from the intensely fruity Verdelho grape, which is oak-fermented followed by a few months of battonage, balancing the intense fruit and solid acidity of the wine. Luscious and well-rounded in the mouth, it worked extremely well with the soft buttery texture and shellfish essence of the fish dish.

The meat course was an intricate confection of ballotine of free-range chicken, stuffed with chanterelle and shitake mushrooms on a watercress risotto with Madeira wine jus.

This was the opportunity to serve the wine Dorina Lindemann dedicated to her late husband and co-founder of the winery, Thomas Lindemann. Plansel Selecta Homenagem ao Thomas (Tribute to Thomas) is a rich and smooth red made from 100% Trincadeira grapes, displaying interesting notes of chocolates and truffles on the nose.

Guests also had the chance to sample two more of the winery's fine reds, the Reserva and a 100% Touriga Nacional varietal, served before the dessert of chocolate fondant with pistachio ice cream and cherry textures.

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THE PORTUGAL NEWS (12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2012)

**O Leão revisited**

O Leão de Porches has been a favourite of the Algarve resident community from way back in the 70's. Back then it was run by Hugh and Meryl Cole, and was almost a club, and the bar was the centre of attraction where Hugh reigned supreme. The interior of the restaurant was originally decorated by world famous Algarve artist Patrick Swift of Porches Pottery fame. For those who know and appreciate his art, there is evidence of his handiwork all around. Patrick studied and understood the local art and designs and this restaurant, in many ways, is a unique 'mini museum' of his art and handiwork.

But let's face it, you don't only go for the decor, you also go for the food and the service. This is where this lovely restaurant has taken the imaginative step of getting a top Michelin trained Chef to take its cuisine to a new level. Belgian owner Bianca Salden has spent the past seven years building up the solid reputation of O Leão de Porches and has now teamed up with Chef George Tannock.

George has trained under world famous chefs such as Heston Blumenthal's world famous Fat Duck Restaurant, awarded three Michelin stars, voted Best Restaurant in the World in the world 50 best restaurants, The Capital Hotel (two Michelin stars), The Green House (One Michelin star) and has even been the private chef to one of the world's Fortune 100 families. Combined with Bianca's natural ability to make you feel as comfortable as if you were dining in your own home, you can expect a truly special evening out, one to remember and to repeat as often as you can.

Very wisely, prices have been kept to a very accessible level for this quality of cuisine, and a budget of around €50 a person, including wine, is easily achievable. We tried the tasting menu, which is slightly more expensive at €60 for five courses. If you plan to try this menu, it would be wise to book, advising the restaurant if you have any food allergies as chef will be choosing the five courses on your behalf, carefully matching all the flavours to give you an outstanding dining experience.

First we were served with an Amuse bouche of Smoked Eel Rillettes and avocado mouse, which was a layer of flavours starting with a delicate, smoked fish moving to a creamy sweet and sour avocado. Wonderful, the perfect way to start a meal! We then moved on to Seared tiger prawn with carrot tofu and Thai coconut broth. This dish filled our flavour buds with a riot of delight, and we had to ask for a spoon to make sure none of the Thai Broth went to waste. The dish was a joy to look at and an even greater delight to eat. Then came the Beef and truffle tartare with kohlrabi puree, fresh, delicate, and superbly flavoured. One of our party had never eaten beef tartare, and was really surprised with the flavour and texture of this dish. She liked it! This was followed by Grilled turbot with mixed mushroom risotto and lemon espuma, and yet again the combination of subtle flavours really impressed us. For the main course, Assiette of duck, honey glazed breast, confit leg and seared Foie Gras with creamed celery and fondant potatoes. The dish consisted of three pieces of duck, delightfully presented on a bed of creamy celery sticks. The Duck was very tender, and the Foie Gras not as rich as we expected. The leg was so tender and flavoursome, helped no doubt by the technique of very slow cooking the confit for 48 hours. Around the dish were small samples of various purees and sauces, each highly complementary to the dish. For desert, Pineapple Poached in Sichuan pepper with a ginger and lime sorbet. The ginger and lime sorbet was another flavour explosion; each of us reacted with a 'wow' as we took the first taste. To finish the meal, Chocolate chunk shortbread petit fours to accompany our coffee, or just to sample on their own.

It was a delightful meal, superbly served and presented. This restaurant has such a lovely ambiance, warm and friendly yet with a real touch of uniqueness and quality, not least due to the fact that it's based on an original 17th century country home. You can 'feel' its history and its unique position almost hidden away in the centre of Porches.

If you love your food, this is one restaurant you shouldn't miss.

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THE PORTUGAL NEWS (26<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2011)

### Delectable dining in your own home

Everybody has preferences when it comes to food - but what is it that sensational dining experiences have in common? The table is beautifully laid, the food full of flavour and exquisite to the eye, the wines unravel and linger in your mouth, and the atmosphere makes you feel comfortable and relaxed.

So why not have your meal in the most familiar and agreeable place - your own home?

With Chefs Table you can stylishly impress your guests or clients with a dining experience equal to any leading restaurant in the Algarve, but in the luxury and qudos of your own home. As with dining out, you do not have to worry about the shopping, preparation, cooking, serving, or tiresome cleaning, because Chefs Table will do all these things to the highest of standards. With over 14 years of cooking in one, two and three starred Michelin kitchens, such as the Fat Duck and Zuma in the UK, and as a private chef for a family listed in the Fortune 100, George Tannock is a skilled Master Chef who combines his international experience with creativity and world class service. He is able to create a unique and personalised menu with a combination of courses to surprise, delight and impress you and your guests.

The food theme of the night is your choice, but you can rest assured it will be delectable!

#### About George Tannock

George Tannock was naturally drawn to the kitchen from the age of five. When on holiday in the Swiss Alps, he was dressed as chef and created chaos in the hotel kitchen.

His first opportunity to start his journey as a chef, was an apprenticeship at the Dorchester Hotel in London when he was just sixteen. He followed this by working in some of the world's leading food establishments. The Fat Duck in Bray (3 Michelin stars), The Capital Hotel in London (2 Michelin stars), The Greenhouse Restaurant (1 Michelin star), and also in the prestigious Japanese restaurant Zuma. His last position in the UK was as Senior Sous Chef at the Capital Hotel. George has recently returned from working as a private chef for the Weston family, and is now back in his birth place of Portugal and his skills are currently available to impress your guests.

#### Planning your event

You are kindly asked to book at least 5 days in advance so that you can enjoy the full Chefs Table experience

First step - Call or email to arrange a suitable time for chef to visit your home and personally discuss the menu and check the dining facilities.

Second step - Once chef has created your unique and personalised menu he will contact you with a quote for your approval. A deposit will be requested to secure a date.

Third step - Chefs table will come to your home on the day and set up the dining room, cook and serve your delectable meal. Once you have finished your meal they will leave everything as they found it so all you have to do is relax and enjoy your special night.

#### Service provided

The service Chefs Table provide is structured around your individual needs so it will be priced accordingly, whether it is a 3 course meal or a 7 course tasting menu. To ensure the quality of your meal is of the highest of standards they can cater for 2 to 8 guests (or possibly more if your home

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facilities permit). Normally, the menu will be the same design for all your guests. They can also cater for all individual dietary requirements with given notice.

The quotation will include travel, a server and most cooking utensils - they will just need your kitchen. The quote will not include any table wines or spirits. (However, they will be pleased to provide matching wines upon request as well as flowers, at an extra cost). The exact number of diners has to be confirmed 48 hours in advance.

Chef George is also available for one-to-one cooking lessons where he will teach you how to prepare and cook any meal and then leave you to show off your cooking ability to your guests.

Speak to George on 917 301 396 or email: [chef@chefstablealgarve.com](mailto:chef@chefstablealgarve.com) or go to [www.chefstablealgarve.com](http://www.chefstablealgarve.com)

Join Chefs Table on Facebook for seasonal hints and cooking advice at: Chefs Table Algarve.