



An IWFS Encomium

Durban's chapter of The International Wine and Food Society has done more than any other factor to raise the authority of classical and regional cuisines offered here -- and to encourage higher levels of creativity among good chefs in our region.

Without its valuable carrot of the President's award -- and a little bit of constructive criticism now and again -- every good restaurant we know here today would be a little bit worse, a little less interesting, a morsel more fat and happy: less able to summon up that breast-the-tape energy of achievement.

Some of them would not be here at all had it not been for the Society's spotlight finding and then filling them with customers who would otherwise never have known they were so good, so worth a visit when their chefs were on the way up.

I'm also pretty sure that, without the Society our Sunday Tribune dining column would not be quite so well read -- and according to the surveys it is the best-read column in the region.

It used to be named Fine Dining each week, but about seven years ago -- when consumer cash began to shrink -- we changed that to just Dining as the regular title, restoring the 'Fine' distinction when a restaurant deserves it.

That's why I feel a very special symbiosis between my efforts for finer food and the IWFS way of going about it. But I won't go too deeply into how very much I enjoy and value the sheer fun and camaraderie of the members' company -- I hate to make strong foodies weep into their starters.

Suffice it to say how happy I have been as an occasional loyal pointer and publicist for the Society and how very grateful I have been for its magical trick of producing dusty bottles that have raised my knowledge of good wine to a more rarified altitude.

For fear of disgrace at the table I always restrain my emotional gratitude for this in case I horrify members who might notice that I was weeping into the wine and diluting it.

Bon appetit!

Derek Taylor