

Que Syrah, Syrah

OSTERIA MATTONE HOSTS QUPÉ FOR AN ELEGANT EVENING IN SUPPORT OF THE HIGH MUSEUM OF ART

Written by Lia Picard / Photographed by Kyle Ripley, Haigwood Studios

In the very early days of spring, wine enthusiasts gathered at Roswell eatery, Osteria Mattone, to raise a glass for the arts as part of the Dine Around Series for the High Museum Atlanta Wine Auction. The dinner featured Qupé, based in Santa Barbara County, California, with pairings by sommelier Daniel Pernice and dishes prepared by Executive Chef Eric Sell.

FOUNDED IN 1982, Qupé was one of the original syrah-makers in California. Ethan Lindquist, son of founder Bob Lindquist, presided over the dinner, telling the group how his father was a “Rhone Ranger” in the late 1970s. At a time when people thought that Rhone varietals wouldn’t grow in California’s climate, Bob proved the region could produce world-class syrahs and served as an advocate for the varietals to restaurants and connoisseurs alike. Now, you can’t talk about California syrah without mentioning Qupé.

The setting at Osteria Mattone was perfect for a springtime soiree. The house-turned-restaurant is charming with exposed brick and minimal decor. Three long tables, set with fresh flowers and candles in the front room, were warm and inviting as the late afternoon sun streamed through the arched windows.





Dinner started with a hiramasa (yellowtail) crudo with almond foam, blood orange supremes and preserved lemon. The fish—rich and slightly sweet—was sliced thin enough to almost melt in your mouth. A burst of brightness from the citrus awakened our palates. Paired with the juicy 2013 Qupé Marsanne, a crisp white with notes of lemon, we were refreshed and ready for the night ahead.

Paying tribute to the restaurant’s Italian roots, the first course was a *stradette*—a cornmeal pasta with origins in northern Italy (pictured at bottom right). Lightly smoked, the pasta was simply prepared in a butter sauce with roasted potato skin, leeks and Parmesan. Light, with varying textures, most noticeably the al dente firmness of the pasta punctuated by the crunch of the potato skin, it was paired with the 2012 Qupé Roussanne. This heady white wine with floral notes and hints of pear played nicely with the buttery dish.



(opposite) Guests eagerly await another glass of Qupé wine; (clockwise from above) Ryan Pernice, co-owner of Osteria Mattone, began the evening with welcoming remarks; Osteria Mattone set an elegant table for its delicious Qupé wine dinner; Executive Chef Eric Sell gets ready for service; the *stradette* was paired with the 2012 Qupé Roussanne; the first glass of the evening, the Qupé Marsanne, was crisp and citrusy.



Find the recipe for Smoked Stradette at flavorsmagazine.com.

Ethan Lindquist, son of Qupé founder Bob Lindquist, tells the story of how Qupé was created in Santa Barbara County, California.



The most interesting course of the evening was the rabbit mortadella. Usually reserved for charcuterie boards, Sell's rendition was thick and studded with pistachios. Served atop a rutabaga puree, the dish was earthy and rustic. The pickled rhubarb garnish added a pop of tartness as well as a brilliant red splash of color on the plate.

Pernice paired the savory mortadella with the complementary 2012 Qupé Sawyer Lindquist Vineyard Grenache. Full-bodied and spicy with hints of cherries, it sang with the flavors of the meat. The table unanimously agreed that this was the best wine of the evening. Interestingly, the grapes used for this varietal were grown on Qupé's Sawyer Lindquist biodynamic vineyard.



The rabbit mortadella was paired with Qupé Grenache.

For the uninitiated, biodynamic vineyards are organically grown in accordance with how the rhythms of the lunar calendar might affect the taste of the wine.

Next came the artfully presented roasted Pekin duck. Aromatic and succulent, the skin was crispy and gave way to the juicy meat. The stars of the plate, though, were the braised turnips topped with blueberry preserves and a flurry of crispy quinoa. The turnips were thick, yet tender, and could almost pass as meat themselves. Blueberry preserves were a sweet surprise and added a hint of spring to a late winter dish.

Two syrahs were paired with the duck. The 2013 Qupé Syrah Sawyer Lindquist Vineyard "Sonnie's" was named in honor of Ethan's grandmother. The jammy red accented the duck perfectly with hints of pepper. The other syrah, the 2013 Qupé Syrah Bien Nacido Hillside Estate, is their flagship wine. With flourishes of blackberry and spice, it was a suitable pairing for the turnips and blueberries. Both wines were full-bodied, but the flagship won my favor with its mocha undertones, a result of aging in the bottle for two years.



The Pekin duck was paired with two of Qupé's syrahs.



Sommelier Daniel Pernice shares his passion for Qupé wines, particularly the syrah, and explains his pairings for the evening.

A slice of dark fruit almond tart with cherry foam and toasted marshmallow was a lovely

finishing touch to our evening. Executive Pastry Chef Kelly Lovett demonstrated elegant restraint by preparing a dessert that was subtly sweet. After a dinner filled with rich flavors, it was fitting to conclude on a simple note.

Roswell may be more than 2,000 miles from Santa Barbara County, but for one night, we were transported to southern California. It was a revelry-filled evening that allowed diners to not only support the High, but to develop an appreciation for the oft-overlooked California Rhone varietals.



Fruit and Almond Tart

Recipe by Kelly Lovett, Executive Pastry Chef, Osteria Mattone

Yield: 8 servings

Pate Sucrée (recipe included)

- 2 cups sliced strawberries
- 2 cups pitted cherries, frozen or fresh
- 1 tablespoon vanilla sugar to taste
- pinch salt

Frangipane (recipe included)

Roll chilled **Pate Sucrée** to about 1/4-inch thickness. Line a 10-inch tart pan coated with cooking spray with dough. Place back in refrigerator to firm.

Heat oven to 325 degrees.

Once dough is firm, top with a lining of wax paper, fill with baking weights and parbake until barely golden. Let cool. Meanwhile, combine fruit with vanilla, sugar and salt and toss to mix.

Once parbaked dough is cooled, evenly spread **Frangipane** mixture in tart shell. Sprinkle half of fruit mixture on top and bake at 325 until mixture is just set and slightly firm to the touch. Let cool completely before cutting. Top tart with reserved fruit.

Pate Sucrée

- 1 cup butter
- 1 1/4 cups powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup almond flour
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt

Pate Sucrée

In a mixer fitted with paddle attachment, cream together butter, powdered sugar and almond flour. Once fluffy, gradually add eggs and vanilla. Mix until incorporated. Add dry ingredients all at once and mix until just combined. Shape dough into a flat disk and chill for 1 hour.

Frangipane

- 1/4 cup almond paste
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup butter, soft
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

For the Frangipane

In a mixer fitted with paddle attachment, cream together almond paste, sugar and butter. Once smooth, gradually add eggs and vanilla until incorporated. Add all dry ingredients last and mix until smooth.

OSTERIA MATTONE

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