

Fall-Winter 2011-2012

HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR

It's not that often where you have one event in a year that really stands out as exceptional. 2011 had that singular event for us at the winery.

At this time last year we got the notice from the Napa Valley Vintners Association asking us if we wanted to offer a dinner at the winery for the Wine Auction in June. We hadn't done an event for the Auction at the winery for several years and I felt the time was ripe to do another one. I asked Jennifer if she wanted to take charge of this time-eating and non-paying endeavor and she agreed. Well after butting heads with the Auction rules and requirements for two weeks we decided to give up on participating with the Vintners and just throw a dinner at the winery for our 40 top direct buyers and thus was born the 'Top 40' party.

I asked my great friend Chef Kurt from the Coach House in Oklahoma City to come out and do the dinner and he readily agreed. Chef Kurt is not only enormously talented but rends asunder the notion that great Chefs have to be enormous primadonnas. Not only did Chef plan the entire meal, he brought out his GM and his top server to help execute the service. And when word got out that he was coming to Napa to do a dinner, four of his former protégés, who are now Bay Area Chefs in their own right, volunteered to help. I've never seen so much talent in our humble little kitchen.

We did the dinner in the cellar, which Jennifer transformed with red carpet, candles and amazing table decorations. It was truly a transformative experience. This was more than just a dinner, it was a night that made me feel an immense sense of pride; in our setting, what our team has accomplished wine wise in the last 12 years, watching my daughter trailing behind the pros carrying every dish down that oversized flight of stairs, and having the kind of friends who can cook like that! I ate every morsel that was set before me. I never do that at wine dinners.

Needless to say, we want to do this again in 2012. Mark your calendars for Saturday August 4th and stay tuned to find out how to qualify!

Cheers to memories,

Michael Keenan

Scan the QR code on the cover with your smart phone, or go to www.keenan40.com on your computer, to learn about how to win seats at the Top 40 Dinner!