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Restaurant Week Round-up

June 10, 7:50 PM Palm Springs Wine Bars Examiner Rick Riozza



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It's nice to be back hitting all the food and wine bar scenes that are going about.

As our desert community well knows, we're in the final days of **Palm Springs Deserts Resorts Restaurant Week 2010**. During these 10 days, from *June 4th to the 13th*, we've been getting to dine at all the famous desert restaurants in the valley at discount prices. Great places we've eaten at, and great places we've all been desiring to eat at. **Ten hotels and 75+ top restaurants**, from the **Adobe Grill**, La Quinta, through **Johnny Costa's Ristorante**, Palm Springs, to **Zin American Bistro**, and a host of others, offering 3 course (some 4 course) *prix fixe* menus for either **\$24 or \$36**. Now is the time to take advantage of this great food deal to "sample old favorites and explore new dining".

For a complete list of participating restaurants and menus, as well as special hotel packages and other offers, visit, www.palmspringsrestaurantweek.com. This is an annual event, so treat yourself.

Restaurant Week had their kick-off celebration at the [Renaissance Esmeralda](#) in Indian Wells. **Stuart Anderson** was easily recognized with his *signature* cowboy

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hat. We talked about his new steak house and wine bar at the new **Stuart's Restaurant** in Rancho Mirage. He's quite

proud of his wine list and wants me (and you too) over to meet his beverage manager, Kimmie Hollier; *and*, he dared me to try his **classic Martini**, stating his staff makes one of the *best in the West*. Well, partner, that's a dare I can handle.

Kelly Walling, executive chef the **Hog's Breath Inn**, was on hand preparing a wonderfully tender and delicious halibut *amuse-bouche* with a corn succotash that went scrumptiously with the **Beringer's, Constantino's, and Leonesse Cellars's** Chardonnays, Sauvignon Blancs, and all the other white wine blends that these wineries were pouring.

It was fun seeing all the **restauranteurs** mixing it up with each other. By nature, everyone is competing with one another to put out the best food and presentation during **Restaurant Week** and throughout the year; but, there is a great comradery too as they themselves know the ins and outs of the business, *and* most importantly to us consumers, they raise the bar of excellence of which we get the ultimate benefit of a great dining experience.

Not to be dropping any names--but I personally look forward to reviewing the restaurant's wine bars and cuisine of the particular owners that were on hand: **Tony Marchese of Trio**, "*where palm springs eats*"; **Mindy Reed of Zin American Bistro**, Palm Springs (I met her a couple of months back at an Italian wine trade program, can't wait to try the wines she chose); and, **Oscar Ayala**, Kitchen Manager at the new **Escena Golf Club Restaurant**, again in Palm Springs, one of the new players in town.

When **Kathleen Bennett of Resort Marketing**, "*Solutions that work*", Palm Springs, found out (in between our munching and quaffing) that I'm in the midst of my "**Bit of Italy in the Desert**" series, *and, that I hadn't yet been to Johnny Costa's Ristorante*, well-- she personally promised to get me to meet Johnny and the family at the *Ristorante*, and, we're entering through the wine cellar! *Avanti! Andiamo!*

Speaking of Italian, **Sirocco**, with their *northern* Italian cuisine, came up to the plate offering a fantastic **butternut squash tortelloni served with an Asti Spumante butter sauce**, and, their Spanish sister restaurant, **Cava**, provided a perfect polenta dish: **Wild Mexican Shrimp Polenta**. The *tortelloni* (yes, a large *tortellini*) "*was to die for*". As to the polenta, I kept going back for more. The only downside to that was my mouth became a veritable gattling gun of *grits* shooting as I spoke. Generally, this is quite irritating to the people you're talking to. There is definitely a time to be silent.

Both restaurants are located inside the **Renaissance Esmeralda**, Indian Wells.



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As the old saying goes: *So many restaurants...so little time.* The new one's better: *It's time to slow down... savor the food and enjoy the company of your friends and loved ones.* And let's thank God for the abundance! **Bon Appetit! Here's to your health!**

Quick reminders: **Gregory Frech**, Manager /Sommelier, at **Roy's**, Rancho Mirage, has a great wine club program that meets once a month to enjoy several premium wines from the world's top vineyards. And, they're enjoying their **Hawaiian Fusion Cuisine** appetizers along side. Yummy

Fantasy Springs Casino & Resort's 12th Floor Wine Bar and Cocktail Lounge begins a new wine tasting event called **Weekly Wine Down-Fridays**. For only \$30, guests will receive **5 flights** of the featured wines from world class wineries along with a wine professional on hand to discuss them. In addition, **Daniel Thomas**, Beverage Manager and **"Mixologist of the Year"**, will be creating innovative cocktails for us to sample as well, and, a *gourmet* cheese platter is also included. Sounds like a fun evening. I look forward to covering these events. Hope to see you there!

The two hour event begins at 7pm. *June 11th* features **Francis Ford Coppola Winery**; *June 18th* features **Robert Mondavi Winery**; *June 25th* features **Beringer Vineyards**. For **reservations**, call **760.238.5646** or log onto www.FantasySpringsResort.com

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