

JAMES BEARD HOUSE FEATURES MASSIMO

By Margaret Word Burnside and Aaron R. Fodiman
Photography by Noraa



Chef Massimo Patano was the chef at Armani's in Tampa prior to opening his own restaurant in Palm Harbor.

JAMES BEARD, THE legendary chef and food writer, starred in the first cooking show on television in the 1950s. After his death in 1985, a foundation was established by Julia Child and Peter Kump

to preserve his Greenwich Village home in New York City at 167 West 12th Street. The foundation provides scholarships to aspiring food professionals and serves as a culinary center, where the public and industry professionals can savor the creations of outstanding chefs from around the globe.

Massimo Patano, the chef/owner of Massimo's Eclectic Fine Dining in Palm Harbor, was invited by the foundation to prepare a dinner at Beard House for 60 guests that would feature his Italian-inspired cuisine and was paired with wines from Vinifera. The evening began in the garden of the Beard House, as guests sipped *Soligo Brut Prosecco NV* and marveled at the texture and taste of Massimo's Truffled Duck Liver Pâté with *Membrillo* on Toast Points, Panko-Coated Ricotta Crabcakes with Avocado-Arugula Aioli, Mushroom-Truffle Oil Crostini and Kronenbourg 1664 Beer-Battered Artichoke Hearts. From there, they moved to the second floor dining room, where dinner began

with an appetizer of Spinach and Red Pepper-Stuffed Jumbo Shrimp with Diver Scallops, Crab Flan and a Sake, Ginger and Orange Glaze that was matched to a 2011 *Costantini Villa Simone Frascati Superiore*. This was followed by Sushi-Grade Tuna Loin stuffed with Boursin, Capers, Red Onion and Norwegian Oak-Smoked Salmon, along with Sour Cream-Soy Sauce, Lime-Wasabi Sauce and Wakame Seaweed and glasses of 2011 *Icardi Cortese L'Aurora*. The third course was a Roasted Vegetable Risotto Cake with Berkshire Kurobuta Pork Belly over it and a Red Pepper Aioli, Balsamic Reduction and Parsley Oil that was paired with a 2010 *D'Alessandro Nero D'Avola-Syrah*. This was followed by Pistachio-Coated and Pan-Seared Duck-Brie Mousse Cake and a Dried Apricot Champagne Sauce with Hudson Valley Foie Gras, all of which was masterly-enhanced by a 2009 *Icardi Surisjuan Nebbiolo*. The next to last course was a Herb-Crusted Colorado Lamb Chop with a Barese Sausage with Fava Bean

Hummus, Cinnamon-Red Wine Sauce and Black Peppercorn Oil that paired well with an aggressive 2006 *Sant'Elena Cabernet Sauvignon*. For dessert, Massimo served tastes of three of his favorites;

a Ricotta, Mascarpone and Gorgonzola Cheesecake, Chocolate-Hazelnut Polenta and Berry Macedonia with Vanilla-Amaretto Whipped Cream. The 2011 *Icardi Suri Vigin Brachetto* that was served with this final course was light with a bit of a spritz and a hint of strawberries and cherries.

At the conclusion of the dinner, the guests rose to applaud Massimo and his kitchen staff, after which Massimo answered questions that ranged from what it was like to work for Sophia Loren to how he prepared his pâté. It was a thrilling evening for those who attended this special dinner at the James Beard House. ■■■

EDITOR'S NOTE: Massimo's Eclectic Fine Dining is located at 31876 U.S. Highway 19 North in Palm Harbor, (727) 784-1881.