

Noosa Slow Food Annual Dinner : the highlights

Annual dinners! Most of us who've lived in cities and been in any way involved with clubs, societies and the like will remember them. Most commonly held in cavernous convention rooms at large hotels or stark community halls, formal events highlighted by endless speeches and inedible food.

What a change for the inaugural Noosa Slow Food Annual Dinner. Ricky Ricardos, packed to the rafters with an enthusiastic band of new friends and old friends, dining on exotic and delicious Catalan food, entertained by the driving rhythm of Spanish guitars, informed by the man who knows Slow Food in Australia best. A kind of showpiece for the ambitions of Slow in Noosa, a thoroughly enjoyable evening during which the purpose, form and function of the Slow movement was never more demonstrably illustrated.

"Once again a tireless crew of members made it all happen and the contributions of the committee were evident in every aspect."

Our thanks to Matt Golinski, Ricky's super-chef who researched, devised, and presented a range of tantalising delights from the Catalonia region of Spain – foods many of us have not previously experienced. Sommelier Pascal Turschwell kicked us off with a Catalonian Cava to accompany the Calcotadas; little spring onions served with a romesco sauce (one of the 5 base sauces of Catalan cuisine) and matched the dishes beautifully with Spanish wines.

Once seated we supped on fresh broad beans with olive oil croutons and sea salt; shared tapas dishes of potato, onion and anchovy tortilla, stuffed



squid with chocolate sauce and green and black olive coca (Catalan pizza) and sipped a Sarsuela or Catalan soup, which translated as a 'seafood operetta', all helped along with a light Catalan white wine, Creu de Lavit. As the red wine, a Valdebon 2202 flowed, we tucked into a main course of suitably slow braised duck with chorizo, tomatoes, white beans and cabbage with a smoky charred vegetable salad. During the evening we were romanced by several sessions of fabulous Spanish guitar music from Andrew Veivers and Chris of Flamenco Fire.

Our Guest Speaker for the evening was James Broadway from Victoria, one of the International Councillors of Slow Food in Australia and while all of his talk was informative and interesting, the highlight was the background to Slow's involvement in the Salone planned for 2006 in Melbourne following the Taste

of Slow in early September this year. Get down there if you can.

All this was followed by a luscious Crème Catalan, with sweet little fritters and baked quinces and two magnificent Spanish cheeses, accompanied by copious glasses of Pedro Ximenez sherry to leave a lingering Spanish taste in the mouth.

Our raffle for the evening raised \$1100.00 and the winner of the Byron Bay prize, Eleanor Gilmour could hardly hear the draw as the musical tones of satisfied diners were beginning to overhaul those wonderful guitars!

Warmest thanks goes to Wendy Taylor from Byron Bay Slow Food for arranging the accommodation with Byron at Byron, a new glam resort and an accompanying dining voucher for their lip smackingly good new restaurant.

Top photo (L>R) Slow Food Noosa stalwarts, Martha Shepherd, Mark and Katrina Ryan.

Middle (L>R) Jeroo Pavri-Thomas gives some pointers to Ricky's manager, Pascal Turschwell & super waiter Johnny Blundstone. **Bottom (L>R)** Preparations under way for a great dinner, chef Derrick Payne with Maestro- chef, Matt Golinski



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