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## A Valentine's Evening to Remember



*Donna Mantone-Adinolfi*

As a travel and spa writer and columnist I've been to my share of big cities and romantic destinations and have experienced evenings of elegance as well as exquisite menus. However, this past Valentine's Day I took a short trip from Virginia to Michigan to visit a close friend in Livonia and on this cold winter night was whisked away to an unrevealed location for what was to be one of the best nights of my life. As a writer and one with a quest to get answers I searched for places in the area looking for ideas as to where I might be going, I had my suspicions and when we arrived at the Western Golf & Country Club in Redford, I was fairly pleased with almost figuring it out ahead of time.

What came next was a surprise like no other and one that I hope I'll get to experience again!

Upon entering the club we were greeted at the door by Western staff and directed to the pub area where we enjoyed a glass of champagne (okay, several glasses) surrounded by candlelight and other guests – a total of 50. I knew that the area would be lit only by candles and it made for the most romantic evening. Later on we were escorted to the main dining room and what an amazing site upon entering. Red and white décor, the ambiance of tapered candles and votives, a cozy fireplace, a pianist serenading us and a beautiful tablescape were all quite impressive. The staff made sure that every need was met and indeed they were.

One hint I received early on included the menu and what a menu it was. The chef created an exquisite, sensuous and rich menu with wine pairings and a few items with aphrodisiac properties (i.e. salmon, champagne, wine, and chocolate). I particularly enjoyed the wine pairing with our appetizer course, which included Roasted Salmon En Croute served over Roasted Yellow Pepper Coulis and paired with 2005 Principessa Gavia. I then chose the Cream of Wild Onion Bisque soup – amazing flavor and texture. The service was amazing as well and with such a rich menu everything was paced appropriately. There were several choices for the main course including Pan Seared Veal Mignon (that was my choice and it was wonderful), Five-Spice Pan-Seared Sea Scallops, Roasted Beef Tenderloin and Pan Seared Breast of Pheasant (my date's choice and it was also wonderful). The wine pairing for the main course was a 2004 Trivento Syrah, which I also enjoyed as I do prefer a good red. Dessert was next and to further enhance an already romantic evening it was served with a split of Rosa Regale – an Italian dessert wine. My choice for dessert included the Caramel Box filled with Macadamia White Chocolate Mouse topped with Spun Sugar and Candied Macadamias – and there was a little chocolate surprise at the bottom. Yummy! It was amazing as were all of the dessert choices.

I have to admit that I was so pleasantly surprised with the evening and recall sharing my enthusiasm several times. If you have a love for fine food and wine and of course a love for each other, I would plan ahead for next year (as long as there's room for the two of us) and experience an evening of complete bliss and great food.

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