

Dear Toni,

Thank you for your circular letter which has enlightened me to the reality of Foie Gras which I must confess has been a course that I enjoyed at the beginning of the meal with our Ratafia. However, may I take the opportunity of apologizing for this disgusting habit and will henceforth refrain from promoting the combination and tell you about how we got to produce our Ratafia.

In 1993 a French student from the Champagne Laurent Fresnet worked on our estate which was a wonderful cultural exchange. We have enjoyed these students for the past 27 years and they had become part of our family.

1993 was a very wet year and our vineyards were infested with snails especially along the banks of the river which runs through the lower part of our property. Laurent begged us if he could collect the snails as he was not allowed to be in possession of more than 24 snails at any one time as everyone in the Champagne was out hunting them to eat. He set out early the next morning after being given permission, coming back with two orange pockets of snails which he prepared on one condition, that we would produce Ratafia to accompany this delicacy ~ the point being that I became civilized as the French enjoy a sweet fortified wine at the beginning of a meal, for two reasons. Firstly the intake of sugar gives one the energy to digest your food, secondly and more philosophically, the alcohol makes one more relaxed to enjoy your food. Thus Ratafia became part of our program and is gaining popularity. "Ratafia" comes from the Latin "Ratification" to help assist in the negotiation of some treaty.

The other starters Ratafia goes exceptionally well with is scallops, chicken and duck liver pate. If you are in the vicinity I would enjoy meeting you and you will notice that Foie Gras has been removed from our new menu. We trust that our Ratafia will once again help in coming to some better understanding.

Best regards,

Achim von Arnim

Managing Director

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