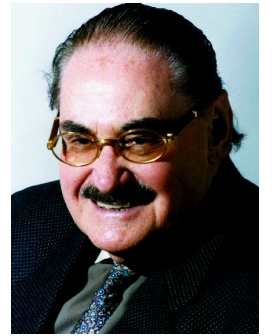


Dining Out

With Sheldon Landwehr
On Vacation

Photos by Rob Rich



Siro Maccioni brings to Mexico City an offshoot of his famed New York Le Cirque. The space, positioned off the lobby of Hotel Camino Real, faces a vast open kitchen supporting imported, hand-crafted equipment, a rigidly disciplined staff, and an elegant dining room, which in defiance of its large size, provides diners a feeling of intimacy.

Le Cirque's awesome black tie opening night featured two great orchestras, one Mariachi the other traditional. Each performed dazzlingly for the glittering assemblage, including every foreign ambassador in Mexico City. The multi-course meal and wines served were extraordinary, especially the rich rack of lamb, fork-tender and fragrant with fresh herbs and delicious flavorings.

It's not an easy task choosing among so many splendid main course examples, but during several visits, we were much taken with the spit-roasted whole chicken, whose mouth-watering presentation and every juicy bite bursting with savoir on the tongue caused much excitement. No wonder it's one of Le Cirque's most popular items. A prize signature dish crisp-skinned sea bass is simmered in a seductive red wine sauce with piquant overtones which works well to cut the richness of the sauce.

Daily specials boast a Thursday pot au feu that is singular and remarkable, hosting a concoction of chicken, short ribs and brisket under a garnish of traditional vegetables, a costly but wonderful mix. Bouillabaisse aficionados can satisfy their craving for this creative specialty Fridays.

Desserts here are sweet, captivating, and worth a vista on their own merit. No one beats their world-class creme brulee, the classic stove, or the chocolate soufflé. Among new signature desserts sample the figs a la provencal, a soft warm almond cake and figs in red wine with fig ice cream, or the fantastic chocolate boxes of 12 bonbons of homemade chocolate.

A limitless and expensive wine list supports meals, from Batard-Montrachet, Louis Latour 1994 to Romanee-St. Vivant, Domaine Romanee Conti 1995 to many unexpectedly excellent Mexican vintages.

**** Le Cirque, Camino Real Hotel, Mexico City. Telephone: 52-63-88-81. Lunch and dinner daily. Sunday brunch. Expensive. Accepts reservations and major credit cards.



Siro Maccioni



Regis Monges - Pastry Chef



Best Wishes