

**April 19, 2011**

## A South Florida Food and Wine Weekend

What a weekend! It was truly South Florida Food and Wine in every sense of the name. This post is more about the photos than the words as the pictures truly captured the flavor and essence of each event. It started on Thursday at the [United Way Miami Wine and Food Festival](#), Taste & Toast kickoff event with 1700 people in attendance tasting and toasting in the beautiful Village at Merrick Park in Coral Gables.



The one thing about these types of events is that it can get 'busy' (that's polite word for massively crowded) so if food and wine tasting events are "your thing" then I strongly recommend purchasing VIP tickets as opposed to the General Admission tickets. VIP tickets allow access to events an hour to an hour and a half before general admission ticket holders which gives attending guests an opportunity to sip, savor and chat with the wine suppliers and restaurateurs.



The attendees and supplier participants were out in full force and on their game at Taste & Toast reveling and enjoying one of the most fun boutique food and wine events in South Florida. It's completely outdoors; the Village at Merrick Park is a beautiful setting with ample parking and the people...what can I say, Miamians really know how to enjoy themselves. [Click here to view more photos of Taste & Toast](#)



Moving onto Saturday night, we attended the Miami Wine & Food Festival Cellar•bration at the InterContinental Hotel in Miami. This was a sit down formal dinner, Gala-ish if you will. It really was a lovely event, well attended, beautifully executed and the overall vibe was cool, very Miami cool.



It's not easy to organize and execute one event let alone four major ones spanning four days and multiple after-parties but the United Way Miami Wine & Food Festival committee seemed to be up for the challenge; and I'll tell you they met it head on. The reception was a continuous flow of Nicolas Feuillatte Champagne only to be rivaled by a multi-course dinner with each course prepared by a local guest chef; David Bracha of The River House Oyster Bar, Richard Hales of Sakaya Kitchen, Alejandro Pinero of Sustain Restaurant, Tom Rhyneer of the newly opened Miami Culinary Institute and Antonio Bachour of Solea.



This cruising menu took guests to culinary ports where we were able to explore the tastes and talents of each chef in one dinner. As part of the centerpiece each table had six bottles of wine all highlights from the [Best in Glass Challenge](#) that was held earlier this year.



The most impressive part of the evening were the auctions, both silent and live. The quality of the auction items was astounding; A wine dinner for 10 people prepared in your home by Micah Edelstein and wines paired by Patrick Sullivan, A mixed case of 2005 Red Bordeaux, A wine lovers vacation to Australia, A trip for two to Champagne, France, and the list goes on. It was truly a memorable evening. To view more photos [click here](#)