

Created by: Debra C. Argen

## Aioli Restaurant



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Some restaurants know how to create a romantic ambience and **Aioli Restaurant at Le Meridien Cancun Resort & Spa** is certainly one of them, as we entered the restaurant to enjoy a late dinner on May 4, 2005, to the strains of live cello music. There is something about the cello that exudes romance, and combined with the attractively set tables draped with damask linens, beautiful china with a yellow and blue pattern, and the striking views of the Caribbean Sea, it made for a special evening.



Ms. Marcela Guisa, Edward F. Nesta and I had dinner at **Aioli Restaurant**, headed by Executive Chef is Yann Giacconi who is originally from Nice, France. The restaurant serves Mediterranean cuisine with a French influence, and each month there is a special theme. Alberto, our waiter, told us that the theme for May was mango, from the cocktails in **LeRendez-Vous Bar** to the menu at the restaurant, and I was overjoyed as I am passionate about mango. Although the menu was extensive, we immediately honed in on our favorites: Cream of Lobster and Red Tuna Medallions for Marcela, Cream of Lobster and Roast Magret Duck with Mango Sauce for Edward, and I selected the Lobster Salad with Mango and the Seafood Combination Platter.



Carlos Martinez, our Sommelier, suggested the Errazuriz 2004 Max Reserva Chardonnay from Chile, which proved to be an elegant, aromatic wine ripe with tropical fruits of mango and pineapple on the nose balanced with vanilla and toast from French oak barrels. The wine had a well-rounded finish on the palate,

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and although quite drinkable now, would perhaps be even better with a few years of cellaring.

We began with an amuse bouche of chilled chopped shrimp with tomato with a lime vinaigrette that was very tasty, and Alberto tempted us with a lovely breadbasket of mixed breads and breadsticks, and although we tried hard to resist, the one that we could not refuse was a bread flavored with achiote.



Our first courses arrived of Cream of Lobster and the Lobster with Mango Salad, and they were both gorgeously presented. The Cream of Lobster was rich and decadent with intense lobster flavor, with a ravioli full of lobster meat and drizzled with lobster oil, and the Lobster with Mango Salad consisted of thinly sliced mango arranged like petals on a flower on the dish, and was topped with succulent lobster medallions garnished with basil leaves, mixed herbs and drizzled with a delightful mixed green sauce. We continued to be impressed with the Red Tuna Medallions, Roast Magret Duck served with sweet potatoes and a mango sauce, and the Seafood Combination Platter which had shrimp, scallops, lobster, fish, a creamy vegetable risotto and baby vegetables, both in the presentation and more importantly, in taste. Please read **Chefs' Recipes** where Chef Yann Giacomoni shares his recipes for the Cream of Lobster and the Roast Magret Duck. The recipes are provided in English and Spanish.



For dessert, we shared two desserts; toasted sweet bread with a pot of mascarpone cheese, cinnamon ice cream and a fruit conserve, and a crispy napoleon made with hazelnuts and almonds layered with a filling of plums, guava and caramel. Afterwards, Alberto ended our dinner on a very sweet note with a selection of Petit Fours that of course, we had to sample.

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**Aioli Restaurant at Le Meridien Cancun Resort & Spa**

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