BOTTLES & BANQUETS

JC EVERSOLE

WILD THINGS AND WINE

WHEN THITID "Ton" Tassanakajohn, executive chef at Le Du restaurant, agreed to prepare a unique Thai dinner to accompany an equally unique selection of wines at Pacific City Club last week, he didn't disappoint. The Culinary Institute of America graduate parlayed his experience in Michelin-starred New York City restaurants with the Thai home cooking of his grandmother to generate an evening-long buzz among guests in the club's packed main dining room.

Indeed "buzz" best described the reaction to chef Ton's appetiser of Ant Caviar & Cold Tom Yum. Depicted as a "handpicked fresh seasonal delicacy from the mountains of Northeast Thailand" these real ant eggs could have been easily mistaken for grains of white rice. Blended with spices and a tom yum mousse, along with some of their one-and-a-half centimetre long guardians, the ant caviar was tasty if controversial.

Co-host of the evening BenjawanWisootsat, director of "fin" – fabulous is needed – readily met the challenge of pairing wines appropriate to the eclectic menu. In keeping with the evening's organic emphasis, each of the six wines poured was either organic or bio-dynamically grown and made.

The '13 Mosel Riesling kabinett from Fritz Haag had just the right acids and floral Riesling character to bring out the best in the ant eggs.

Wild Thai porcini mushrooms in a broth of fermented fish and Thai herbs didn't wag as many tongues as the appetiser but its earthy mouth filling richness occupied everyone's attention until completely consumed. A fruity Spanish Albarino from Pazo de Senorans in Galicia proved an apt companion.

Ton drew from a border tribal recipe to feature free-range forest chicken in a soup augmented with wild organic rice, pleasantly married with a light '07 Austrian pinot noir from Fred Loimer. Thirty-day dry aged beef from Pak Chong, rivalling the best Aussie or US beef, matched serenely with a superb '05 Solare sangiovese-malvasianera blend from Capanelle in Tuscany.

Bravo to Pacific City Club now under contract to Six Senses company and its manager Marcel Jacquat.

LeDu restaurant is on Silom Soi 7, Call (092) 919 9969. Fin is at www.Fin-wine.com