

Persimmon kicks off food, wine series



Chef Vahe talks to a group of women at Persimmon on Thursday, May 7, in Wilmette. Photos by Alexa Burnell/22nd Century Media

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Pamela Matiosian, owner of Wilmette's Persimmon knows that when you combine food and art, you're sure to fuel an appetite and inspire creativity. So, she reached out to her friend, Chef Vahe and created a food and wine series, mixing the senses of sight and taste, much to her customer's delight.

The first class in this monthly series was held on Thursday, May 7, where Matiosian welcomed seasoned and budding artists to join her in an evening of painting, while enjoying tasty samplings of Vahe's food.

Attendees trickled into the store, greeting one and another, sharing wine and their goals for the evening. Soon after, Vahe introduced his meal of roasted eggplant with basil and lemon served on a bed of pesto with Heirloom tomatoes. He also offered crostini with roasted walnuts and feta cheese topped with pomegranates or honey. Dessert was a lemon rosemary cake.

The food was there not only to satisfy appetites, but to inspire creativity as well, and did just that for student, Noreen Cashman.

“What really drew me to [Persimmon] and this class is that I’m an artist and I was just entranced by the whole idea,” she said. “I came to one painting class, and I’ve been hooked ever since. Combining great food with art is just a wonderful idea and really fun.”

After nibbling on Vahe’s tasty creations, the class began tapping into their artistic side with guidance from Matiosian. She gave them a suggestion to follow, but encouraged everyone to express themselves however they saw fit.

“I want to give my students guidance, but at the same time, I want them to be creative and not take my instructions too literally,” Matiosian explained. “I like to stay open-minded and encourage my students to do so as well. We can gain insight from one another.”

Deborah O’Mara came all the way from Park Ridge for the evening, and appreciated the relaxed approach and the chance to try something new.

“I was intrigued by the idea of combining food and art, and figured this would be a fun way to meet new people and try something different in an easy-going environment,” O’Mara said.

As the night of painting and food sampling came to an end, students left appreciative of the chance to try new food, develop a new skill or perfect an existing one and make new friends along the way.

For more information about Persimmon, visit www.persimmonart.com.

- See more at: <http://www.wilmettebeacon.com/persimmon-kicks-food-wine-series#sthash.30LwUDhf.dpuf>