

Coral Gables news

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Historic Preservation Association holiday event has French theme

BY LEE STEPHENS

Spreading cheer and goodwill was nowhere more apparent than during the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables' recent gathering at the historic home of Joseph and Nora Portuondo in the Country French Village.

In keeping with the French theme, the Portuondo's were the second homeowner on Hardee Road this year to host an HPACG event. Both events celebrated French cuisine and French inspired architecture.

One of George Merrick's seven themed villages, the Country French Village sits on the 500 block of Hardee Road. These historic homes were inspired by rural French architecture. Both of the host homes, part of the original 11 homes built between 1925 and 1926, were designed by architect Edgar Albright.

The Portuondo home was carefully renovated by homeowner and attorney Joseph Portuondo to be sensitive to historic accuracy. He worked closely with the Coral Gables Historic Resources Department while he did extensive renovations and an addition.

This day, the home was beautifully decorated by the homeowners with colorful holiday flower arrangements. VIP patrons festively participated in a wine tasting in the intimate setting of the living room where the focal point of the room is



Pictured (l-r) are HPACG past president Ann Goodman, president Karelia Martinez Carbonell, and homeowner and host Nora Portuondo.

the stunning copper hood above the fireplace mantel displaying the Portuondo family crest.

Along with holiday music played on keyboard by Samuel Zilberstein, Coral Gables Museum wine expert Patrick Alexander gave an interesting talk on the difference between the fabled wines of Burgundy and Bordeaux. According to Alexander, the wines — Chateau Branaire Ducru and Louis Latour Pernand Vergelesses Ile des Vergelesses 2012 courtesy of HPACG member Lee Schragger — are “almost mythical wines and represent the two souls of French wine.”

As the sun set, guests, many with prosecco in hand, strolled outdoors to savor made-to-order crepes on the old Chicago brick patio. Back inside, guests enjoyed dessert followed by after-dinner sherry courtesy of Lustau. The finale of the evening was an exciting raffle featuring a Bang & Olafson headset valued at \$400 as the top prize.

The Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables (HPACG) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit with a mission to promote the understanding and importance of historic resources and their preservation. For additional information or to become a member, visit <www.historiccoralgables.org>.