

Le Cirque

Closing night was eminently memorable-- a frenzied, celebrity packed spectacular.



When foodies gather together, talk invariably turns to eating, wine, cooking and restaurants, until their conversation degenerates into controversy. They are incapable of agreeing on what ingredients are suitable for an authentic bouillabaisse, or whether imported Bordeaux is superior to Burgundy, or perhaps Stags Leap, a domestic wine is better than either, whether Italian cuisine in fact rivals French, or if Crystal Champagne is favored over Dom Perignon, and so on and so on. One thing only united gourmets (but for one newspaper critic whose awesome lack of credibility, keeps all others at the top of their game), and that was the late, great Le Cirque. Oh yes, there was one other thing never challenged. Proprietor Sirio Maccioni's title as the most extraordinary entrepreneur in the business.

Movers and shakers, people of affluence and status, columnists and actors, patronized Le Cirque. Many rich, high-profiler's and celebrated talented people congregated there because it was the super-place to see and be seen. Others were driven by their superior understanding of Le Cirque's supreme fare, careful selection of wines, its elegance and polished service.

When Tuscan born Sirio Maccioni came to the states he started work in Oscar Delmonico, soon pushing on to the world's most fashionable restaurant, the Colony in the position of Maitre d'.

Encouraged by William Zeckendorf, the owner of chic Hotel Mayfair, Sirio realized a dream when he opened his own venue Le Cirque, in March of 1974 in the Mayfair, making it Manhattan's first privately owned hotel



Marco Maccioni and Angela

Photos by Cecilia Lewis

Le Cirque unique. Everything it did, it did admirably. Kitchen aficionados insisted the fare, particularly in its salad days was unsurpassable. They were probably right.

The first rumblings of trouble in this paradise came last year with persistent rumors leaked by close insider's claiming Le Cirque was going to close! Inevitably we tracked Mr. Maccioni to confirm or deny these allegations. Alas, he confessed it was true. Landlord and union troubles made it untenable to continue and so he would ring down the curtain New Years Eve, December 31, 2004. "This is awful," moaned New York's 'haute monde'. "After three decades we have reached the end of a dazzling culinary era."



Egi and Sirio Maccioni

Needless to say, Sirio's closing night was eminently memorable--a frenzied, celebrity packed spectacular, attended by the proverbial everybody that was anybody. Up to the last nostalgic clink of champagne toasts, undefeated founder Sirio Maccioni maintained the



Mario, Marco, Mauro and Sirio Maccioni

restaurant. It became an overnight sensation. So great was Le Cirque's success, it instantly burst into New York's number one dining destination.

It held forth at the Mayfair honorably until 1997, when under the new name Le Cirque 2000 it reallocated to the voluptuous surroundings of the New York Palace Hotel and landmark Villard House--a site already radiant, and now made even more so by Sirio's skillful decorator. When old friends and fans walked into the new Le Cirque 2000 for the first time, apprehensively, looked around, gasped with incredulity, sighed with relief and smiled with satisfaction. They were inherently standing in the same temple of gastronomy that kept their palate's dancing with savor for years.

It's difficult and even a bit foolish, to single out special dishes that made Le



Maria Bartiromo, MSNBC with Mauro Maccioni



Sirio Maccioni



Sirio Maccioni

Photo courtesy of Le Cirque



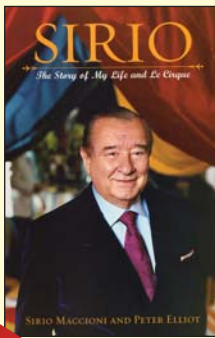
Egi and Sirio Maccioni

Photo courtesy of Le Cirque



Sirio Maccioni and Chef

Photo courtesy of Le Cirque



SIRIO MACCIONI AND PETER ELLIOT



Youssef Nadiri, Gerard McKeon, Joyce Brooks, Sheldon Landwehr and Arthur Silverman



Rudy Giuliani and Judith Nathan bring in the New Year



Mr. and Mrs. Neil Sedaka



Joan Collins and Husband Percy Gibson



BlackTie Publisher Gerard McKeon (standing) Arthur Silverman, Sheldon Landwehr, Joyce Brooks enjoy a moment with LeCirque's owner Sirio Maccioni at his private table



Black Tie wishes a Happy New Year to all.

Thank you LeCirque for a memorable evening-BlackTie magazine



Carol Campbell and Bill Boggs



Sirio Maccioni and Joyce Brooks



LeCirque's owner Sirio Maccioni



Ci Vediamo Presto!



The last Le Cirque 2004 menu