

Salt Scores The Best Ham In The World

January 28, 2009

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A rather wonderful evening of great food, wine, and ale took place tonight. It started in the Cellar at [Salt Tasting Room](#) in Gastown round mid-afternoon, when Serrano Imports and Bosa Foods unveiled a leg of Fermin Jamon Iberico de Bellota for a small group of besotteds.

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The black Iberico pig, indigenous to Spain, feasts on special acorns from three oak types in the months before slaughter. These treats, in addition to the regular foraging typical of swine, keep them nice and plump, resulting in a cured ham that is considered the finest on the planet. It is aged for three years, and it tastes like salted nirvana.

So I ate lots of that, having never done so before, pairing it with short sips of sherry and Spanish rosé. Many local chefs and avid food and drink lovers were in attendance, and everyone seemed utterly fascinated by the presentation. As you can see from some of the photographs it was an almost solemn, if not holy, occasion, as if heaven had dropped its chief ingredient and it had landed, hoof up, on our table.

Next came a beer breather at Boneta and a tour of a nearby upcoming new restaurant that is still on the down low, and then a return to the Salt Cellar for a private tasting of several delightful cheeses from Mt.

Townsend Creamery in Washington State, hosted by the very charming cheesemakers themselves. This was another splendid group, with plenty of familiar faces, and much bread was broken, cheese eaten, and wine drunk.

And then home. Stagger stagger.

If you're looking for Iberico, you can buy it at Bosa Foods and Oyama, or have it plated for you locally at Salt Tasting Room, Cioppino's, and Il Giardino, and in Whistler at La Rua, Bearfoot Bistro, and Carambal.