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Wednesday, August 5, 2009

Ajit George's excellent island adventure

Meals with the Masters creator dines in style with Sir Richard Branson

DINER'S DIGEST • BY PATRICIA TALORICO • AUGUST 5, 2009

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CityKids uses the arts to engage and train young people to create positive and powerful solutions to issues impacting their lives. Young people learn to improve their own educational status, become agents for social change, take action in community projects, and carry positive messages to their peers. And they have a great time doing it.



Hang on the sand in Bethany Beach? Hike in the mountains? Explore the Grand Canyon?

Ajit George had dinner with one of the richest men in the world, Sir Richard Branson, on Branson's very own private island in the British Virgin Islands.

You can hang on Branson's exclusive Necker Island, too. Well, that is, if you can pony up the \$51,000 a night it costs to rent it. (Hey, it's a bargain. It'll cost \$53,000 per night for 28 guests to share its 14 rooms in 2010.)

George, who helped create the Meals from the Masters' culinary events, held every spring in Wilmington to raise money for Meals on Wheels Delaware, is now the managing director of Nail Bay Resort, in Virgin Gorda, the British Virgin Islands.

Born and raised in Kuwait, George moved in 1970 to Delaware after four years in India, where his parents were born. He currently spends time in Wilmington, Virgin Gorda, and London, with his wife Sarah Brown, a partner at the global consulting company Accenture.

From July 15 through 19, George was the host and mastermind behind the 2009 Virgin Islands Winemakers Dinners series, where more than 1,000 people attended gourmet lunches and dinners on four islands in the area, including Branson's. A photo of George and Branson on Necker Island was flashed on a jumbo screen in New York's Times Square last month.

George, who was looking to promote tourism in the British Virgin Islands and raise money for local charities, invited seven chefs to prepare seven-course dinners. The dinners were served with at least 14 different wines from seven winemakers, who personally poured them.

The chefs, who volunteered their vacation time, included the Hotel du Pont's executive pastry chef Michele Mitchell and Tom Hannum, hospitality safety director, as well as a few others who have cooked at past Celebrity Chefs' Brunches in Wilmington, including Vikram Garg, executive chef at Halekulani Resort in Waikiki, Hawaii, and chef Alain Ivaldi, professor at Lycee Hotelier in Marseille, France.



Ajit George (left) with Sir Richard Branson



A photo of Ajit George with Richard Branson on Branson's Necker Island was flashed on a jumbo screen in New York's Times Square.

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Contact Patricia Talorico at 324-2861 or ptalorico@delawareonline.com. Read her culinary blog [Second Helpings](http://www.delawareonline.com/secondhelpings) at www.delawareonline.com/secondhelpings and follow her on

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George wrote on Facebook that it "was a lot of work to move over a 1,000 plates and wine glasses from each island to the next location each night and bringing guests, chefs and winemakers by boat. None of the four dinner locations could be accessed by roads. It was quite a logistical challenge."

But, he wrote: "The food, wine and settings were all magical."

Dinners were held at Necker Island; Falcon's Nest on Peter Island; Jost House on Guana Island; and at Mooney Bay Estate on Virgin Gorda.



Ajit George (left) with Sir Richard Branson

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