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## Birthing center of the Lakeshore General Hospital benefits from Tuscan magic

By Mike Cohen The Suburban May 1, 2019 Updated 4 hrs ago



Dario Cecchini meets Beaconsfield Mayor Georges Burelle and wife Ellen at the dinner.

MIKE COHEN PHOTO

Dr. Raymond Hasel is a noted Yale-educated anesthesiologist at the Lakeshore General Hospital in Pointe Claire who has a passion for contributing to the financial growth of his place of work. Three years ago he planted a seed with 40 Westt Steakhouse & Rawbar owners **Stefano Hinoporos** and **John Leonis** about hosting a fundraising evening of their own. They liked the idea and working with the Foundation, the first dinner benefited mental health, followed by the Intensive Care Unit.

Hinoporos and Leonis said it made them feel really good to host a meal for more than 100 people and have the proceeds go directly to the hospital. For the recent 2019 edition the duo really outdid themselves, with a big assist from sommelier and prominent wine writer **Bill Zacharkiw**. He was in Italy last summer on business, visiting the famous Castello di Albola vineyard. Via owner and winemaker Lorenzo Zonin he heard about a fellow named Dario Cecchini, an eighth generation Italian butcher whose celebrity status has resulted in invitations from all over the world and his own episode of the Netflix series Chef's Table.

When Zacharkiw returned home he recommended to Hinoporos and Leonis that they bring Cecchini and Zonin to town for the next hospital benefit. They went one better and flew in Cecchini, his American-born wife Kim, his team of chefs and Zonin for a Tuscan evening. The ever so charismatic Cecchini brought the house down, demonstrating his meat cutting technique to the tune of rock music and while wearing a number 31 Canadiens jersey and "Price" on the back. He visited every table and posed for selfies.

The evening of Tuscan wine and food brought in \$57,000 for the birthing center at the hospital, which the Foundation has already targeted over \$400,000 for in 2019. Working alongside Chef Hinoporos and his kitchen team, Cecchini and his associates helped serve up an extraordinary 12 course meal. His dishes were paired with wines from Castello di Albola, with Zonin and Zacharkiw taking care of that aspect of the gala.

"We are very proud of our unit," said Chief of Obstetrics Dr. **Stephane Bakare**, who was seated beside her friend and colleague Dr. **Shauna Reinblatt**.

The department delivers about 1,800 babies a year. "Just today five new lives came into this world thanks to our birthing center," Foundation Managing Director **Heather Holmes** said the evening of the dinner.



Leonis and Hinoporos are already trying to think about what they can do next year. And they loved having Cecchini and company in their open kitchen. Will items like Chianti “butter” crostini, Rosemary up the Ass (that was the name of Cecchini’s meatballs) and braised beef and onions make their way to the 40 Westt menu?

Finally, just a little more information on the fascinating Cecchini. This is a guy who wanted to be a veterinarian, but instead turned into the world’s most famous butcher. His family’s shop in Panzano has been passed down from generation to generation for over 250 years. “I’m not a cook; I’m a butcher that cooks,” he says. “

Bravo to everyone responsible for a memorable evening!

**COHEN CHATTER:** The Montreal Lakeshore University Women’s Club (MLUWC) will hold its annual general meeting on Mon. May 13 (7 pm) at the Olympia Restaurant on St. Jean Blvd. in DDO with guest speaker **Dr. Anja Geitmann**, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at McGill. She will discuss plans to set up a high-level training program for those interested in working in the burgeoning industry related to medicinal cannabis. Info: [www.mluwc.com](http://www.mluwc.com)...The Kirkland Artists’ Association is presenting its exhibition/sale from this Friday to Sunday at 11 chemin Lantieré Proceeds from raffle ticket sales will profit The Sian Bradwell Fund. **Lise Bousquet** will also be presenting four colourful paintings. There is no admission charge.

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