

# Bill Boggs

## A VIEW FROM THE CORNER TABLE

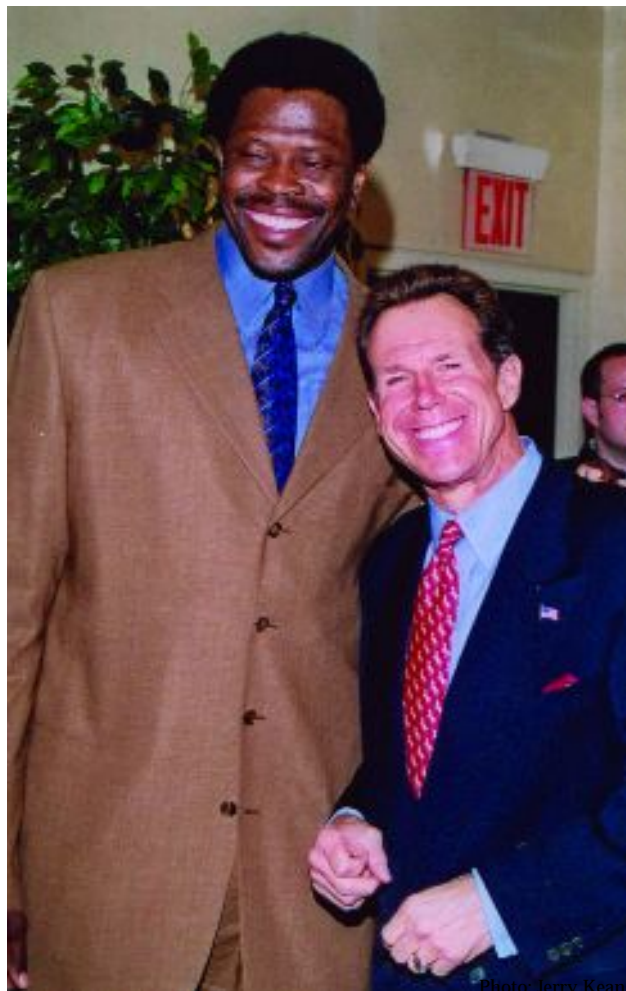
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I haven't been landlocked since my last communication. In an effort to expand the reach of this column, I stepped away from the always-tempting revelment and Epicureanism of New York City and dined abroad for a month. Two weeks in France and two weeks cruising the Baltic on the Crystal Symphony made one thing clear--I didn't want to come home. But I am home, and here's an account of the adventure.

I like to swim, I like to eat, I enjoy the modest pleasures of a world-class hotel, so why not have a little Riviera reverie at the Hotel Martinez in Cannes? Its Michelin two-star, Art Deco, "Palme d'Or" Restaurant, overlooks La Croisette, the spacious palm-lined, beach-front boulevard. Co-executive chefs Christian Willer and Christian Sinicropi cook to a level of perfection that I won't soon forget. But the next day I wanted even more, so I had lunch at the beach with the Sylvain Ercoli, the General Manager, and Christophe Aldunate, the Resident Manager, who told me that restaurant dress codes for men are now more relaxed in France than in New York City.

In Provence, I discovered a compellingly-beautiful "Relais and Chateau" establishment, Hostellerie De Crillon Le Brave-- a thirty-one room luxury country hotel run with warmth and precision by former French Air Force jet pilot, David Candillon. It offers panoramic views of the Rhone Valley and Mount Ventoux, and easy access to the finest vineyards of southern France at Chateauneuf du Pape and in the Cotes du Rhone. The Hostellerie's "Le Restaurant" is under the direction of Provence native, chef Philippe Monti, formerly of Taillevent and L'Esperance. I'll be back for more of his fresh and healthy Provencal cuisine.

The majestic Hotel de Crillon in Paris, where I next stayed, has just a touch of history associated with it. The magnificent building was commissioned by Louis XV in 1758, and is considered a masterpiece of 18th century architecture. This is one of the great hotels of the world, and it is home to an equally extraordinary



Patrick Ewing and Bill

restaurant--"Les Ambassadeurs." This Michelin starred gastronomic treasure seats only fifty-five diners, yet executive chef Dominique Bouchet has six "second" chefs and commands a staff of sixty. The restaurant boasts the "Michael Jordan" of French sommeliers--David Biraud who was acclaimed as the "best sommelier" in France 2003. He's a prodigy who began drinking wine at age three. Makes me sorry I got such a late start.

At sea, I was dazzled by the quality of food served aboard the Crystal Symphony. This is not big buffet "all you can eat" dining that some close-minded people associate with cruising. Symphony executive chef Jurgen Klocker, food and beverage manager Renato Chizzola, and their teams create works of fine cuisine that satisfy a demanding and decidedly upscale international clientele. In the month away, many of the best meals I had were on board the Crystal Symphony. Nothing, of course, could surpass the first crunch into the "Cone of Tivoli" at my beloved Tivoli Gardens on our stop in Copenhagen.



Sylvain Ercoli, Bill Boggs and Christophe Aldunate on the Riviera



Chris MacDonald, Jane Gordon, Bill and Winston Groom Fort Meyers

Back home, I handled a whirlwind of "MC" chores--taking the stage at The American Liver Foundation dinner at The Pierre Hotel and sharing a table with friends Egidiana Maccioni and Drew Nieporent. Patrick Ewing out ate me at the annual Father's Day Press conference, and I had a reunion with old pal, writer Winston Groom and hung out with actor Chris MacDonald and jewelry designer Jane Gordon after my chores hosting the Thomas Edison Film Festival in Fort Myers, Florida.

It all makes me hungry for another trip. See you soon.



Chef Jürgen L. Klocker, Bill and Crystal Symphony's Renato Chizzola at sea



Bill with Palme d'Or co-executive chefs Christian Sinicropi and Christian Willer



Bill, Sommelier David Biraud and Chef Dominique Bouchet at the Hotel De Crillon in Paris



Bill and Hostellerie De Crillon Le Brae's chef Philippe Monti  
Bill with Palme d' Or's co-executive chefs Christian Sinicropi



Bill, Egidiana Maccioni and Drew Nieporent at the Liver Foundation Dinner