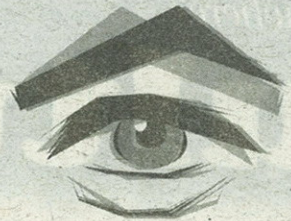


O...



PRIVATE



Gerard James Borg HITS TOWN!

therine
Jones ran
lections
nst your
band... do
think the
s would still
question fills
ng vibe,
wife of
n Joseph
ing brown
d smoothly
un against
favourite
ver!"
mother of
I Etoile
pick me up
istorante &
ta. We
inutes and
ntillating
ion. She is
ation of soft

seems to have a very healthy appetite, and we dig in immediately. We work out a little deal since she is not big on seafood. I get the *neo-nati* and she gets the cheeselets. I tell you Michelle... the *neo-nati* come close to listening to Joseph Calleja sing - divine!

And would you like to know what Michelle and I have in common? It's kind of weird actually, but we both like to cook and take photos of the food. I reveal my little secret and she laughs, admitting she does the same. We also share a love for anything that is creative and spend at least one hour discussing another favourite topic - public relations. We are also big time chatterboxes! Yes, I'm loving Michelle!

The wine she has chosen is a French Pascal Folivet (Pouilly Fumé 2007) priced at €22. It is not on their wine menu but in their *bottega* on the upper level. The choice is quite vast, and I'm told that they even have a Charming Grüner Veltliner 2007 from Austria which Kim Markus from the Wine Spectator has rated with 90 points.

We clink the crystal glasses together and sip the fresh, white wine waiting for our *bottarga di tonno* to arrive.

I snap into here and now. "What do you like best about your husband?" It's a very straightforward question for which I require a very straightforward answer.

"I like the fact that he is a very positive person," she replies with a sparkling vitality that indicates she is enjoying life to the full. I ask her how they met and she tells me that they met at a political event they both happened to attend, which I assume is no PN mass meeting on the Floriana Granaries!

Charles is back with the *bottarga di tonno* and asks if everything is

Being devoured by a T-Rex in Jurassic Park is by far more entertaining than the bathroom.

"Have you ever disapproved of any item of clothing your husband wore?" I ask, once I am back and Dr Muscat is probably back somewhere in Brussels feeding on a high cholesterol diet of Belgian mussels.

She giggles. "I choose his clothes 'cos he is not that good with colours," she admits. "I even number them for him sometimes but we choose the ties together." I tell her that my new hobby has become picking out ties mentally for public speakers. Ties are a simple, yet powerful tool, which can deliver big messages.

"If you were a bee whom would you sting?"

Michelle is thoroughly bemused, and at the same time excited by the questions pouring in. I'm told she has never been asked such a variety of creative questions, and I revel in the compliment like a little boy swimming inside a chocolate fountain. It takes a while for her to answer, then in a fun tone she replies: "Maybe Lawrence Gonzi for hiking up the electricity bill." I joke that bees can also be attracted to honey!

"Which political opponent do you like best... and why?" Yes, the questions get tougher as the wine consumption gets higher.

Michelle sips her wine, her eyes sparkling. She is really enjoying herself, and she is so unbelievably down to earth that I have no qualms about addressing her as "Michelle" as she refuses my more formal Mrs Muscat. "Simon Busutil and David Casa. They visited me when I was in hospital and you can't imagine how much I appreciated that!" She is 100 per cent honest in her replies. My eye is very well trained to spot that.

We skip the tempting desserts Charles offers us, but allow ourselves two glasses of



A MARVELLOUS MICHELLE MUSCAT @ HORZ

RATING 1-

- Wine: ★★★★★
- Ambience: ★★★
- Food: ★★★★★
- Service: ★★★★★

