



WINTER 2018

CHAÎNE DES RÔTISSEURS
BAILLIAGE DE GRANDE BRETAGNE

table talk

For the Love of Fine Dining

CELEBRATING CHEFS AND SOMMELIERS OF THE FUTURE
Young Chefs and Young Sommeliers International Finals

ON THE GRILL
With Craig Bancroft of Northcote Manor

BOUTIQUE VINEYARDS
An introduction to Danebury

OMGD WINEMAKERS DINNER
Beautiful Burgundy with Olivier Bernstein



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In this issue...

YOUNG SOMMELIERS COMPETITION INTERNATIONAL FINAL



Another success story for Chaîne GB with Piotr Pietras taking top place at the Young Sommeliers Competition International Final which in 2017 took place in Budapest. Head Sommelier at Launceston Place restaurant, and a member of London City Bailliage, Piotr had a tough contest but came out on top as you can read about here.

YOUNG CHEFS COMPETITION INTERNATIONAL FINAL



George Marsh from Swinton Park in Yorkshire had even trickier challenges to contend with and, whilst he didn't win, had a wonderful experience making lots of new friends and developing his skills in the Young Chefs Competition Finals which took place in Frankfurt.

ENGLISH VINEYARDS – DANEBURY



The second instalment in our series profiling prestigious English vineyards stops at Danebury vineyards. Located near Stockbridge, Hampshire and owned by Ernst and Elizabeth Piech, Professionals du Vin, Danebury is one of the older commercial vineyards in England.

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If you would like to promote a Bailliage event, or you have any news or photos you would like posted on the Chaîne Facebook page, email them, together with a brief outline, to the online editor Edwina Morris at online-editor@chaine.co.uk

Photographs of events are now available on www.photos.chaine.co.uk

To follow the Chaîne news online internationally, visit www.chainedesrotisseurs.com/news_online

Dear members and friends



Since the last newsletter both the international competitions for our young professionals have taken place. First for the Young Chefs in Frankfurt and then for the Young Sommeliers in Budapest – these are great events and attract the very top talent from around the globe and in which our

candidates did very well. It is very encouraging when dining in your local Chaîne establishments to ask who has produced any course that you feel was outstanding. You will be pleasantly surprised how often these are prepared by young people.

It is a pleasure to welcome two new Baillis, first John Bishop as Bailli of Cotswolds and also Helen Sunderland as Bailli of London. My thanks to Alan Cox and Cassandra Charles-Bagott for their contributions to the Bailliages over the last years.

The Clink, our chosen charity, goes from strength to strength. Chris Moore tells me that they can now train up to 160 prisoners

over the 6 sites, and have a new production kitchen coming on stream at HMP Downview women's prison and a café staffed by prisoners out on licence in central Manchester, both very soon. Also of note is that the outside catering team have their first Royal banquet booking. Recognition indeed. Please do what you can to continue to support their work – if in doubt how to, then do contact Chris directly.

I am sure that you are all looking forward to the Grand Chapitre in Brighton in early October. The team have planned a superb programme (more on page 20).

My warmest wishes to you all for the year ahead, and I look forward with pleasure to seeing you all at various events across the country and then of course at the Grand Chapitre.

Vive la Chaîne!

Bailli Délégué
Membre du Conseil Magistral

MEMBER OFFERS

How to find them...

One of the benefits of your membership is that many of our professional members have special offers for members. How do you know what they are? Just go to the Chaîne GB website (www.chaine.co.uk) and click on either 'Restaurants' or 'Wineries'. Scroll down to the establishment and if an offer is available it appears like the one below. Just click on the offer button to find out more.



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Camaraderie *on camera*



Elisabeth Hammelsbeck



Janet Evins and Don Cunningham



Sheila Douglas, David & Rory Haigh, Phil Douglas (cameo), Ann Scott and Julian White



Phil Douglas



Tal Gal-Cohen, Janet Evins, Andrew Stembridge and Philip Evins



John Trowbridge and Peter Welsh



Daniel Galniche



Martin Jones, Patti & Jem Scales



Stephen Gilmour, Gerard O'Shea and Ben Purton



Michele & Paul Smith, Nilgum Sarmas, Mayassa Reip and Daniel Esplen

CELEBRATING CHEFS AND SOMMELIERS OF THE FUTURE

Young Sommeliers Competition International Final

Piotr Pietras, the winner in Budapest – world's best young sommelier

A worldwide group of young men and women assembled in Budapest in late September to compete for the title of best Young Sommelier. Chaîne GB was represented by Piotr who is the Head Sommelier at Launceston Place restaurant in Kensington and a member of London City Bailliage.

The programme started with a dinner hosted by the Bock Estate at *Bistro Vendéglő a Kisbíróhoz*, then there was an early start the following day for the journey to the east of the country and a very memorable day in the world famous Tokaj wine region. Our first stop was a visit to István Szepsy, for a talk on the history of the region, and a wine tasting in his courtyard. Tokaji Aszu has been



Marie Jones, Piotr Pietras and Philip Evins

called 'The King of Wines and the Wine of Kings' and the tasting showed just why.

Then on to Sauska, a family-owned winery with vineyards in both Tokaj and Villány, where we sampled the top-class wines made by their young, talented team.

After an informal lunch held at the Yellow House on the Disznókő estate, with wines from a group of young winemakers of the region, the group then toured the vineyards and winery of the estate under the expert direction of Estate Director Laszlo Mescaro. The vertical tasting in the winery of Tokaji Aszu dating back to 1995, then finishing with a 2005 Essencia, was truly incredible! Disznókő is part of the AXA Millésimes group, which also owns well-known wine estates in Bordeaux, Burgundy and the Douro Valley. During the course of the day over 30 world-class wines were tasted. Dinner back in Budapest at the famous 'Vadrózsa Étterem' Restaurant prepared us for a full day competition on the Friday.

The competition follows the same format as the national events comprising: theory, practical and blind tasting elements. That evening Sauska Winery hosted a dinner at Emile Restaurant. On Saturday morning we discovered the top three candidates who then progressed to the Final. This was a high-tension event, with the competitors working against the clock in front of an audience. At the Awards Ceremony and Gala Dinner in the Corinthia Hotel in Budapest, Piotr was placed ahead of Australia's Mikael Grou of Sails Restaurant in Queensland in second place, and Vincent Morrow of Petaluma in California in third place. Speaking about the competition, Piotr

'I felt honoured to represent GB in the International Young Sommelier finals in Budapest. The competition was very well-organised and, as expected, the level was really high'

said 'I felt honoured to represent GB in the International Young Sommelier finals in Budapest. The competition was very well-organised and, as expected, the level was really high. It created a perfect opportunity for me to meet and chat with world's top young sommeliers and compete against them in a friendly way. I could also visit Hungary's most regarded wine region, Tokaj, and taste beautiful dry and sweet wines from leading wineries: Istvan Szepsy, Disznoko or Sauska, to name a few. What I will remember for a long time is the hospitality of chefs and restaurateurs in Budapest – great hosts, and the local food we tasted in their restaurants was simply amazing.'

Piotr received the Competition's Gold Medal, an engraved silver-plated tray, a Champagne sabre and a six-litre 'Imperial' bottle of Irvine Grand Merlot.

Our national finals for the 2018 competition take place on 6 March 2018 at the Gaggenau showroom in London. If any professional members would like to submit a candidate please contact the Bailli Délégué immediately.

Young Chefs Competition International Final



Back row: Bernard Fraiss, David Tetrault and Klaus Tritschler
Front row: Michel Booijink, Amelia Ng and Christopher Malone

George Marsh from Swinton Park in Yorkshire was our competitor at this year's International finals held in Frankfurt in which 21 countries were represented. It was pleasing to see that 30 percent of the competitors were women, showing that this career path is now very much open to all.

Before the competition the group were taken first on a tour of the Lufthansa airline production kitchen which produces over 120,000 meals each day. This was followed by a Vitamix demonstration, a Pommery Champagne tasting, and then a visit to Hassia Springwater.

On to the competition itself. This year's primary protein was revealed two months in advance to the competitors, while the rest of the black box was revealed to the contestants when each group of chefs entered the menu writing room. The black box consisted of a whole sole, a whole trout, lamb steak and rack, artichoke, pea pods and mango.

The result was the First Place medal for Amelia Ng from the Bailliage of Malaysia, the Runner-up medal for Michel Booijink from the Netherlands and the Third Place medal for Australia's Christopher Malone. George said, 'I had a wonderful time, making new friends and learning a lot.' We are sure that this will stand him in good stead as he starts a new role working with Mark Sergeant at Rocksalt in Folkestone.

Amongst the international team of Judges were two from GB, Ben Purton from the Royal Lancaster Hotel and Daniel Ayton from Chefbytes.

Looking ahead, our national finals for 2018 will be held in the Unilever development kitchens in Leatherhead on 1 March and the 42nd Concours International des Jeunes Chefs Rôtisseurs will be in Taiwan on 7 September.



Daniel Ayton and Ben Purton



Countrywide *with the Chaîne*

BOVEY CASTLE

South West Baillages' final event of 2017 was held at the splendid Bovey Castle Hotel, set within the Dartmoor National Park, built in 1890 by the son of William Henry Smith the original 'WH Smith' who was later to become Viscount Hambleden.

Lucky guests arrived during a wet and wild afternoon in October and, once refreshed, we met in the stunning great hall to enjoy a chilled glass (or two!) of Mercier Brut NV served with a tasty selection of Chef's Canapés hosted by Maître Hôtelier Francisco Macedo.

Dinner was served in a private dining room around a beautifully decorated large oval table with the hotel's experienced banquet manager David ensuring everything was 'just so'.

We started the evening with a very tasty amuse-bouche of pear and blue cheese cream topped with a bacon crumb with a long cheese palmier to give the dish some crunch – a great combination of flavours that worked very well.

Our main course was the highlight for me, Pot roast pheasant, celeriac and truffle gratin with a Sauternes roasting



jus. The bird was plentiful, lovely and moist, the gratin rich and creamy with a truffle sauce topping. A croquette of braised leg meat gave another nice crunch and the very tasty cavolo nero was cooked perfectly. Just when I thought it couldn't get any better I swirled my Crozes-Hermitage, Les Launes, 2014, put my nose to it and smiled, a superb choice of accompaniment!

I would have been quite happy to have finished my evening after the main but no, I was forced(!) to try the most delicious of desserts, a dark chocolate

marquise, with a confit of orange and fennel. Light and airy, definitely chocolatey but made all the better for the sweet citrus twang of the orange and fennel, a great dish paired beautifully with another one of my firm favourites the Banyuls, 'Cuvée Léon Parcé', Domaine de la Rectorie dessert wine.

After the Santé du chef and du servis those assembled retired to the bar and its open fires to ensure that the hotel's whisky collection was still up to scratch!

Mark Godfrey

Escaping to the Country in Style



Preparing to board: Howard Barclay, Sheila & Philip Douglas, Ian & Margaret Bailey



Maretta & Robert Williams



David & Janet Neale with Gordon Vickers

In November, the Cheshire and North West Bailliage embarked on the Northern Belle for a Dinner Amicale and an evening that memories are made of. Changes due to Network Rail conspired in our favour to ensure we could have more time on the train. So we departed from Chester Station early and returned a little later than originally planned.

Once settled in the sumptuous Warwick Car, we were served champagne and some among us indulged in a cocktail as well. As the train rolled gently northwards into Cumbria, we enjoyed a leisurely five course dinner of seasonal British food.

Our starter was a trio of fish, including a nice Halibut Gravadlax. Then warming Windsor Brown soup, before a main course of duck followed by a medley of British cheese plus a complimentary port, kindly provided by our hosts.

Finally sticky toffee pudding was served with a delightful Madeira all whilst being pleasantly regaled by musicians and having the opportunity to watch a firework display given the date...

The Northern Belle is currently a part of Belmond, but from 2018 gains new owners with market leading expertise in the heritage railway industry. So, we shall look forward to our next excursion on this beautiful train and exciting piece of British History!

Ian Bailey

CHILTERN'S BAILLIAGE DINE AT FORBURYS

Early September 2017, Chaîne Chilterns and other Bailliage members, their guests, plus some very special guests from the Vilnius, Lithuania Bailliage, made their way to Forburys for a Friday evening dinner.

Chaîne Chilterns have always dined well at Forburys, and, Maître Restaurateur, Xavier le Bellugo and his team, as usual, didn't disappoint.

The meal began with Dorset Crab, followed by roast Guinea fowl, a delicious truffled Brie de Meaux and was rounded off by a magnificent egg custard tart with rhubarb ice cream.

The accompanying wines from Xavier's extensive cellar were perfect, although members did joke that among them, a South African Pinot Noir had crept in under the radar and was being served in a French restaurant!

Each table hosted members from Vilnius, many of whom had started their day at 1am to travel to the UK to take part in the event, and many new friendships were made.

This particular Chaîne Chilterns dinner showed how truly



Santé!

International the Chaîne des Rotisseurs is, and how, through the simple act of honouring the traditions of enjoying great food and good wine, members can transcend language barriers and strike up great friendships and camaraderie.

Vive la Chaîne!

Helen Wernham

Steam Train Outing to Tweedbank

The Chaîne gang of Haggistan always enjoy an outing to the borders – close to the Sassenachs but nevertheless a pleasant part of the country!

The wonderful Monte Casino Restaurant at Melrose is situated on a railway platform but alas the line is no more. However, Vic Michel knows how to get there by taxi from Tweedbank and from Edinburgh to Tweedbank by train – and Vic being Vic, that was of course a steam train.

After a magnificent lunch, worth every mile travelled, it was time to return to Edinburgh and reflect on a day to remember!

Bill Bruce



CHAÎNE ECOSSE at Fonab Castle

Fonab comes from the Gaelic, meaning Abbot's land, the area having come into the possession of the monks of Coupar Angus Abbey in the 12th century. And not much later, in 1248, we can trace the first mention of the guild of 'Les Oyers', the fore-bearers of the Chaîne. It took the best part of 900 years for the Chaîne to make it to Fonab – now, we just can't get enough. So, for our Christmas gathering High* Heid Yin Sheila prescribed the mixture as before: Fonab Castle and Pitlochry Festival Theatre.

We mustered in the airy bar, overlooking, through rime-rimmed rowans, the hoary panorama of Loch Fascally. Then, suitably refreshed, we progressed to the matinee performance of 'Singing in the Rain' – not seasonal but a superb performance which raised everyone's spirits.

As always, we dined in the highly 'hygge' Sanderson Room and, as oft before, under the suave aegis of James Payne who delighted us with his selection of nectareous wines to match the seamless succession of succulent dishes supplied by Chef Munur Kara and his team.

At the bar afterwards we settled down to a convivial chat and agreed that Fonab Castle continues to improve – we'll be back!

Bill Bruce

** Not that high – maybe five feet.*

*'Happiness is the longing
for repetition
– Milan Kundera'*



CLIFF HOUSE HOTEL SUMMER BBQ



Garden santé!

Members and Guests of Wessex Bailliage were welcomed at The Cliff House Hotel in Southbourne, near Bournemouth, by Hotel owner Andrew Gosling, Officer Restaurateur, and Tim Seward, General Manager and Maître Hotelier, who joined us for a summer BBQ, in the Hotel's delightful garden.

Max Uyanikwill, director of food for Andrew's catering company 'Food Show', and his team travelled from London to work together with Fabien Cozic head chef of Cliff House.

Max's speciality is canapés and they did not disappoint. Foie gras bonbons, which looked like perfectly formed cherries, and a feuille cone filled with beef tartare and topped with yogurt foam, which at first

glance resembled miniature ice cream cornets, were just two of a selection of amazing canapés that were served with Rivarose Brut Prestige.

Traditional BBQ food of sausages, beef and corn on the cob were accompanied with a delicious Paella of saffron rice, langoustines, chorizo, tiger prawns, mussels and squid. Finally came an explosion of flavours with the green Tea Parfait dessert.

Despite the threat of rain during the day we were fortunate that the sun shone for the entire afternoon, which added to the enjoyment of a very friendly, relaxed and happy occasion.

Christine Wallage

Fat Olive's



In October Solent Bailliage visited 'Fat Olive's', Emsworth, Hampshire for dinner. Originally a seventeenth century fisherman's cottage, this restaurant is a cosy place with a very pleasant ambiance.

On arrival, canapés of cured Chalkstream Trout and Watercress with Yoghurt were served with a fresh, and very local, English Sparkling wine – Raimés 2014.

Then came a course of Pigs Head Terrine with Apple Puree, Celeriac and Crackling with a complementary Chalkdown Cider (Méthode Champenoise) from Hampshire or, for non pork eaters, a stylishly presented alternative of creamy Butternut Soup.

The fish was a gently cooked Seabass, Ras El Hanout, with Cauliflower in a warm Saffron Mussel Sauce. A delicate Chablis, Domaine Bernard Defaix 2015, was an ideal accompaniment to this course.

A dish of perfectly flavoured Roast Partridge followed, with Faggot, Pear, and Butternut Squash Puree, and served with a Red Wine Jus and a robust Templars Hill Pinot Noir 2012, from Central Otago, New Zealand played a good counterpoint to the game. Dessert came in two guises: Chocolate Delice and Ginger Beer Jelly with Gingerbread matched with an Elysium Black Muscat 2014 from California – quite delicious!

This was a well prepared and presented meal, full of flavour and served with care. Our thanks to Lawrence and Julia Murphy and all of their staff for an excellent evening!

Judy Deverill

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Congratulations to them both

JOHN BISHOP, NEW BAILLI FOR COTSWOLDS

John is an actuary with many years of experience as a Chairman/Chief Executive of large multinational organisations. Following that he spent 10 years enjoying a diverse portfolio of directorships, in a variety of fields, with an emphasis on corporate governance, risk assessment and management. He stepped back from his last appointment in March 2017 and regards the Chaîne as a great opportunity to hone his discriminatory gastronomic capabilities. Having joined the Chaîne only two years ago he is honoured, flattered, and perhaps a little surprised, to be asked to take on such an interesting and exciting challenge!



HELEN SUNDERLAND, NEW BAILLI OF LONDON

Helen is a Swiss-British national who joined the Chaîne in 2001. She has been a member of the Bailliages of Beijing and Seattle, and was Vice-Chancellor of Beijing and Chargée de Mission of China before serving as Bailli of Beijing for the past several years. Helen moved to London last year where she works as a lawyer and corporate advisor, and has been an ad hoc member of the Bailliage Team.



Cotswolds Bailliage 20th Anniversary dinner

John Blain, Richard Maxwell, John Bishop, Christine Maxwell, Alan Cox, Philip Evins and David Joyce

The Cotswolds Bailliage celebrated its 20th anniversary with a splendid formal dinner at the Hywel Jones by Lucknam Park Restaurant, based at the Relais & Châteaux 5-star hotel just outside Bath.

Over 50 were present with Cotswolds members supported by members from Wessex, Chilterns, and South West Bailliaiges. Elizabeth Eyre, who founded the Bailliage in 1997 and has recently rejoined, was welcomed with other distinguished guests by Alan Cox, Bailli.

After the reception in a beautiful lounge, with Henriot Brut Souverain Champagne and assorted canapés, members and guests went through to the fine dining room where a wild salmon 'two ways', caviar, radish, apple and horseradish plate was followed by a tasty dish of scallops, pork croustade, carrots, raisin and caper dressing supported by a New Zealand Riesling. The main

course of Grouse, brassicas, girolles and mulled brambles was augmented with a Pinot Noir from Chile. The dessert was a masterpiece – Lavender crème brûlée, raspberries, raspberry doughnuts, and bitter chocolate sorbet matched with a glass of Graves Superieures.

The service provided by Restaurant Manager Chris Kidd and his staff was immaculate, friendly and efficient and the wines were expertly chosen by the Head Sommelier, Antonio Ciaccio.

The kitchen and serving staff were assembled in the dining room to be congratulated by Philip Evins with a 'Santé' to both chef and service which was warmly applauded by all attendees.

Alan Cox

WESSEX AUTUMN DINNER AT ESSEBORNE MANOR

It was on Friday 13th October that members gathered at Esseborne Manor for the first Chaîne dinner to be held at this hotel and, despite the date (unlucky for some), everyone enjoyed a very congenial evening.

Located close to Highclere Castle, home of the television series, 'Downtown Abbey', and where many of the actors stayed when filming, this family-run Victorian Country Hotel is small and unpretentious. It is set amidst the splendour of the North Wessex Down close by the lovely Bourne Valley, in an area designated as one of outstanding natural beauty.

The evening began in the best possible way with a glass (possibly two) of Coates & Seely Brut Reserve NV. Head Chef, Dennis Janssen, produced an excellent meal – the most outstanding courses came at the beginning and end of the dinner. These were the Pig Cheek with Fennel (some said the best pig cheek they had ever tasted!) and the dessert of Orange Posset, Chocolate and Pistachio. It's no surprise, then, that the hotel

has 2 AA Rosettes for their Courtyard Restaurant. Family owner, Ian Hamilton, joined members for dinner whilst Maître Hôte Mark Hamilton kept an eye on proceedings with another private dinner (beside ours) and a full restaurant.

Janet Evins



Mark Hamilton, Janet Evins and Ian Hamilton

Thames Valley FULL OF STEAM

On a bright October morning members of the Thames Valley Bailliage, along with friends from other Bailliage and guests, gathered in all their finery and period costumes in the

Belmond Lounge at Victoria station prior to our lunch trip on the beautiful Belmond British Pullman.

After being shown to our respective seats and being welcomed by Chaîne member, and Director of Sales for Belmond Trains, Howard Barclay, we were royally looked after by the Belmond on-train team.

As the gorgeous steam locomotive chugged its way through the Surrey Countryside we practiced our most Royal wave to the passengers and onlookers along the route.

The very friendly and efficient team from Belmond spent the journey serving us a lovely meal and wines to complement it. We would also like to thank Andre and the entire team at M Restaurants for their generous hospitality after the trip. If you are thinking of joining M club or using the restaurant please contact Andre direct at Andre@mrestaurants.co.uk

Janet Wigley



London Christmas Lunch at Mosimanns

After an exceptional starter of Dorset crab accompanied by a 2013 Domaine de Perdrycourt 1er Cru Chablis, we proceeded to enjoy seared filet of beef paired with 2008 Château Faugères Grand Cru Saint-Emilion, followed by a rich Vacherin. A particular highlight of this year's lunch was the final course: an apple and blackberry crumble elevated from a humble pudding to an expression of all that is delicious, evocative and sumptuous about Christmas dishes!

Maintaining our festive tradition for many years, the Baillages of London and London City held their joint Christmas Lunch at Mosimann's Club in Belgravia in December. This event is always one of the most popular on the calendar, and this year proved to be no exception: members braved flurries of snow to attend which, whilst very seasonal and picture perfect earlier in the day, caused chaos on the roads!

Hosted by Grand Officier Maître Rôtisseur Anton Mosimann himself, we enjoyed a superb lunch of classical cooking at its finest, accompanied by glorious wines served entirely in magnums from the Mosimann cellar. The event began full of cheer with a Mosimann Grand Cru Brut champagne reception in the beautiful Gallery Bar and then we proceeded downstairs to dine under the chandeliers of the stunning main room of the Club, which was elegantly decorated as a Winter Wonderland.

During the lunch, we were proud to honour two Confrères for their outstanding services to the Chaîne at a surprise ceremony: Graham Wheeler, for acting as the Vice Chancellor-Argentier of London for 10 years, and Tugrul Yigitoglu, for his role as Vice Chancellor-Argentier of London City for nearly 5 years.

Members from nine Baillages were present, with visiting Baillis attending the lunch from Thames Valley, Wessex and Yorkshire. In addition, we were joined by overseas members from The Netherlands and China. In true Mosimann's fashion, the lunch was a wonderful way of rounding off 2017 in style, with much camaraderie around the table and, of course, exquisite food and wine.

Helen Sunderland



VODKA AND FISH in St Petersburg

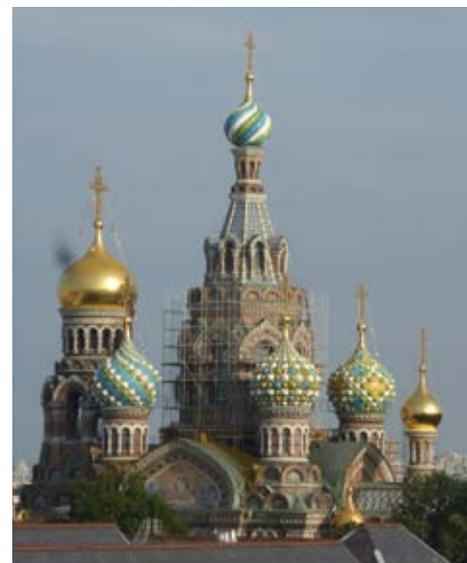
Irina Efremova, Andrew Vlasov, Janet Evins, Tatiana Shtoda, Henri Everaars, Philip Evins, Galina Efremova

What better way to see any new location than through the eyes and experience of local Chaîne members. Our short visit to this magical city was made immensely more interesting and enjoyable through the friendship and help of local Chaîne members. A boat tour of the city on arrival was followed by a visit to the Vodka Museum – with mandatory tastings! Followed by a multi-course Russian dinner in the Chaîne member restaurant 'Wodka Room' arranged by Bailli Délégué Henri Everaars – again with mandatory vodka tastings. We learned that horseradish flavoured vodka is the drink of the moment...

Day trips with a terrific guide around the city, to the Summer Palace and Petershof followed. Then came a wonderful dinner at another Chaîne restaurant – La Perla Fish House. Maître Rôtisseur Stanislav Potemkin is really to be congratulated – Michelin standard cooking with creative presentation skills on display. Our final morning included listening to ethereal singing in Kazan Cathedral and a visit to see those very special Easter eggs designed by Peter Carl Fabergé.

Maître Hôtelier Sjefke Jansen and his staff in the Belmond Grand Hotel Europe looked after us throughout the visit. Thanks to all for this special 'insiders' trip to your fabulous city. Vive la Chaîne!

Philip Evins





Philip Evins, Dr Peter & Sandy Chui and Roberto Zanghi

THREE COUNTRIES TWO TARTANS ONE COUPLE

The 58th Grand Chapitre was full of important meaning for us. Besides the promotion of Sandy to Officier and Peter to Vice Chargé de Mission, this was also the first time that we were wearing tartans. Sandy wore the new tartan sash of the Chaîne (there is no need to tell you how special that is). Peter, in contrast, wore the sash and tie of the tartan of The University of Hong Kong (HKU). This specially commissioned tartan was presented to HKU by the University of Aberdeen as a gift to celebrate the historic links between the two Universities and the collaborations that will continue into this century. The historic

connection between the two Universities dates back to the period of the Hong Kong College of Medicine, founded by Sir Patrick Manson, a University of Aberdeen graduate, in 1887.

The HKU tartan is inspired by the green and blue of the HKU Shield which was granted in 1913 by the College of Arms in London, with colours referencing different features of the Shield. The red and gold are for the lion on its field of crimson. The narrow black lines on white denote the open book bearing the University's Chinese motto and the Latin version 'Sapientia et Virtus'. The vibrant green represents the modern outlook of the University and HKU's Centenary. These two tartans linking France, Scotland, Hong Kong (part of China), two universities, and the Chaîne!



Dr Peter and Sandy Chiu



Diner Amical

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FINLAND!

Finland is a land of very good F1 drivers, very good rally drivers, of relaxed sailors, of gentle wooded countryside and great food. Last year marked the 100th anniversary of the Finnish state. I was delighted to be asked to be Inducting Officer for their Grand Chapitre in such an important year.

August in the Baltic is a wonderful time, as there are long days during which one is able to share the company of friends in a leisurely fashion. We were able to do this in the port of Kotka, situated in the idyllic countryside of Karelia – an area that we normally associate with the music of Jean Sibelius. The Finnish Grand Chapitre last summer brought together 350 members to this delightful area just a couple of hours east of Helsinki. Bailli Délégué Ari Arvonen hosted the early arrivals to a boat ride to the Bear Island Fishing Centre for dinner. This tiny island holds just a restaurant and sauna complex. What an evening –

wonderful fresh crayfish and a sauna with the best view in the world! Ari-Pekka and Sari Parviainen even introduced us to the art of arranging your empty crayfish shells!

The next evening we mingled with members between the exhibits in the Merikeskus Vellamo (Maritime Museum) while nibbling local delicacies. On the Saturday the Induction and Gala Dinner were held at the National Officer Training College in Hamina. This provided a link with the centenary celebrations as this was the base for the country's national hero Field Marshall Mannerheim. Dinner was a stunning range of delightfully light dishes – including a superb Worshmack – served in the atmospheric ammunition storage cellars of the garrison – a memorable evening with friends. Vive la Chaîne!

Philip Evins

THOMPSON'S RESTAURANT

Newport, Isle of Wight

Robert Thompson, a chef who has received Michelin stars at not one but two restaurants in his career so far, has opened his own restaurant in the middle of Newport, in the centre of the Isle of Wight. A quite informal setting where the kitchen is open to view.

On arrival there was Prosecco Vino Frizzante, Bemardi or a cranberry and ginger fizz both designed to complement the nibbles of puffed seaweed crackers with taramasalata, rock samphire and lemon.

Once seated an appetiser was offered of wood pigeon tartare with quails egg and nettles. This was followed by a delicious and surprising soup in a glass. It was a chilled jersey royal potato soup with a foam of local asparagus and sandwiched between – crab. The Spanish Verdejo, Casa Maria, Agricola Castellana, Castilla y Leon 2015 supported the flavours very well.

Next, a tenderly flavoured grilled fillet of sea trout with charred local lettuce, anchovy, parmesan and dill matched with

a Sauvignon Blanc/Sauvignon Gris from Uruguay.

However, the centrepiece of the meal was a superb barbecued rump of lamb. It was tender and pink and served with slow cooked crispy shoulder meat woven through layers of potato, rosemary gnocchi, broad beans and peas, with a sauce vierge. An organic Cabernet Franc Domaine Mas Barreau – Pays du Gard 2015 – provided a perfect companion.

Then was the choice of a selection of cheeses with a glass of Taylors LBV or an apple and blackberry posset with cider granite and with quite exquisite flavours. Delightful homemade petit fours accompanied the coffee and tea.

Our visits to the Isle of Wight have never failed to delight and this was one of the best. Many congratulations to Robert Thompson and his excellent staff – both in the kitchen and front of house. There is no question, either collectively or as individuals, we shall return!

Judy Deverill



Barbecued rump of lamb



Wood pigeon tartare with quails egg and nettles

WESSEX FESTIVE DINNER AT THE VINEYARD

STOCKCROSS

Members and friends gathered together for the last Wessex Bailliage event for 2017 at this luxury Relais & Chateaux, 5-star hotel and spa. Privately owned by the Michael family since 1996, who also own the highly regarded Peter Michael Winery in California, the hotel is renowned for its cellars, which contain over 30,000 bottles.

An evening at The Vineyard is always special, and, true to form, it didn't disappoint. Since the Bailliage's last visit in the kitchen was a new Executive Chef, Maitre Rotisseur Robby Jenks, who was previously at Amberley Castle where he obtained 3 AA Rosettes. Robby's menu was not just delicious, but also innovative! Of particular note was the starter of beef sirloin tartare, sorrel sorbet, raisins and bone-marrow crumb with a burst of different flavours and textures that came together in one wonderful mouthful. The Devonshire cod, cauliflower,

curry and coconut that followed also proved to be an excellent meld of flavours and melting textures.

All the wines were well-received and, interesting to note, they came from six different countries: France, Spain, Italy, Australia, Argentina and Hungary, the last being perhaps the most special – Sauska's Tokaji Aszu 6 Puttonyos 2003 – a real treat!

During the course of the evening, as usual at the December dinner, a raffle was held in aid of the Chaîne UK Charity - The Clink. From the many raffle prizes, Andrea Levene was the lucky lady who won a three-course à la carte menu with matching wines and champagne on arrival for two people, kindly donated by The Vineyard. The raffle raised nearly £900 with gift aid – a great evening to end the year!

Janet Evins



Mike Brooks and Janet Evins

ENGLISH VINEYARDS

Danebury Vineyards is not open to the public but if a Chaîne member would like to visit the vineyard or would like more information do not hesitate to contact Caroline Stevens on 01264 781851 or at sales@danebury.com



DANEBURY VINEYARDS

Danebury Vineyards, owned by Ernst and Elizabeth Piech, Professionals du Vin, is a boutique vineyard located near Stockbridge, in the heart of Hampshire, on the paddocks of what was a famous nineteenth-century racehorse training yard. The vineyards cover 7 acres (2.8 ha) of sheltered, south-facing fields on chalk and flint-stone soil.

Danebury's vines were planted in 1988, making Danebury one of the older commercial vineyards in England. Their flagship vintage brut sparkling wine 'Cossack' is made from Auxerrois Blanc and Pinot Gris in the traditional method, with a minimum of 4 years on the lees. They also produce two varietal still white wines 'Madeleine Angevine' and 'Schönburger', as well as 'Danebury Reserve', a blend of all their grape varieties.

The family has chosen to focus on limited production, following organic principles, which is reflected in the premium quality of the wine. Although on the fringes of the wine producing regions of the world, Hampshire's long summer days allow for maximum ripening of the grapes, ensuring strong fruit flavours and the chalk and flint soil, characteristic of the region, lends the wine its minerality.

Danebury wines are made only from grapes harvested from their single vineyard. Their experienced viticulture and wine

making skills are reflected in Danebury's exceptional fine wines, which are consistent medal winners in international wine awards and are poured in senior government institutions and establishments in London and the South East.

Caroline Stevens

'The family has chosen to focus on limited production, following organic principles, which is reflected in the premium quality of the wine'





BEAUTIFUL BURGUNDY

The final OMGD gathering of 2017 was held in the most appropriate venue, the cellars at No. 3 St. James Street, London. This is home to Berry Bros and Rudd, Britain's oldest wine and spirit merchant, established in 1698. They hold two Royal Warrants and can boast 8 Masters of Wine.

Dinner was preceded by an induction ceremony, with some of our professionals travelling from as far afield as Devon to attend.

Our winemaker for the evening was Olivier Bernstein, a truly rising star of Burgundy. His wines have received superb press notices since his very first vintages in 2007, an achievement made even more remarkable when you realise he comes from a music publishing background! He left a promising corporate career to study oenology in Beaune, where he has managed to acquire two of the

'A truly memorable evening of stunning wines shared with superb company.'

vineyards he was managing, Gevrey-Chambertin Les Champeaux and Mazis Chambertin. The fact that his wines are distributed world wide by the same agents as Domaine de la Romanée Conti speaks volumes.

The first course, red wine poached egg with roast artichoke and wild mushrooms, was accompanied by two wines: a 2011 and 2012 Chambolle-Musigny, Les Lavrottes 1er Cru.

This was followed by roast pheasant served with Brussel sprouts and choucroute, accompanied by two more superb wines: 2011 Gevrey-Chambertin, Les Champeau 1er Cru and 2011 Gevrey-Chambertin, Les Cazetiers 1er Cru.

The final course, a selection of excellent cheeses was accompanied by 2009 Bonnes Mares, Grand Cru. This was a truly elegant wine and undoubtedly the star of the evening. Sadly, at £275 a bottle, it is unlikely to become everyday drinking for many of those present!

Thanks to Jake Dean, Fine Wine Director of Berry Bros and Rudd, for his generosity in helping fund the evening, and to Head Chef Stewart Turner and his team for the fabulous food.

A truly memorable evening of stunning wines shared with superb company.

Vive les Gourmets Dégustateurs!

Stuart Cunningham



Induction party

Tell us a bit about what you feel is the 'secret of your success'?

Northcote Manor has evolved (through organic growth) from small beginnings to what it is today by the honest endeavours of a front of house and kitchen team that were joined at the hip. Nigel and I are business partners that operate from a position of mutual respect and total understanding. We work alongside each other all the time and help each other where we can across all facets of the business. If he wants to sell suckling pig... I sell suckling pig... and the team follow suit. We have the most incredible 'front of house' team spirit and this team spirit is the most important thing within our business.

Are your customers 'loyal customers' that return time after time or are you a tourist haven?

Both, but predominantly local customers. We started with 6 rooms when we arrived, I was 21 and Nigel was 25 - you could say we were young upstarts! We initially built the business purely on local custom and then added 14 rooms in 1992 - we're now up to 26 rooms. Predominantly our heart is local and many of our weekend guests come 15 miles to stay. As our reputation spreads wider, we are seeing customers from all over the UK and this has the potential for further growth to the business.

What has inspired your current menu and wine selections?

To be honest, tasting menus are slightly waning and our most popular menu is our Gourmand Menu inspired by local provenance and seasonal produce. The other thing we do brilliantly is lunch as a course of 4 x 4 - including coffee.

Which is your best-selling wine?

Our house wine which is hand-picked by Craig is the best seller, but the sadness is that it's now on every discerning sommelier's list! It's wine by Carlos and Julian Reynolds and delivers a particularly beautiful and easy crowd-pleasing glass. Our best selling champagne is Louis Roederer Champagne. In general terms we have built out list on Portugal - my father lives in



'On the grill' with: Craig Bancroft of Northcote Manor

In this issue of Table Talk, the Chaîne talks to Craig Bancroft – Managing Director of Michelin-starred Northcote Manor set in the heart of the stunning Ribble Valley in Lancashire

All about Craig

- Since Craig Bancroft took over Northcote Manor in 1983, alongside Chef Patron Nigel Haworth, the hotel has undergone a transformation and is now a prestigious boutique hotel, offering its guests a haven of food and wine excellence alongside a renowned customer service experience.
- Not surprisingly, under his and Nigel's auspices, the hotel has flourished and is now the holder of numerous awards including Hotel of the Year in 2016 in the AA Hospitality Awards and Hotel of the Year in 2017 in the Visit England Awards for Excellence.
- Craig himself is a proud holder of a Catey won in 2016 for Hotelier of the Year and was awarded the Imbibe Hotel Personality of the Year in 2017.
- A strong supporter of the Chaîne for many years we asked Craig a few questions about the magic he and Nigel have brought to Northcote Manor.



Portugal and my cousins' wrote about Portuguese wine before the country was really on the map. Hence why we have won the Ambassadors award and Best Portuguese Wine twice.

Are you seeing any emerging trends or changes in customer preferences – perhaps towards healthier eating?

The big trend – which will come as no surprise to anyone is the 'gin craze'. Everyone is now drinking gin – NOT champagne. We now run about 40 gins. We keep 20 firm favourites as a base and roll around a further 20. We don't try and have the biggest gin bar in the world, but every month we review the ones we have had in and bring in another nine, and take nine off. At home we have a rule, never buy the same gin twice! Whilst gin is the biggest trend, the second one is rosé wine which has become well received as a food wine – where previously, it would have been drunk on the terrace or with a barbeque.

Aside of your own establishment, which is your favourite restaurant?

Vila Joya (House of Jewells) in Portugal – which is a small 16 room hotel where I have been going since my cousin's husband, Bruce, introduced me to it. In the UK, I love Bentleys in Swallow Street.

What would your dessert island menu – if you could choose a starter, a main and a dessert...?

Starter: Fresh Crab
Mains: Veal Sweetbreads or Roast Grouse with traditional bread sauce and red currant jelly. If fish, Seabass or Turbot!
Pudding: Soufflé – black cherries with clotted cream ice cream with cherry ripple
One cheese: Colston Bassett Stilton washed down with a fabulous glass of port

What's next on the horizon for you?

Both Nigel and I just want to continue to look after our team and make sure that we can continue to build and maintain a robust legacy. I can't see myself retiring although I would like to enjoy more time with my wife and children...

Camaraderie *on camera*



Julie Morgan, Vic Laws and Steve Brownless



Tal Gal-Cohen & Helen Sunderland, Zainab Kahn & Daniel Esplen



Yara and Oliver Zeitoun



David Edwards and Chris Moore



Dan DuFon and Charles Frise



Georgina Graham and Julia Edwards



Ian and Carole Simpson



Craig Bancroft and Vic Laws



Angela & Jim Marsh and Charlotte Fenn



Steve Eagle, Janet Wigley and Takashi Suzuki

59th Grand Chapitre in Brighton, 4-7 October 2018



Our 59th Grand Chapitre will be held in sunny Sussex in the Regency resort of Brighton, home to the Prince Regent's stunning Royal Pavilion. Our base for the weekend will be on the sea front in the recently renovated Grand Hotel. This has recently been beautifully restored and modernised to regain its position as the premier hotel on the Sussex coast. The program will take advantage of being close to much of the English Sparkling wine production.

The event starts on Thursday evening with an informal fish dinner at The Jetty inside the Brighton Harbour Hotel. The skilled hand of Michelin-starred Alex Aitken will be obvious there. We have two options for Friday trips: the first will go to Ridgeview Winery and then on to the famous Bluebell Railway for a steam hauled round trip from Horsted Keynes which

will include lunch on board the Wealden Rambler. The second option will first visit the historic town of Lewes where there will be visits to Anne of Cleves House and the Castle – a fabulous view from the top – before going on to join the other group for the trip on the Wealden Rambler.

Friday dinner will be held at South Lodge Hotel near Horsham. Under the baton of Maitre Hotelier David Connell this superb country hotel has held a Michelin star for the Pass restaurant for a number of years.

On Saturday the Induction ceremony will be held in the Grand Hotel. Then attendees walk across the promenade for the reception on a flight in the British Airways i360. We will all gently ascend to 450 feet in the glass pod for a panoramic view of the coastline accompanied by some English Fizz.

Other options include a private guided visit to Arundel Castle including lunch. This spectacular castle sits on a bluff above the town and has been home to the Dukes of Norfolk for centuries. Another option, a must for railway enthusiasts, is a buffet lunch in the Brighton Toy Museum under the guiding hand of Trustees Chairman, Chevalier Vic Michel and his team.

The Gala Dinner will be held in the Empress Ballroom of the Grand Hotel prepared by Maître Rôtisseur Alan White.

On Sunday, two special events, first a private visit to Nyetimber winery at West Chiltington with guided tours of the vineyard followed by lunch in the White Barn.

Then the final event is a private guided tour of the spectacular Brighton Pavilion followed by dinner in the Banqueting Room.



Chaîne GB's 59th Grand Chapitre will be held in the Regency resort of Brighton

Diary Dates

Make a note of these dates in your diary.

OMGD Winemaker Dinner,
London
23 February 2018

GB Young Chefs
Competition, Leatherhead
1 March 2018

GB Young Sommelier
Competition, London
6 March 2018

Young Professionals Awards
Dinner, London
23 March 2018

OMGD Dinner, London
25 May 2018

GB Grand Chapitre,
Brighton
4-7 October 2018

OMGD Dinner, London
23 November 2018

GB Grand Chapitre, London
3-6 October 2019

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