

SUPPER

GLOBAL HOTEL F&B

ISSUE 2



Tony Conigliaro

The award-winning bartender on service, storytelling and simplicity

AvroKO

A design and concept firm with a difference, we speak to the four founders

Loh Lik Peng

From Singapore to Sydney, making the list with the founder of Unlisted Collection



Octopus cooked over a wood fire

Le George

Four Seasons Hotel George V, Paris

Words: Adrian Moore

The Four Seasons Hotel George V has always been a world-class leader in the hospitality industry, as much for the high standards of its rooms and amenities as for its gastronomic offerings. Its gourmet restaurant, Le Cinq, has hosted high level French chefs such as Philippe Legendre and Eric Briffard. With charismatic world champion sommelier Eric Beaumard as its director, it has always drawn top talents, recently culminating in a three star Michelin rating under most recent chef, and former Ledoyen chef de cuisine, Christian Lesquer. To ensure optimum quality, all other dining outlets fall under the command of the head chef - including La Galerie (run by the talented and aspiring David Bizet), Le Bar, and all aspects of room service.

It is quite the foodie event then that the hotel has recently launched its first new restaurant since it reopened its doors a decade and a half ago, in what was most recently the Salon Anglais private function room, and formerly the first restaurant to open in the original Hotel George V, the luxury brasserie Les Princes.

The new incarnation, known as Le George, is a luminous dining room looking out onto the interior marble courtyard, designed, like the rest of the hotel, by Pierre-Yves Rochon.

An entranceway of black metal framework, embedded with Lalique crystal panels, opens onto an ivory and white dining room with vaulted ceiling, well spaced tables covered in brown leather (no tablecloths here), and supremely comfy Damask upholstered wing chairs and 1930s grey leather armchairs.

Light from the interior Marble Courtyard is filtered through made-to-measure grey cashmere curtains, and the easy on the foot carpeting is straight from the archives of the venerable French house of Branbuenié. The room is given a surprisingly contemporary touch with optic illusion 'paper sculpture' paintings from artist Junior Fritz Jacquet, rounded out by Artistic Director Jeff Leatham's elegant, sometimes provocative floral arrangements. His installations often provoke 'oohs and ahhs' from diners.



The cherry on this opulent design cake is a breathtaking 2½-metre Baccarat crystal chandelier, also conceived by Rochon for the Lalique house. In the coming months, a seven-metre high, glass enclosed 'orangerie' will give guests the opportunity to dine year-round in the marble courtyard, protected from the elements.

The ambiance is subtle, relaxed and Parisian. The majority of diners come from around town, with only 20% hotel residents. This mostly local crowd are doted upon by Director Quentin Garreau de Labarre (formerly number two at Le Cinq) and the charming Vanessa Bonnaud, who for years catered to every whim and caprice of the world's most famous fashion designers, stars and billionaires at the legendary avenue Montagne restaurant L'Avenue. It's a brilliant move to ensure a star-studded clientele.

The cuisine, described by the hotel as "a journey between the French Riviera and northern Italy", is thanks to Marco Garfagnini - born in Carrara, the same town from which the majority of the hotel's marble is sourced.

Chef Marco, who was brought over by General Manager José Silva and with whom he worked at the Four Seasons Hotel Les Bergues, has an impressive culinary background. He earned his first Michelin star at the age of 29 in his native Tuscany, and a few years later in 2005, was named young Italian chef of the year by the Gambero Rosso guide. While working at Les Bergues, he also obtained a Michelin star rating for its fine dining establishment Il Lago and opened an innovative rooftop Japanese fusion restaurant called Izumi, which remains to this day one of the Swiss city's most coveted tables.

Le George was created with the idea of providing a modern French and Mediterranean table with a distinctly Parisian vibe, a 'convivial gastronomic experience'. The light and healthy dishes, meant to be shared, are composed of crudos, vegetables and fresh pasta, which is made twice daily. Risotto is made to order.

Although many of its style-savvy mannequin-sized guests may be calorie conscious, the food satisfies on many levels, embracing fine dining while remaining

healthy. Tuna crudo, with petals of black truffle; onion "tarte tatin" with parmesan sorbet and an astoundingly fresh langoustine with Mostarda di Cremona (an ancient north Italian concoction wherein preserved fruit is marinated with mustard oil or seed) are but a few of the dishes on the menu.

Whilst the defining characteristic of his cooking is simplicity, chef Garfagnini says, "I use the best products available to me and promote the product in its purest form. I don't want to disguise it or hide it in any way." He does feel lucky to be at the epicentre of the gastronomic world, especially being able to use the best produce from his own country as well as the south of France, and while the majority of his cooks are Italian, there are also teammates from Ireland, Korea and Japan. All adhere to the same values: "A good work ethic and atmosphere are absolutely essential in the kitchen."

It makes for eminently satisfied customers as well.

www.legeorge.com