



ACADÉMIE INTERNATIONALE DE LA GASTRONOMIE

*Information Note n° 41*

January - April 2020

### **AIG recent events**

- **Sunday, February 2nd 2020 in Paris** : AIG Gala dinner, preceding the General Assembly, at Hotel Meurice
- **Monday, February 3rd 2020 in Paris** : AIG General Assembly at Hotel Meurice followed by a luncheon.

### **AIG coming events**

#### **AIG International and National Prizes - Award ceremonies :**

As measures restricting public gatherings continue to be in force in many countries, International and National AIG Prize Award ceremonies had to be cancelled. Both AIG at Paris-Levallois headquarters and Member Academies will have to take other initiatives vis-à-vis the winners. Thank you in advance for keeping us informed in due course.

#### **AIG Trip to Portugal :**

Scheduled from May 21st to 24th with Porto as the arrival city, it was initially postponed to October 18th to 21st. As we still ignore when travel restrictions will be lifted, President Vitaux has decided to cancel the trip for 2020 and to postpone it to the spring 2021 (see his Easter message below).

## Easter message from President Vitaux, Paris, April 2020

Dear friends,

At this time of Easter and confinement at home, I read the Bible again: the Old Testament reminded me of the Angel of Death in the book of Exodus, but also the first celebration of Passover; then reading the Gospel gives me hope with the wonderful promise of Easter.



We are certainly living difficult times, but our memory is short: who remembers the tragedies of the Black Plague in the Middle Ages that killed at least a third of the European population, and much closer to us the Spanish flu that claimed more victims than the First World War! This allows us to put the current coronavirus epidemic in perspective, without ignoring its seriousness, but we had forgotten the risk of infectious diseases.

As we can no longer visit our usual places of conviviality, restaurants, we must look at the bottle half full rather than half empty: the health crisis has not led to food shortages; confined consumers have rediscovered home cooking, baking in particular. Confinement has made it possible, namely through internet orders, to rediscover small local producers, and to make a simple and tasty cuisine with local and seasonal products. Finally, Chefs were able, as much as possible, to show solidarity and to provide meals, especially to healthcare professionals.

While in this period of confinement we must of course be mindful of the safety of all, nothing prevents us from communicating, especially by internet and telephone – postal services being affected in certain geographies. We must not loosen ties but rather strengthen them: I suggest you begin thinking about restarting our activities, and make proposals to strengthen and expand them.

But this crisis will also teach us that the absence of direct human contact is probably the most difficult thing to bear, despite modern means of communication: the absence of our regular meetings within our national Academies and the probable cancellation of AIG trips this year, testifies to this fact. We don't know when we'll be able to meet again at a good restaurant, but nothing prevents us from thinking about our future friendly meals and our future trips.

Above all, I wish you good health in these difficult times, which are also an opportunity to strengthen our ties.

**Dr Jean VITAUX, President of AIG - Académie Internationale de la Gastronomie**

## Gala dinner on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and Luncheon on February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020 \*

We are gathered in a beautiful private room of Hotel Meurice for the gala dinner that traditionally precedes the General Assembly of the International Academy of Gastronomy the next day. Hotel Meurice is a storied Parisian Palace, where Salvador Dali made long stays with his menagerie (including two cheetahs) ; in 1944 it headquartered the Germans' occupation forces.

We are greeted with a glass of champagne, or a selection of fruit juices for those of us so inclined. Appetizers are highly elaborate : toasts of foie gras, salmon fillets on cream, marinated sea bream on squash cream.

Jacques Mallard speaks: "Dear friends, we welcome you all on behalf of the International Academy of Gastronomy. It is the first time we meet at Hotel Meurice. There have been many rebounds in the choice of location. For a long time we held our Assemblies at the Bristol Hotel, but it became overly expensive. So we left it for the Prince de Galles Hotel, whose Chef was excellent, but the management of the hotel changed their strategy and closed the gastronomic restaurant. So we looked for another prestigious hotel, with a reputable restaurant and offering a special pricing package for rooms. So we chose the Meurice.



Jocelyn Herland is the Chef in charge here, but he is not present tonight. He is replaced by his assistant John Argo. You will start with an artichoke prepared in an original way. Then there will be a lobster carpaccio, then a fillet of seabass, followed by a hot duck and foie gras pie. Coconut vacherin for dessert.



*Our first dish consists of an artichoke cream with olives, topped with artichoke slices and a parmesan shaving. Creamy and good. The oyster-soaked langoustine carpaccio is generously sprinkled with powdered poutargue. Unfortunately, the pungent poutargue completely overpowers the fine taste of the langoustine. Seabass*

*fillet on a cabbage leaf stuffed with shells and chorizo (chorizo is too spicy). Hot duck and foie gras pie in a flaky pastry crust and full-bodied juice, perhaps a bit too hearty, especially after the previous three dishes. All accompanied by Burgundy and Roussillon wines. The dessert is light and airy, almost ephemeral .*



Jacques: "Here comes the moment of the review that will be made by Nicolas Kenedy: "I love beauty. How to make a review in this Pompadour lounge in the presence of the Chef? Beauty and generosity... Artichoke, poutargue, chorizo, foie gras, coconut. Very complicated dishes to find an accomplishment. Beauty of the place, beauty of the Chef's work. I'm sitting with Régine, Gerald Heim de Balsac (with s). My name is Kenedy with only one n. Meal under multiple constraints. Artichoke dominated by lemon, langoustine by poutargue, pâté by foie gras. See you tomorrow in the same room!"

The next day, as an aperitif before lunch, a small bun with rosemary and candied lemon.



*The first dish is a very good, warm pan-fried foie gras, accompanied by a slice of toast, aniseed apple and rosemary crumble.*

*This is followed by a veal fillet and potatoes with candied onion. Tender and well cooked.*

*"Citron 2.0" turns out to be a reconstituted lemon filled with lemon wedges with an outside glaze.*



The wines come from Burgundy and Bordeaux. .

Jacques: "We are coming to the end of these events. The review will be made by Mr. Fabien Petitcolas. " Fabien : "My review will be difficult after yesterday's menu. Chef John Argo prepared both meals. It's much better than last night. Hors d'oeuvres, langoustine and chilli. The foie gras is not easy to cook for 40 people. It was creamy on the inside, crisp on the outside. The side dish and the wine were good. The veal was well cooked, the juice did not overwhelm the taste. Potatoes and onions. Lemon 2.0 (sweet and sour). Our Pastry Chef's name is Cedric. The room team is pleasant and discreet. It's a nice lunch."

There is a seating plan for all of us. The youngest guest is George Harrison, he's 9 years old. He is the son of Sakiko Yamada and he accompanies his Japanese mother.

Jean : "The main problem yesterday was the lobster carpaccio crushed by the too heavy poutargue. We will try to do better next year."

*\*A report prepared from the notes of Line Chaoui, whom we thank very much for her work*



AIG Members attending  
the 2020 General Assembly luncheon