

gourmet

New restaurants, sumptuous wine tours and culinary festivals; there's plenty to get your taste buds around in the world of fine dining



Words by Hugo Ripley

he world of fine food tours this year doesn't get more jet set than the 125-hour gastronomic tour de force on offer at **Le Royal Monceau Raffles** in Paris to celebrate their 125th anniversary. Guests are afforded celebrity treatment including 15-hours of the very best gourmet dining, four hours lingering over breakfast delicacies by France's 'Picasso of Patisserie', Pierre Hermé, five hours in a helicopter en route to a gourmet lunch in the Loire Valley, and limousine treatment the rest of the way (leroyalmonceau.com).



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: LE ROYAL MONCEAU RAFFLES IN PARIS; TURKISH CUISINE AT BARBAROS BAY; SPICY CHICKEN BURGERS AT THE EXPLORER'S CLUB IN FRANSCHHOEK; MEZZE AT BARBAROS BAY; SHOPPING IN THE ANDALUCIAN MARKETS



TOUR DE COURSE

Dine your way around Paris in a limo, take a course with your very own celebrity chef in South Africa or trawl the markets of Andalusia for the finest ingredients; the world of food tours is your oyster

Meanwhile, the hideaway **Kempinski Hotel Barbaros Bay** on Turkey's Aegean Coast is offering three-day cookery classes to learn the art of Turkish nouvelle cuisine, an Ottoman-era fusion style rich in vegetables, herbs and seafood. Days are spent exploring Bodrum's farmers markets, and by boat on the bounteous Aegean waters, to find and prepare evening meals in the mezze style, accompanied by excellent local wines and enough fabulous Turkish coffee to keep you awake throughout (kempinski.com/bodrum).

In the far south of Spain, the bucolic province of Andalusia is one of the finest places in Europe to shop for the finest in Mediterranean ingredients. Melanie Templer, an expert in local fare, runs **The 2's Company**, who organise slow food-orientated tours. Iberico ham and membrillo (quince jelly, superb with manchego cheese) are iconic products. But it is the olive oil that stands out; travelling around the famous white villages, visitors cannot miss the miles of olive trees stretching up every mountain. Get your hands on a bottle of Marques de Grinon from Toledo and you'll never look back (the2scompany.com).

Mahammad runs annual cooking courses with a sub-continental flavour. Guests learn the art of making such delicacies as beansprout salad with chargrilled asparagus, spinach koftas in tomato sauce, spicy chicken burgers, jewelled rice, spiced smoked salmon, tomato ginger chutney, murg irani, all washed down with the finest Cape wines (explorersclub.co.za).

If you have any spare belt notches, head to Canberra in Australia for a few days on the **Poachers Way** trail. Starting just north of the capital at **Poacher's Pantry**, a winery-cum-smokehouse, visitors can meander around some of the most fertile lands in New South Wales. There are farmers markets, vineyards, pubs, art galleries, spas and gardens around the bush towns of Gundaroo and Yass (thepoachersway.com.au).

Further on south, in the sumptuous surrounds of the **Explorer's Club** in South Africa's gastronomic capital of Franschhoek, popular Indian celebrity chef Reza

LINGER OVER A BREAKFAST OF DELICACIES BY FRANCE'S 'PICASSO OF PATISSERIE', PIERRE HERMÉ, BEFORE TAKING A HELICOPTER TO A GOURMET LUNCH IN THE LOIRE VALLEY

ONE VINE DAY

The variety of wine tours is opening up opportunities for budding wine tourists to taste and buy the finest wines and champagnes in the world, often while living like a king in a grand château

The Moët that rocked!

Wine tours are best begun with an apéritif, and if you're going to have an apéritif you might as well have the best. Tours at **Moët & Chandon** are conducted in the amazing labyrinthine cellars beneath the company's Epernay chateau. In this subterranean world three different types of grapes are given the perfect conditions in which to mature into their distinctive blend of regal bubbles. Join a long list of Moët devotees, including Maurice Chevalier and Cary Grant, with a stay at the Hôtel Moët and tastings galore of Napoleon's favourite tippie (moet.com).

Puligny out the stops

Staying with France, **Fine Wine Vault** offer exclusive tours each year to the very finest chateaux. First up in November is their tour to the supreme white wine vineyards of the world on Burgundy's Cote d'Or. It's a great way to learn about the history of these venerable wine farms, not to mention witnessing



the production of some of the finest wines ever made. Puligny Montrachet. Meursault. Chassagne Montrachet. The names roll of the tongue as easily as the famously buttery chardonnays slip down the palate (thefinewinevault.com).

If you like your wine Chile...

In the up and coming regions of Chile and Argentina, huge investment is really starting to put them on the map. Former city banker **Tim Robertson** offers bespoke wine and gourmet tours of 250 bodegas in the foothills of the Andes around Aconcagua and Casablanca on the Chilean side and Mendoza on the Argentinian side. Reds are generally the order of the day, with malbec and cabernet sauvignon the most successful varietals. If you like your wine tasting complemented by soaring snow-capped peaks, this is the place for you (robertson@winetours.com).

Spitpoons not necessary

Closer to home, the excellent wine shop at **Harrods** hosts wine and champagne tastings every month,

accompanied by gourmet canapes and often with guest speakers and experts from around the oenological world (harrods.com).

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:

VISIT CHATEAUX SUCH AS PICHON LONGUEVILLE; BILLECART MAISON; CHEF MICHEL ROUX JR; TASTE WINES SUCH AS CHATEAU LATOUR; THE ICONIC LAURENT PERRIER GRAND SIÈCLE CHAMPAGNE



It's a Brut

For our favourite bubbles we never look further than **Laurent Perrier's** signature Brut, which is still considered a classic. Pale gold in colour and famous for its hints of citrus, the champagne, along with its sister cuvées, will be available to taste at Roux at Parliament Square where celebrity chef **Michel Roux Jr** has created a special paired tasting menu to celebrate Laurent Perrier's bicentenary. To whet your appetite the menu will include matches such as scallop croustillant, potato and truffle butter paired with Laurent-Perrier Vintage 2002 and slow roasted breast of English veal, with macaroni gratin and woodland mushrooms paired with the iconic Laurent-Perrier Grand Siècle. Tickets are £175, please call 0207 334 3737 or email bookings@rouxaps.co.uk (laurentperrier.com).

Secrets in pink

Billecart-Salmon Brut Rose, hewn with loving care from the fields of Epernay and made in a secret vinification process for over two centuries, is another favourite. To try this pink-hued gem, visit the bar at The Connaught hotel in London, where it is served in beautiful champagne 'saucers', or the River Cafe on the river in Fulham where Billecart is the only champagne on the wine list. Also, in October, Billecart will be 'wine of the month' at the Ritz in London (champagne-billecart.com).



SAVE THE REST 'TIL LAST

Our round-up of the most exciting restaurants with rooms and the best hotels with gourmet dining on the menu



For luxurious culinary stays in the capital, look no further than the **Sheraton Park Tower** on Knightsbridge where restaurant **One-O-One** has shot up the rankings under French super chef Pascal Proyart, to the extent that it's now widely credited as the best seafood restaurant in London. Starwood's Luxury Collection is famed for its sophistication, and if seafood is your thing, Proyart will be hosting paired Autumnal tasting menus from September to December, for just £99 per person, with five courses consisting of such mouthwatering things as native

lobster and green pea sorbet (paired with Cape chenin blanc) and wild Norwegian red king crab with rocket chiffonade (Proyart made this live on the BBC recently). Guests get to sit around the restaurant's amazing 'oyster table' and if you attend the December meal, a Festive Tasting Masterclass, you may even get the chance to go behind the scenes to lend a hand. Under strict supervision that is. For bookings call 0207 290 7101 (starwoodhotels.com; oneoonerestaurant.com).

There's also a decidedly French feel these days at **Gleneagles**, the 'chateau in the glens' in Perthshire, and its not just the Versailles-style



grandeur of this palatial hotel. The fine dining at the legendary golfing venue (they host the Ryder Cup in 2014) also has a distinct flair for the nouvelle, only with an intriguing Scottish slant. To Scotland's only double Michelin-starred chef, **Andrew Fairlie** (at the helm of an eponymous restaurant there), the Franco-Scottish blend comes naturally as he was trained in France. Local ingredients from the natural larder outside Gleneagles' front door combine with delicacies sourced in Paris to produce dinners of duck foie gras and lobster thermidor smoked over whiskey barrels, lunches of sautéed pigeon and breakfasts of Dumfries smoked salmon and porridge (andrewfairlie.co.uk; gleneagles.com).

The delivery of the season's *en primeur* (bought before bottling) wines is an exciting moment in the year for oenophiles, but imagine how exciting it is when new vineyard owners take delivery of their very first vintage. Regular visitors to **Villa Clarisse** (and its

sister the five star **Hotel de Toiras**) on the increasingly popular island of Ile de Ré on the French west coast will notice the addition of two new Chateau Clarisse red vintages on their already-inspiring restaurant wine lists. The 2010 vintage has just been released to the owner, Olivia Le Calvez, who's passion it has long been to produce her own wines for the hotel. The vineyard is in St Emilion, a hallowed spot on the right bank of Bordeaux's Gironde, and has produced a fabulous vintage, one which the experts say to drink while young. What better reason to pay the Ile de Ré a visit this year (villa-clarisse.fr).

This Autumn sees the opening in Marrakesh of the **Mosaic Palais Aziza & Spa**, set in a lush Moroccan garden, which will have an avowed policy of healthy eating. Chef Daniele Turco, previously of the Gritti Palace in Venice, will be able to call on that garden for many of his ingredients; vegetables from the kitchen garden, fruit from the citrus trees, and his own homegrown olive oil. The rest he will source from the city's world famous medina, just down the road. There will be two restaurants, **Maroliano**, for creative Moroccan and Italian cuisine, and **The Pergola**, for relaxed open-air '*cuisine du soleil*' with salads and grills. There's a sublime spa to aid with relaxation, but if that doesn't work you still get to breathe in the gorgeous fragrance of jasmine in the garden, listen to the ever-present backdrop of birdsong or just stare at the dancing reflections in the hotel's impressive fountain (mosaicpalaisaziza.com).

In culinary circles it's the wonderful herbs and spices of Peruvian cuisine that has everyone talking at the moment. There are many Peruvian restaurants popping up in London to introduce us to the wonderful world of *paca de pescado* (steamed chilli fish wrapped in bamboo) and *ceviche* (lime marinated fish). But, you can also head to the place itself, somewhere like the **Machu Picchu Hotel**, 8,000 feet up in the Andean mountains to, firstly, tick off one of the world's top

'bucket list' items, and secondly sample Peruvian food straight from the jungle, literally. Their honey is from the owner's hives, herbs are from their garden, coffee is from the plantation down the road. At the hotel's friendly **El MaPi** cafe, be sure to mingle with the other guests over plates of *yucas frittas con huancayina* (crispy yucca with a spicy dip) before sitting down to *cuy confitado* (confit guinea pig), the local delicacy, with pisco sours, a cocktail that demands a degree of caution (inkaterra.com).

There's South American cuisine on offer too at the eclectic **Tribal** at

Niyama in the Maldives. But it's combined with African influences in the giant Arabian tent in which this fascinating restaurant is housed, on an island 40 minutes by seaplane from Male. Niyama's floors are sand, well, beach really, and tiki torches light the way under canvas to food cooked on open fires, taking food back to its raw, basic unit – hence the name, Tribal. Once you've taken the culinary situation in, you'll also notice that you're on one of the most beautiful islands in the world with luxurious beach villas dotted along an idyllic shoreline (niyama.peraquum.com).

PERUVIAN RESTAURANTS ARE POPPING UP EVERYWHERE TO INTRODUCE US TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF PACA DE PESCADO (FISH WRAPPED IN BAMBOO) AND CEVICHE (LIME MARINATED SEAFOOD)



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: THE POOL AT MOSAIC PALAIS AZIZA & SPA IN MARRAKESH; ONE-O-ONE AT THE SHERATON PARK TOWER IN LONDON; PASCAL PROYART OF ONE-O-ONE; ANDREW FAIRLIE'S SIGNATURE SMOKED LOBSTER; RED TUNA TARTARE AT ONE-O-ONE

The cocktail**THE GLENMORANGIE ZEST**

Featuring: A simple twist to a whisky cocktail

How to make it:

Add a couple of ice cubes to a Glenmorangie tumbler and pour a measure of Glenmorangie Original in to it. Create a 2cm long fresh zest of orange using the Glenmorangie zester and peeler. With the zest of orange held over the Glenmorangie glass, gently squeeze and with a lighter, ignite the zest for a few seconds. Place the zest in the glass where the citrus oils and aromas will further add to the whisky

The place to have one:

The Didsbury Hotel in Manchester

The cocktail**THE GREY GOOSE LE FIZZ**

Featuring: Grey Goose vodka

How to make it:

Mix 35ml Grey Goose vodka, 15ml elderflower cordial, 15ml freshly squeezed lime juice, top up with ice-cold soda water. Shake and double strain into a flute and top up with ice-cold soda water.

The place to have one:

The Savoy hotel, London

The cocktail**KIR ROYAL**

Featuring: Lanson White Label

How to make it:

Ingredients: ¼ oz crème de cassis, 2¼ oz Lanson White Label. Pour the crème de cassis into a flute, then slowly add the champagne. What could be easier. This is a sec, or sweeter, champagne which highlights fresh fruit flavours and really sings when a strip of orange, lemon or lime zest is added. Strawberries also make a great combination. The wine is a blend of chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier and has a very distinct Lanson signature of freshness.

The place to have one:

The Library at Mosimann's Dining Club

THE CRUCIAL MIX

Where to be seen sipping cocktails like Bond...

**The cocktail**
THE AVIATION

Featuring: Bombay Sapphire

How to make it:

Ingredients: 60ml Bombay Sapphire, 15ml maraschino liqueur, 7.5ml crème de violette, 15ml freshly squeezed lemon juice, lemon zest, maraschino cherry. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice, add all ingredients and shake. Strain the liquid into a chilled glass, then twist some lemon zest over the surface of the cocktail to release the essential oils onto the drink, then discard the zest. Garnish with a maraschino cherry and you're up and away.

The place to have one:

The Artesian Bar at The Langham or the London

The cocktail**THE HENNESSY SODA****How to make it:**

Mix 2 oz Hennessy cognac, 4 dried apricots (organic), 1 oz

lemon juice, ¼ oz syrup, one dash of ginger bitters and one dash of orange bitters. Garnish with fresh ginger. Only shake, with ice.

The place to have one:

Bar Boulud at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park or The Connaught hotel in London



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: JEAN-GEORGES VONGERICHTEN WITH HIS CATCH OF THE DAY IN ST BARTHS; ON THE ROCKS, ST BARTHS; THE GIN 'N' BITTER EXPERIENCE AT THE RIB ROOM BAR AT THE JUMEIRAH CARLTON TOWER



CATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

Essential tips for fine wining and dining this year, from keeping that store cupboard stocked with gourmet goodies to knowing where to smoke a cigar with the best view in the world

To try the wonderful Peruvian cuisine (see restaurants with rooms section) a little closer to home visit **Ceviche** on Frith Street in London's Soho for the best marinated fish in the country. The chefs use a lot of lime, a touch of chilli, they make it in front of you and there's pisco sours while you wait (cevicheuk.com). Just around the corner on Wardour Street, the team at **Busaba Eathai** are also building a cult following for their stylish, chattering Thai eateries. Their ginger beef, pad kwetio wok noodle and grilled aubergine are talked about in hushed tones by aficionados (busaba.com).

Gourmet foodie gifts are always a necessity for the store cupboard and there is no better place to stock up than **Selfridges Food Hall** (selfridges.com) on Oxford Street. You can wander the mouth-watering plethora of counters, eat in, watch the food demonstrations, taste wines, and package up such delicacies as Pierre Hermé macarons, Godiva chocolates and Lola's cupcakes. Your second port of call should be **Fortnum & Mason** (fortnumandmason.com), the marble pillared hall, with royal patronage, dedicated to epicurean delights. Famous for its teas, coffees and hampers, don't go home without their truckle of organic blue stilton or a tin of fabulous Chococlossus

biscuits, packaged exquisitely as always. A quick cab ride to **Harvey Nichols** (harveynichols.com) on Knightsbridge takes you to this small but inviting food hall. Don't miss Regimental Condiment's delightful range of chutneys, while great British buys include Professor Cornelius Sloe Gin and Hattie & Blythe sweetie jars.

Three Michelin starred chef **Jean-Georges Vongerichten** (of Jean Georges in New York and Spice Market in London fame) will be heading up two of St Barths's top restaurants, the Sand Bar and On the Rocks, the first time the Caribbean island has seen a chef of

this stature there. Both restaurants are at the legendary **Eden Rock** hotel and will feature Vongerichten's farm-to-table ABC Kitchen Concept (essentialhotelcollection.co.uk).

Serviced villas are a joy for a family holiday, but at **CV Travel** guests can also book a range of villas around Europe with a professional chef to shop, cook, and clear-up afterwards. Highly recommended serviced villas are The Cowshed near Polzeath in Cornwall, Sant' Antonio in Tuscany and Kasbah du Lac in Morocco (cvtravel.co.uk).

The **Jumeirah Carlton Tower** on London's Sloane Street has opened a new cigar bar to celebrate its 50th year – at the Martin Brudnizki-designed Rib Room Bar – featuring some of the world's finest cigars. The bar also features a Gin 'n' Bitter experience, with various types of gin – with accompanying bitters, ranging from lavender to liquorice and cardamom to chocolate – delivered on silver salvers in full theatrical style (theribroom.co.uk).

Fairmont The Palm opens this Autumn in Dubai on the Palm Jumeirah, the astonishing palm-shaped island completely risen from the seas by human hands. This long-awaited hotel will overlook the island's 'fronds' and will feature an eclectic array of restaurants from Chinese Szechuan to the only Brazilian restaurant in Dubai. Their Cigar and Malt lounge has a walk-in humidor and single malts can be had with stellar views (fairmont.com).