

Cognoscenti magazine

Because life is short

La Cabro d'Or Les Baux de Provence

After relaxing in a charming guest room decorated in blue and green, visiting **Cognoscenti Magazine** editors sat down for a late dinner at **La Cabro d'Or**. We gazed past the bouquet of cala lilies on our table to take in the lovely pastoral landscape just outside. The sunset was illuminating the gardens, where wild ducks waddled along the pathways before plopping contently into the pond. Just beyond, Les Baux de Provence's famed limestone cliffs loomed large.



*La Cabro d'Or sings of
sweet, lazy summer days*

It might be considered tempting to compare La Cabro d'Or to **Oustau de Baumanière**, its more famous (and expensive) sibling located just down the road. [See our separate review of it in this issue.] Jean-André Charial, who owns and operates both properties, is intent upon keeping La Cabro d'Or's very own identity—and rightly so, because the two properties are in fact quite different. With its gardens, pool, equestrian center, and goat park (goats serve as a leitmotif throughout), La Cabro d'Or sings of sweet, lazy summer days. The easygoing feeling that one senses here extends to its restaurant where, as Maître d'Hôtel Massimiliano Bigoni notes, "We have a relaxed style."

Chef Michel Hulin serves up some tasty renditions of classic provençal cuisine, changing the menu every other day to make sure that his dishes feature only the freshest in seasonal and local produce. In the grilled seabass and braised baby endives (*filet de loup grille sur une compotée d'argumes aux endivettes braises, jus de cuisson acidulé à la coriandre*), the citrusy stew might have been subjected to further reduction. In *gigotin d'agneau cuit au sautoir*, served with eggplant caviar, and *noix de jarret*

de veau longuement braisée—flavors were kept clearly recognizable, with fresh herbs enhancing rather than competing with them—thus reflecting Chef Hulin's aim to "go straight to the essence" of the products he employs in his dishes.

For the wine, we bucked the temptation to order a white, choosing instead a medium-bodied 1998 *Vieux Télégraphe* "La Crau" (Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape). Volatile on opening, it gradually improved as it oxidized in a decanter to reveal rich elements of jam, herbs and spice. Presently Sommelier Xavier Bayeul is busy expanding the restaurant's wine list to include a larger offering of Provençal wines—a region that has been producing much-improved reds in addition to its better-known rosés.

This article was written by Contributing Editors to *Cognoscenti Magazine*.

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