

Cognoscenti magazine

Because life is short

RESTAURANT PETROSSIAN
PARIS, FRANCE

“It’s possible to come to **Petrossian** and have a good meal not necessarily related to caviar,” says the restaurant’s charming Guest Relations manager, Anna Micic. “The food here is traditional caviar cuisine with new influences.”

Certainly, over the decades, Petrossian—which operates in New York and L.A., as well as Paris—has become something of a “temple of caviar” to its affluent and discerning clientele. Sumptuous tasting bowls heaped with legendary caviar like Ossetra, Beluga, Sevruga are traditional favorites, but visiting

Cognoscenti Magazine editors were more interested in trying out Chef Sébastien Faré’s new culinary notions. In the menu we tasted, caviar was often integrated into larger dishes as a flavor enhancer, but it seldom took center stage.

Chef Faré, trained under Robuchon, serves a tasting menu that showcases his talents for juxtaposing flavors in new and unusual ways. “It’s about feelings,” he told us. Chef Sommelier Benjamin Lacombe’s paired wines ranged from a fresh and unctuous 1997 *Domaine Lefebvre* Puligny-Montrachet to a Russian

Massandra Muscadet. “I strongly contrast wine to food because I like opposition,” he said.

Inside Petrossian, the décor is sleek, stylish and sophisticated. Mirrors on each of the walls multiply the

artsy color scheme, and each table is adorned a carnation or a rose and an oil candle. Trendy upbeat music plays in the background—no staid classical sounds here!

We began with Champagne Besserat de Bellefon Blanc de Blancs, very pale in color, delicate, austere with a touch of mineral and stone, nice grip, well-balanced.



*Petrossian Restaurant
in the 7th district*

The meal began on an auspicious note with several fine flavor contrasts: smoked salmon with beetroot jelly; salmon, artichoke and curcuma with potato emulsion; pork and mushroom with parsley cream; and langoustine with vinegar candy and white chocolate. (“It’s a different way to taste vinaigrette,” explained the chef.)

Caviar on poached egg with soy sauce and bean sprouts introduced a lovely Asian twist. Hot dishes were slightly less captivating, with black rice, carrot emulsion and green asparagus a bit weaker, and stur-

geon with caviar and vodka-lemon overly creamy. Lamb cooked eleven hours with apple-onion *tangine* was very tender indeed, but flavors might have been better concentrated.

Restaurant Manager Serge Calvez proved himself a very capable showman as he wheeled up a wooden cart to our table that was covered with intriguingly mysterious-looking dried herbs and flowers.

Tableside, he prepared a trio of exceptional “parfums à boire” which he paired to a dessert sampler. These palate-cleansers progressed on the flavor path from salty to sweet. “I think of them as commas between the desserts,” said Mr. Calvez. First came star anise with

malvia flowers, followed by a shot of “Nile tears” made with sumac and hibiscus, and finally a ginger concoction called “Bois & Racines.” Served in frosted glasses, these herbal infusions were as light and flavorful as magical potions, and a delightful way to end our feast.



Starter plate: smoked salmon; langoustine; salmon; and pork.

This article was written by Nicole Medvecky-Riggs and other contributing editors to *Cognoscenti Magazine*.

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