



The event at **Joie Grillades** was keenly awaited. So why, one wonders? A new restaurant in the city? something different in the theme being French Basque cuisine? a new *Maître Rotisseur* to meet? Possibly each contributed to the event sell-out in just a few days after it was announced. The full menu is at the end of this review.

Thirty-eight (38) Victoria Bailliage Members and their partners were greeted by our host, *Maître Rotisseur* Laurent Neveu, whose exuberant personality set the stage for the fun evening that was to follow. The restaurant décor is delightfully minimalist in tones of black and white which carried through to the table settings. Our traditional Reception began with a glass of “Bubbles” (a Loire Crémant from our cellar), which we enjoyed as we caught up with old friends, hearing exciting stories of travel adventures and treks undertaken since our last event in December.

For the Reception, Executive Chef Neveu and his team had prepared an amazing array of warm and cold **Pintxos - Basque Hors-d'oeuvres** to complement the Loire Crémant “Bubbles”. Bowls of marinated olives, to-die-for-artichokes and red peppers were followed by platters of the most delicious portobello mushrooms (**Champignons Diabolo**) and feather-light pastries (**Tartelette en Pipèrade**) filled with slivers of Basque-style sautéed vegetables. At my table there was considerable discussion over whether the mushrooms or the pastry was the favourite. A tough decision, but I think the mushrooms won my vote while

Rob very definitely sided for the pastry as he ate his second helping!

The first dinner course of **Terrine d'Homard au Xeres** was a very generous slice of Lobster Terrine served with cornichons, wafers and a lightly dressed salad of Arugula. Warm baguettes of crusty bread were available for spreading on the terrine, but most seemed to relish the lobster by itself. Laurent had paired a Basque Chardonnay Hacienda di Arinzano with this course.

We did need a pause for tummies to settle after indulging in such generous servings and enjoyed a little more Chardonnay before the meat course, **Txuleta Vasca**, was introduced. Laurent paired this with a Pinot Noir from Basque, a Reserve Jean Pierre Chenet. The Filet Mignon, beautifully oven-seared and wrapped in prosciutto and peppers was accompanied by crisply sautéed potato wedges, Yum!

But we were not yet finished, as dessert of **Sable aux Pommes et Brie** appeared, and caused serious second thoughts about whether one still had “room” for it. Sipping a luscious Tokaji Muscat from our cellar helped make up a few minds and some chose to enjoy, later at home, their dessert of a warm, Basque- style apple pie, topped with melted brie.

We were extremely grateful that *Maître Rotisseur*, Laurent, and his hard-working team delivered an exceptional event for our Bailliage on what was their only night off during the week. Bailli Gail Gabel presented each team member with a *Chaîne* Certificate of Appreciation and expressed thanks on behalf of all present for a truly wonderful introduction to French Basque cuisine.

Gail Gabel

Bailli de Victoria



Reception

Pintxos

Basque Hors-d'œuvre

Champignons Diablo

Portobello braised with garlic, lemon, basil and Piment d'Espelette

Tartelette en Pipèrade

Pastry baked with a Basque vegetable fricassée
De Chanceny Crémant de Loire

Dinner

Terrine d'Homard au Xeres

Lobster terrine, flavored with Spanish Sherry, condiments, crusty bread
Aragon Chardonnay

Txuleta Vasca:

Filet de Boeuf, Oven-seared with peppers and prosciutto, sautéed potatoes
Gironde/Landes Pinot Noir

Dessert

Sable aux Pommes et Brie

Basque style warm apple pie baked with Brie
Tokaji Muscat L.H. Kereskedohaz