

Whisky tasting dinner won't be cheap, but it should be top-notch

Seven years ago, I was fortunate enough to attend a gourmet dinner like no other. Hosted by Montreal caterer Denise Cornellier, the meal featured an elaborate tasting menu paired not with wine but whisky. The pairings were done by Cornellier's friend of 20 years, Martine Nouet, a French writer who focuses exclusively on spirits, with food and whisky pairing being one of her great passions.

Nouet began her career as a political correspondent for the French newspaper *Le Figaro*, but soon changed her focus to food. Though she initially detested whisky, a trip to Scotland on a whisky assignment changed all that. Today she not only judges whisky competitions and organizes whisky festivals worldwide, but makes her

home on the Scottish island of Islay.

Though one expects a whisky dinner to be hosted by a kilt-clad Scotsman, a lesson from Nouet is in the French vein. She serves the whisky in a wine glass, ideally bulbous in shape and narrow on top. Instead of swirling the liquid to aerate, she inhales deeply before tasting to better absorb aromas such as berries, plums, smoke and humus. At that meal, Nouet paired foie gras with a Glenmorangie Port Wood Finish whisky, and sweet potato soup with a 10-year-old Bruichladdich. Then came duck with a 12-year-old Glenfarclas, a rich and noble whisky that she said reminded her of a library filled with old books and antiques. To finish, we savoured a smoky Talisker

with a cardamom and chocolate pot de crème.

These two innovative gastronomes will be preparing a new whisky tasting dinner on Tuesday, Nov. 30, at 6:30 p.m. A cocktail will precede a six-course menu paired with seven single malt Scotch whiskies. The price is steep at \$275 per person, but the food and spirits are top-notch. For more information or to reserve a spot, contact Denise Cornellier Traiteur at 514-272-8428 or visit their website at info@cornelliertraiteur.com. The venue will be chosen according to the number of diners in attendance.

SPARROW FOOD TAKES FLIGHT

Fans of the terrific Eng-

lish-cuisine inspired boho resto The Sparrow take note: though the bar will still be running full force, the team behind the restaurant, managers Ethan Wills and Sefi Amir, chef Marc Cohen and designer Annika Krausz, will be moving operations a few doors south to a locale at the corner of St. Laurent Blvd. and Fairmount Ave. This popular brunch and lunch spot in Mile End has garnered plenty of buzz for its British-centric breakfasts and upscale gastro-pub fare at lunch. Yet because the site was used as a bar after sundown, dinner was impossible, which explains the move to the new locale. Opening is expected around Dec. 1 and the restaurant's name has yet to be determined. The new space will feature about 40 seats, the

menu will be similar to what they are serving at The Sparrow now, and the hours of operation will be from Wednesday to Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday dinner and weekend brunch. Tomorrow will be the final service at the Sparrow for chef Marc Cohen and the Sparrow restaurant team.

JOSÉE DI STASIO VISITS LONDON

Josée di Stasio, Quebec's leading lady of all things gastronomic and host of the excellent *Télé-Québec* cooking show *À la di Stasio*, appears to have been seduced by all things English of late. She has dedicated her next two programs to her recent sojourn to London, enjoying

tea, pubs, fish and chips, Indian food and a Thames-side bowl porridge. She visits St-John's famous chef Fergus Henderson, Neil's Yard cheese shop, takes a stroll through the Borough Market and more. Back in Montreal, di Stasio continues her English discoveries at Dominion Square Tavern and alongside chef Derek Dammann, who prepares a classic toad in a hole. Having seen all of di Stasio's international programs, I find the British shows to be her best. And has England ever looked more appealing? Not to be missed!

À la di Stasio's two-part *Séjour à Londres* episodes debuted last night at 9 p.m. on *Télé-Québec*, but repeats Saturdays and Mondays at 1 p.m. and Sundays at 5 p.m. Details: aladistasio.telequebec.tv.