

# Goustevin Scotland's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Dinner - June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017

by Ormond Smith

The essence of the Confrérie des Compagnons Goustevin de Normandie can be summed up as a combination of "Good Food, Good Wine and Good Company".....and that, quite simply, describes Goustevin Scotland's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Dinner, held in an atmospheric setting on June 3<sup>rd</sup> in the New Drumossie Hotel on the outskirts of Inverness.



The Conseil had decided, some time ago, to make the Anniversary Dinner a memorable evening and the Culloden Suite in the hotel was transformed, reflecting the gold and red colours of the Conseil Magistral's ceremonial robes. The effect was achieved thanks to the bespoke creative styling of Highland Occasions by Design from Glenlivet, Marie and her small team dressing the round tables with black tablecloths with a golden centre sash and the chairs were all given red covers, each chair then being decorated with a golden sash. Member and webmaster **Brian Forsyth** had created six A1 size photo displays covering the 40 year history of the Goustevin in Scotland (that gave rise to some serious reminiscing!!!!) and the display boards were enhanced with special lighting as was the Goustevin banner on the far wall of the suite overlooking the decorated tables, the dining area itself lit with a soft red glow which highlighted the ivy clad flickering candelabras on the tables. The visual effect was further enhanced by the red carpet leading into the function



suite flanked by two pairs of flame machines which set the tone while at the front door of the hotel, our member and piper John Robins was in well in tune as the members and guests arrived. The presentation was rounded off with the Connetable and four members of the Conseil, resplendent in their ceremonial robes, welcoming everyone to the Culloden Suite.....the scene was set!

The assembled party of almost 60 comprised members (and a small number of guests) from "a' the airts o' Scotland", from the Orkney Islands to the Central Belt and many parts in between. Disappointingly, there was no representation from the Grand Conseil in Normandy. However, there was a French presence as Nicol had invited past Grand Conseil members **Michel Goulon** (a former Grand Connetable and the French originator of our branch) and **Janine Bigot**, to attend as his personal guests and they were accompanied by **Robert and Chantal Lebrec, Alain Varet and Monique Vialard**, the group going on to enjoy a couple of days touring in the Highlands before returning home.



With a welcoming glass of **Ackermann Riesling Sekt Brut 2014** to hand (from Goustevin member Harold Junglen in Zeltingen-Rachtig on the Mosel), the assembly spent time scrutinising all the photographs which pictorially detailed Goustevin Scotland's activities since 1977. In addition, there were on display the framed and colourful Confrerie Charters for both the creation of the Consulat in '77 and the Embassy in 2001, along with a rather splendid framed testimonial parchment



gifted to Goustevin Scotland by our American confreres who had such an enjoyable visit in 2016. As rather tasty canapés were passed round, old friendships were renewed, new friendships created and there was an expectant buzz of excitement before the assembly was invited to be seated for what promised to be a most splendid repast, accompanied by excellent wines carefully chosen by the Conseil Tasting sub-committee three weeks previously.

Once everyone was seated, **Connétable Nicol** formally welcomed the members and guests and gave a short discourse on the aperitif wine which we had just enjoyed at the reception.

The opening dish was **Caorunn Gin & Tonic cured Wester Ross Salmon with Citrus King Prawn, pickled Kohlrabi, charred Cucumber puree and mustard frills**, the delicate flavours admirably enhanced by the **2014 Riesling Kabinett Halbtrocken "Sebastian A"** from the house of S.A. Prum in Germany's Mosel valley at Wehlen near to Bernkastel. **Mître de Cave James Sheerin** gave the discourse on this wine, highlighting its delicately fragranced nose of ripe apricots and citrus fruit with a pronounced mineral character imparted by the slate rich soil in which the grapes are grown on the steep banks of the picturesque Mosel vineyards.

James was soon back on his feet to deliver the discourse on the main course wine, a **1998 Chateau Poujeaux** from Moulis in the Central Medoc on the left bank of the Gironde in Bordeaux. This hard to come by vintage of this Cru Bourgeois Exceptionelle wine had been double decanted some six hours previously to permit all the characteristics to open and develop in time for serving. It's the classic Bordeaux blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and a wee touch of Petit Verdot. With a beautiful garnet colour, the wine revealed an open expressive nose with burnt and fruity aromas with toasty oak, voluptuous on the palate, medium to full bodied with silky tannins leading into a lingering satisfying finish. In a year when wines from the left bank were not overly exceptional, it was a pleasure to enjoy this '98 which certainly "punched above its weight" and exceeded expectations! The wine was a most able accompaniment for the main course, **Loin of Ardgay Venison with Pommes Anna, carrot & liquorice puree, bbq tenderloin broccoli on a game jus.....succulent, beautifully textured and a perfect "marriage" with the Poujeaux.**



In a break with "French" tradition where the cheese is served before the dessert, it was decided to do things "the British way" (stiff upper lip etc) and culminate the dinner with the cheese (you'll understand why in the next paragraph), therefore the colourful dessert was next served. This was an **Iced White Chocolate and Elderflower Parfait with Strawberry and Vanilla compote, fresh mint, heather honey and oat granola** and was well presented, the different colours harmonising on the plate to present an enticing prospect and to accompany this dish, a **Floralis Moscatel Oro** from the famed Torres winemaking family in Penedes, just west of Barcelona. Goustevin **Narrateur Ormond Smith** gave the discourse on this wine, a non-vintage Vin Doux Naturel, with tantalising aromas of orange blossom, Turkish Delight and honeyed fruit, whilst the palate savoured a full bodied wine,

with indulgent sweetness and concentrated yet light flavours, and as the winemaker opined, it finished with a delicate sensuality leading into a satisfying candied aftertaste.

The simple reason for serving the cheese as the final course was because of its wine accompaniment, not just a Tawny Port..... but a **Grahams 40 year old Aged Tawny**, expensive, not easy to find but an absolute pleasure to sip and enjoy!!



The individually served cheese plates were composed of **Clava Brie**, **Blairliath Truckle** and **Blue Monday** (a creamy gorgonzola style blue cheese) all served with fine biscuits, quince, grapes and chutney.

Narrateur Ormond gave the discourse on this exceptional port from Grahams, the 1820's founded British Port House, and after giving some background to the vineyard, the terroir and the grapes, he invited the assembly to accompany him on a tutored tasting of the port. Golden amber in the glass with a pale green tinge at the rim, with a powerful nose, both complex and with notes of dried fruits, then, having taken a sip, the palate was assailed with an array of flavours – from delicate fruits and raisins to toasted toffee and chocolate.....mouth filling and satisfying! Then the climax, the finish.....rich and intense, lingering and an absolute pleasure to experience!! This rare Aged Tawny at around £100 a bottle is most certainly not an everyday tippie (if you could even find it!), but a sensual experience to be savoured and enjoyed, a perfect climax to the Anniversary Dinner.

Coffee and tablet were served and the assembled confrères sat back and heard firstly from **Michel Goulon** who recalled his long friendship with Connetable Nicol and the founding and promotion of Goustevin Scotland from a Consulat to Embassy status and he thanked Nicol for the kind invitation to be present at this auspicious dinner.



Nicol then invited guest speaker **Malcolm Ogilvie** to take the floor, Malcolm a Goustevin member of many years standing and a

highly respected figure in the Scottish wine trade, being Sales Manager for the North of Scotland with Sir David Murray's (himself a member) Wine Importers (Edinburgh) Ltd. Renowned for his wine knowledge and his effortless, always interesting delivery, Malcolm spoke on how the wine trade has

developed over the years, changing customer trends, how Inverness has evolved in many different ways over past decades and his friendship with, and appreciation of, Nicol as the Connetable of Goustevin Scotland and he wished the Goustevin continued good fortune for the next forty years, finishing his talk on an appropriate note.....given that in life, a forty year old marriage is referred to a "Ruby", he presented Nicol with a rather nice bottle of Ruby Port.



And so the Anniversary Dinner drew to a close, an evening of delicious food, excellent ambience, outstanding wines, great company and memories that will last for some time. What a pleasurable night!!