

International Grand Chapitre & Gala Dinner

Inverness May 11th 2024

by Ormond Smith

Over the years, international participation in Grand Chapitres held in Inverness by Goustevin Scotland has always been enthusiastic and this year proved to be as popular as ever, with a strong attendance from France, Germany and the United States. Held in the magnificent Great Hall of the Inverness Town House, there was an expectant air as the skirl of the bagpipes heralded the entrance of the Scottish Conseil, followed by Connetables and Conseil Members from the three visiting nations.



Inverness City Provost Glynis Sinclair-Campbell welcomed some eighty assembled members and guests, expressing the desire that the visitors would enjoy their time in Inverness, before Connetable Nicol formally opened the Chapitre. With some eighteen robed Goustevin Conseil members on stage, to be added to by the fifteen inductees/ promotions, free space was limited but with aplomb, the Ceremony ran smoothly. Joining Goustevin Scotland were **Damoiselles Jean Couper, Marjorie Maule** and **Lesley Michels** with **Ecuyers John Couper** and **David Morton**, with additional inductions being conferred on **Janne** and **Thomas Schäffer** from Germany who had expressed the wish to be inducted in Inverness whilst becoming members of the Mosel Goustevin. Moving on to the promotions and **Dame** status was conferred on **Jacque Grantham** while husband **Michael** was promoted to the rank of **Chevalier** along with **Graham Vine**. Both **Caroline Duncan** and **Linda Hay** received promotion to **Noble Dame** while ascending to **Barons** were **Brian Forsyth** and **David McAllister**. The **Baron d'Honneur** was none other than **Richard Peterson OBE**, Scotland's leading whisky blender.

After Connetable Nicol formally closed the Chapitre and the procession of both aldermen and alderwomen had been piped out of the Great Hall, they returned to join members and guests for the civic reception hosted by the City Council prior to travelling up to the [Kingsmills Hotel](#) for the Gala Dinner.



Leaving the Town Hall

On entering the function suite, we were presented with a welcoming glass of **Champagne Blanc de Blancs, Cuvee Prestige** from **Joël Martin & Fils** from near **Troyes**. The nose was floral with citrus lemon and white peach notes and the palate was fresh, silky and creamy. Connetable Nicol gave a short welcoming speech, followed by Grand Connetable Joël Laurent before Baron d'Honneur Richard Paterson addressed the floor with a very amusing short talk on how to savour a glass of whisky! You



Connetable Nicol Manson with Grand Maître des Ambassades Patrick Laverny (Left) and Baron d'Honneur Richard Paterson (Right)

can view this on [YouTube – “How to drink whisky with Richard Peterson”](#) - highly recommended.

The Gala Dinner starter was a delicious **Brandade of Cod** with **Smoked Cod Mayonnaise, Poached Langoustines** on a **Sauce Vierge**, accompanied by a **2022 Muscadet de Sèvre et Maine Sur Lie “Garance”** from the house of **Pierre-Marie et Marie Luneau**, the 100% Melon de Bourgogne grapes giving a lean character to the wine, the fruit is saline, lemon with a zesty, prickly acidity – an ideal accompaniment to the fish dish.

The Main Course was a **Walnut Crusted Saddle of Wild Venison** with **Caramelised Celeriac Purée, Magret Cabbage** and **Soused Currants**, tender, “melt in the mouth”

and delicious! Paired with this was a **2008 Mazis-Chambertin Grand Cru**, acquired from the cellars of past Baron d'Honneur Sir David Murray, the former owner of Jessauime & Fils in Burgundy. After much deliberation by the tasting panel, the wine was decanted around 3pm in the afternoon and by the time it was presented superb!! This 100% Pinot Noir displayed well integrated tannins with fruit and forest notes coming through after the initial notes of cherry and violets on the nose. A truly satisfying wine which paired excellently with the venison.

The Cheese selection was a trio of **Mature Mull Cheddar, Strathdon Blue** and **Morangie Brie**, served with **quince jelly grapes, onion chutney** and **Highland Oatcakes** and to accompany these delicious cheeses was a **2021 Cinsaut** from the **Bosman Twyfells vineyards** in **Wellington, Western Cape, South Africa**. Matching a wine to a selection of cheeses is never easy and the tasting panel took three different attempts to match the cheeses perfectly. 100% Cinsaut, the wine was a real mouthful with good body and excellent acidity which complimented the different cheeses perfectly.

The Dessert was a **White Chocolate Panna Cotta** served with **Rhubarb Granita** and a **Stem Ginger Cookie** and this was paired with a delicious **2011 Gewürztraminer Vendanges Tardive** from Alsace, an early maturing, good quality wine which benefitted from a mid-afternoon decanting. Golden yellow in the glass with a fragrant fruity aroma yet soft and delicate on the palate, this wine “married” with the dessert perfectly. Served with the coffee was an exceptional whisky, generously donated by our Baron d'Honneur Richard Paterson, a very rare **45 year old Dalmore Single Highland Malt with a Vintage Chateauneuf-du-Pape Mont Redon finish**. With Richard suitably advising all present on how to fully appreciate this whisky, it was quite simply superb in the writer’s opinion and a unique experience for all present – a simple “thank you” on this occasion seems quite inadequate! The evening continued with music and dancing to Ronnie Shaw until, sadly the carriages were summoned to carry us home. A splendid evening and a grateful thanks to all concerned in its organisation.

International Goustevin Confreres Tour

May 9th & 10th 2024

by Ormond Smith

The Chapitres of Goustevin Scotland have always attracted an appreciative attendance from both European and American confreres and 2024 was no different with some 26 overseas attendees making the trip to Inverness for the Scottish Chapitre and accompanying Tour. Arriving by various means on the Wednesday, the Tour commenced on the Thursday morning with an 8.30am start taking us initially to the [Speyside Cooperage](#) in Craigellachie where we learned about this centuries-old technique of both manufacturing and repairing barrels and casks. Although modern technology now assists, most of the work is still done as it was through the ages – by hand.

We then travelled the short distance to [Glenfarclas Distillery](#). The most informative guides took us through the distillery, competently explaining the processes before a visit to one of the bonded warehouses housing hundreds of casks of maturing whisky, the oldest being filled as long ago as 1953. It was then on into the unique Tasting Room for a dram of a 21 year old, followed by a special edition 16 year old – both were superb! We then enjoyed a most satisfying buffet lunch, being joined by Glenfarclas Chairman John Grant and his charming wife Ishbel, much appreciated by all. With lunch running “slightly” over time, the decision was taken to shelve the projected visit to Culloden Battlefield and head back to town for the Welcome Dinner in the Kingsmills Hotel that evening. A very tasty meal with nice wines and a display of Scottish Country dancing by four young dancers from the Elizabeth Fraser School of Highland Dancing with piper Ian Hamilton was well received.

Another 8.30 start to the Friday would take us north and west through Achnasheen to a short break at [Eilean Donan Castle](#) and then onward to the Isle of Skye. Fortunately the slightly hazy weather began to clear giving spectacular views of the Cuillin Mountains as we headed for Portree. Continuing north past the famous Old Man of Storr rock pinnacle, we stopped for a photo opportunity at the Kilt Rock/Mealt Waterfall and it was then on around the north of Skye to our lunch halt at the [Uig Hotel](#) sumptuous sea trout! We headed next for [Dunvegan Castle](#), home of the Macleod of Macleod, the somewhat austere exterior giving way to a beautiful interior – a most interesting visit. From Dunvegan it was homeward bound but stopping for dinner chez confreres Dick and Jon Beach at their famed [Fiddler’s Restaurant](#) in Drumnadrochit who laid on a traditional Scottish meal of haggis, neeps and tatties, accompanied by a couple of drams, of course. And to cap the evening, Dick did a very entertaining “Address to the Haggis” which caught the imagination. With time constraints re the coach driver’s hours, we returned to the hotel in Inverness - an interesting two day tour showcasing our culture and scenery at its best.

