

# LEADER-POST

## Taste Regina: Authentic methods work best for Chateau le Puy

BY CJ KATZ, THE LEADER-POST SEPTEMBER 16, 2015



Pascal Amoreau, 14th generation winemaker raises a glass with Harold Langlais, associate winemaker from Chateau le Puy winery. The pair were in Regina showing off their exclusive wines.

**Photograph by:** CJ Katz

It's a romantic tableau - a tall ship heavy with supplies, a crew, and precious cargo sailing the Atlantic.

Each fall, Chateau le Puy winery hoists a handful of oak barriques filled with finely crafted Bordeaux onto their brigantine, Tres Hombres. It sets sail from the shores of Brittany to endure wind and rain, high waves and calm waters. Over 10 months, the vessel will steer as far away as the Dominican Republic before returning.

It's a long and pricey voyage but for the winery, with roots dating back to 1610, there couldn't be a more authentic way to continue their winemaking tradition - by aging their Bordeaux on the swell of the ocean's ebb and flow.

Retour des Iles and other wines by Chateau le Puy, a French organic

and biodynamic winery, have a certain cachet with the world's top chefs. According to Harold Langlais, associate winemaker, about 30 per cent of Michelin-starred chefs including Guy Savoy, Yves Camdeborde and Eric Ripert, use their wines.

"The wines respect the tastes of the most refined dishes composing with them a great harmony, they never dominate the food," said Langlais. "This is one reason why chefs do us the honour of choosing our wines."

Chef Tim Davies of Regina has had several opportunities to prepare dishes with their wines, once two years ago and again this past week.

MeraWine, a local wine promotion agency specializing in organic and biodynamic wines, invited Pascal Amoreau, a 14th generation winemaker, to show his wines at an exclusive luncheon at the Willow on Wascana.

"Even though the name might not be that recognized here in Saskatchewan, Chateau le Puy is highly respected and events with Pascal or his parents, Jean- Pierre and Francoise, are in high demand," said Shawn Dalton, coowner of MeraWine.

Guests experienced a vertical tasting of the 2012, 2011, 2000, and 1990 Emilien - a blend of 85 per cent Merlot, seven per cent Cabernet Sauvignon, six per cent Cabernet Franc, and one per cent each Malbec and Carmenere. There was also a treat - a glass of 2012 Retour des Iles - the very wine that had travelled the seas.

Chef Davies prepared a lovely four-course lunch based on tasting notes from the winery.

"My aim was to try to enhance the undertones of the flavours in the wine," he said.

The meal kicked off with a duo of yellow heirloom tomatoes, their tartness offset with a creamy sheep's milk yogurt. The 2012 (\$40), a rather tannic wine, dark cherry in colour and earthy with pronounced clay and limestone as well as red and black currant fruits became brighter and a little tart when paired with the tomatoes and then smoothed out somewhat with the sheep's milk yogurt. That's the wonder of pairing wine with food - to taste and experience the changes as the wine mixes and melds with different flavour elements.

The next dish was served with the 2011 and 2000 vintages. Based on

notes of cocoa, Davies turned to creating a meaty dish.

"I leaned toward eggplant caponata and rubbed the meat with a mole that included spices such as celery, cinnamon and sesame seeds." Indeed, it was spicy, strongly flavoured and hearty with sheets of black pepper fazzoletti wrapped between tender pork cheeks and braised eggplant. The flavours tamed the 2011's tannins but brought out the strong earthy notes in the 2000.

The 1990 (\$475) was stellar and the shining star of the four wines. I would love a glass to quietly enjoy wrapped in my favourite throw and buried in a steamy romance novel. It is beautiful, elegant and graceful and calls for delicate fare, if any food at all.

With no bottle to sample, Davies cooked blind, basing his dish around flavours of roasted almonds.

"I went with a classic peanut soup from Spain and North Africa but instead I made almond butter and threw in some charred almonds."

He topped the spicy soup with a charred tomatillo pickle and chili as well as three fat shrimp. Sadly, for nearly all the guests, the fiery flavours overwhelmed the feminine wine. The 2011 however, with its stronger tannins and more masculine style, was a superior match.

The meal ended with the 2012 Retour des Iles (\$375). It was remarkable how the movement of the wine over so many months could completely tame the tannins. Juxtaposed with the Emilien of the same year, it was like comparing silk to burlap, the difference was that stark.

Davies turned to late summer black plums for the final pairing, macerating them in vanilla and then baking with a crumble of steel cut oat and butter. Each was served with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. It was an interesting match, perhaps a tad too sweet however. Chocolate might have been a better partner.

The afternoon was most interesting and enlightening, bringing together the expression of the chef on the plate with the expression of the terroir in the glass. These wines are available by special order only in Saskatchewan. Contact [www.merawine.com](http://www.merawine.com).