

The Rose Bakery, Paris 9^eme and The Goring, London

23 Nov 2004 by JR

Brunch is, not surprisingly, a meal that Parisians are only now beginning to appreciate - after all in a culture that has existed around three good meals a day an amalgamation of breakfast and lunch has been unnecessary.

But times are changing and anyone who likes to sleep in late at the weekend and still enjoy eggs, bacon, tomato and toast, boiled eggs with Marmite toast, crunchy granola or porridge with honey, should head for the charmingly named Rose Bakery no more than 15 minutes walk from the Gare du Nord.

Rose Bakery is the creation of Jean-Charles and Rose Carrarini who set up the initial Villandry in London but have now re-emerged with a bakery, café and shop (which sells Ruscombe Farm apple juice, Green&Black chocolate and several other top-quality British foodstuffs for any homesick ex-pat) in a rather atmospheric building. Two hundred years ago this was a garage for the carts of Paris' fruit and vegetable sellers.

Simplicity and quality are the leitmotifs of the food. On our last-early morning visit the day's loaves of bread and a squidgy cheesecake had just emerged from the ovens (a hopeful line on the menu in French asks the customers not to smoke as they are eating in a bakery) as we sat down to a bowl of poached quinces and bread served on a breadboard with a knife for you to cut it yourself, two slabs of butter and pots of orange and strawberry jam. Their coffee is refreshingly strong. Pancakes, organic Irish smoked salmon with scrambled eggs, English cheeses and crumble aux pommes, crème anglais are other temptations.

So too are the many top-class food shops nearby, all of which are open during most of the day on Sunday. Before heading back on Eurostar leave time for brunch at the Rose Bakery and room in your suitcase for food shopping.

Rose Bakery, 46 rue des Martyrs, 75009 Paris (tel 01 42 82 12 80)
Tuesday-Saturday 0900-1900, Sunday 1000-1700, closed Monday

The Goring, the Queen's local

Financial Times, 22 November 2003

William Cowpe, managing director of the family-owned Goring Hotel equidistant between Buckingham Palace and Victoria Station, unexpectedly confessed, 'I wish my customers would complain more often.'

This unlikely request did not refer to the impeccable, rather old-fashioned manner in which the hotel or its diningroom are run but rather to the hotel's most exciting and fairly priced wine list. The Goring, under Cowpe's guidance, has continued a practice now abandoned by so many London hotels run by accountants rather than hoteliers of investing heavily in the world's fine wines when young, maturing them in its cellars and putting them on the list when they are ready to drink.

The problem Cowpe and so many wine enthusiasts face is faulty corks which lead to wines smelling everything from faintly subdued to distinctly off. Cowpe and David Morgan-Hewitt, the hotel's general manager, believe that this now affects 10 per cent of the wines they serve but unless they hear more vociferously from their customers they will never really know. And screwcaps, a possible solution, have not been around long enough for any research to determine yet how they will affect the maturity of The Goring's sort of wine.

These not only include classic French wines at keen prices (three Pomerols from 1971 to 1990 at £100 each) but also a selection of some of the best from California, Australia and New Zealand and, of course, half-bottles and various ports.

And for any wine enthusiast who likes to drink the best alongside the best ingredients simply prepared, now is the time to visit The Goring while a bountiful autumn is still with us.

The menu is extremely clear and straightforward. Hors d'oeuvres are French onion soup, potted Arbroath smokies, lobster omelette and deep fried whitebait with tartare sauce. And while there are good choices for fish lovers and vegetarians, the kitchen seems to revel in cooking meat, particularly game, serving it as simply as it should be. When I

was shown my greyleg English partridge before it was served I asked the waiter not to carve it for me. 'Of course, not sir,' I was informed quite firmly, 'that's not how we do it here.'

The Goring, Beeston Place, London SW1W 0JW (tel 020 7396 9000, web www.goringhotel.co.uk)
Dinner £29 two courses, £38, three courses