

**A great menu for greatest Rhone wines at
the Early Winter Feast at
The Wynnstay, Machynlleth. Sunday 31 October 2010.**

By Colin Pressdee

I have related the story before of how a French soldier returning from the Crusades became a recluse and lived in a tiny chapel on a hill in the Rhone valley. He had brought from Syria some vines that he planted around his home. The vineyards of the surrounding area all originated from his first plantings, and long after his days the grapes were named Syrah a corruption of Syria from where they had travelled.

He was known as the hermit, and the area became Hermitage, the finest vineyard of which surrounds his tiny chapel home, La Petite Chapelle. It is still renowned to this day for its supreme quality from the unique location. It is the most famous wine of the renowned Rhone valley wine producer and merchant Paul Jaboulet Aine.

To any wine enthusiast this name stirs excitement that starts with his top wine La Chapelle and continues through the range of Rhone wines. Domaine Thalabert in Crozes-Hermitage is regarded as the best and truly serious age worthy wine of this lesser regarded appellation. Their range of red and white Rhone wines is something to which great gastronomes pay great homage.

One such person is the charismatic chef/patron of the Wynnstay Hotel in Machynlleth, Gareth Johns. He is such an enthusiast he has devised an entire menu around these great wines, and the UK agent Bruce Kendrick of Liberty Wines has joined vinous forces to provide the wines.

A balanced seven course menu of Gareth's take on modern Welsh cuisine encompasses old country favourites and to the day contemporary dishes. Diners will sample rillettes, scallops, lamb pie, venison, Welsh cheese, panna cotta and whinberries. The nine different wines include Condrieu, the finest white of the Rhone, Domaine Thalabert, St Joseph La Grande Pompee, and, yes, Hermitage La Petite Chapelle.

It is a rare evening not to be missed on Sunday 31 October, a perfect way to start the winter after the clocks go back.

For full menu details and special rates on accommodation visit:

www.wynnstay-hotel.com or call the hotel on 01654 702941

Wine details on: www.libertywines.co.uk

Colin Pressdee

WYNNSTAY HOTEL

PAUL JABOULET AINE DINNER

With Liberty Wines Ltd

Sunday 31 October 2010

Chef Gareth Johns and his team present

**Rillettes of Welsh duck and local rabbit, toasted cobnuts
Cotes du Rhone Blanc 'Secret de Famille' 2008**

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**Cumin-seared Cardigan Bay scallops, white pudding and chorizo
Crozes-Hermitage Blanc 'Domaine Mule Blanche' 2008
Condrieu 'Les Cassines' 2007**

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**Templeton Market Katt Pye
(Old traditional spiced Welsh lamb pastry)
Crozes- Hermitage Rouge 'Les Jalets' 2007
Crozes Hermitages Domaine de Thalabert 2007**

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**Loin of Marches venison, red wine and smoked chocolate gravy,
Dauphinois potatoes, kale
Hermitage, 'La Petite Chapelle'**

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**Gold Medal Pembrokeshire Extra Mature Cheddar, oatcakes and fruit bread
St Joseph, 'La Grande Pompee'
Gigondas Pierre Aiguille 2007**

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Llaeth-y-Llan Yoghourt panna cotta, home conserved whinberries, bara bwff

Muscat de Beaumes de Venise 'Le Chant des Griolles'

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Coffee and nibbles.

£59.50

Gareth Johns and Bruce Kendrick