

**THE VALUE OF GOOD SERVICE IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE TO NEWTON CROSS, WHO HEADS UPS THE RENOWNED SOUTH AFRICAN BUTLER ACADEMY. HE SHARES HIS PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF AN UNFORGETTABLE DINNER AT TWO-MICHELIN-STARRED LA GRANDE MAISON IN BORDEAUX.**

Bordeaux is located close to the European Atlantic coast, in the southwest of France and in the north of the Aquitaine region. It is around 500 km southwest of Paris. The city is built on a bend of the river Garonne, and is divided into two parts: the right bank to the east and left bank in the west. The Garonne River is accessible to ocean liners often belonging to nobility.

The restaurant has a feeling of opulence and exclusivity – crystal decanters, an ornate fireplace, large antique bookcases with beautiful leather-bound books. Refinement and elegance were the key words for Frédérique Fournier, the decorator of the rooms. The dining room is

decorated in a Napoleon III style. Emphasis is placed on French crafts, with embroidered Braquenière silk taffeta fabrics from Pierre Frey, Houlès trimmings, Moissonnier furniture and products by Guerlain in the bathrooms. "I was looking for very floral decoration, quite bold for Bordeaux, creating a new, very French approach, where the clear presence of luxury is offset by charm and elegance," explains Frédérique Fournier, who chose all the decorative elements from the work of French artisans, in line with the hotel's respect for tradition.

The tables are well spaced in the dining rooms, not too cramped on top of the each other. The tables are beautifully and correctly set. A perfect table setting always needs to have 3 main layers; the silence pad, the underlay and the overlay which builds a rich, decadent feeling. The dining chairs were beautifully upholstered and very comfortable, all in all, blending the elements perfectly into a spacious, formal yet cosy and welcoming entertaining atmosphere.

# La Grande Maison — Bordeaux

Five-star service

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HAUTE PERFORMANCE



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The service was efficient and professional with great care in the placement of serving dishes on the tables, as to not utilise the full table space, only half, to allow patrons to literally watch the dining experience unfold in a perfectly-told story.

The famous chef, Pierre Gagnaire's mission statement states his wish to run a restaurant which is 'facing tomorrow but respectful of yesterday' ('tourné vers demain mais soucieux d'hier'). With an infamous chef such as Pierre Gagnaire, the menu was not a disappointment. Keeping in theme, the French staff were absolutely perfectly versed in English explanations of each and every dish they were questioned about and delivered a detailed and clear description, down to the finest nuance. The menu itself was simplistic, delivering two options, a more entry-level selection and then a more expansive pairing menu –

encompassing the whole food journey. The presentation of the amuse bouche is impressive, comprising a selection of tastes – Champagne jellies flavoured with cucumber, foie gras brulee and escargot. The calamari and truffles – sensational.

The owner Bernard Magrez has ensured a wonderfully unique wine list, offering all the Grand Crus Classes of Bordeaux. The wine was well paired to our meals, poured in the perfect amount to each glass, placed in the exact position on the table during dining.

La Grande Maison welcomes you with exactly what you would expect in terms of a perfect French neighbourhood, set in a beautiful historic building in a well-established and perfectly maintained and manicured garden, which to my mind, rounds off the experience as an elegant welcome and a graceful au revoir.

HAUTE PERFORMANCE

