

## Imperial Treasure Fine Chinese Cuisine • LONDON

9-10 Waterloo Place, St James London • ☎ 44 20 7389 0784



The Imperial Treasure Group has launched – on 18 December 2018 – their most ambitious restaurant. It is their first foray outside Asia. London is the group's destination of choice. Not only did it venture into the English capital, Imperial Treasure has made the scope of their ambition abundantly clear by situating their restaurant in the most prestigious, exclusive enclave of Britain. St James's is the aristocratic heartbeat of London. The palace of the same name was built by Henry VIII and, although displaced by Buckingham Palace in the late 18th century as the home of the British monarchy, such is its traditional importance that ambassadors and high commissioners to the United Kingdom continue to be accredited to the Court of St James's. Here too are the most prestigious gentlemen's clubs, the auction houses, and Britain's oldest wine merchant still in business, namely Berry Bros & Rudd – founded in 1698 – on 3 St James's Street.





Imperial Treasure London is at 9 Waterloo Place, near the Royal Theatre Haymarket (better known simply as the Haymarket Theatre, Royal Automobile Club), 67 Pall Mall and, as mentioned, Berry Bros & Rudd. The restaurant is in a heritage building where the original interior and exterior of the building cannot be altered. Apparently, the Queen is the landlord. The cuisine is Cantonese but also with a nod to the British favourite, namely Peking Duck. Maipo Doufu is also available. Before and after dinner drinks being so important to the British consideration, the bar at Imperial Treasure London has a place of prominence.

The restaurant has two levels. By the time you read this, the mezzanine should be ready. Here are three private rooms with a capacity of 8, 10 and 14 respectively. If needs be, they can be opened up to accommodate a total of 32 guests.

### Declaration of Interest

I was engaged by Imperial Treasure London to organise a series of pre-opening dinners between 27 November and 5 December 2018 for the British media and invited chateau friends from Bordeaux and Champagnes Deutz, Laurent-Perrier, and Louis Roederer to the dinners. I also invited The Macallan Rare Cask as the digestif.



Braised Whole Hokkaido Sea Cucumber Stuffed with Iberico Pork



Crispy Iberico Pork Belly



Boiled French Chicken with Spring Onion



Mas de Daumas Gassac is often referred to as the “First Growth of the Languedoc” and produced from mainly red Bordeaux varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Malbec. The Cabernet Sauvignon is uncloned and forms the backbone. Blackberries, blackcurrants and rich lively tannins from skin and oak. Youthful and vibrant. Could be mistaken – in a blind tasting – for a Bordeaux.





Pan Fried Turbot



Braised Spinach Tofu with Mushrooms



Stir-Fried Lobster with Black Bean Sauce



Golden Fresh Oyster with Salted Egg Yolk



Smoked Eel

This is perhaps the most complex white wine in the world. After all, it is produced by blending 20 varieties: 29% Petit Manseng, 28% Viognier, 15% Chardonnay, 13% Chenin Blanc (the original vines coming from Domaine Huet in Vouvray), and the balance 15% made of Courbu, Muscat Ottonel, Muscat Petit Grain, Muscat d'Alexandrie, Gros Manseng, Semillon, Neherleschol, Petite Arvine, Amigne, Sercial, Khondorni, Tchilar, Albarino, Falanghina, Fiano, and Grechetto Todi. On the nose, sunshine, stones, pebbles, minerals, apricot, honey and herbs. The texture is smooth and caressing. Serve this in a big, round glass or Cognac ballon. And not too cold. Sit back, enjoy, and marvel.





## MAS DE DAUMAS GASSAC



Veronique Guibert de la Vaissiere (right) is an ethnologist and specialist in the myths and traditions of Celtic Ireland. Aime Guibert, originally from Aveyron, came from an old Millavoise family of glove and leather craftsmen.

It is believed that the vineyards of the Gassac valley go back to at least the 8th century. Saint Benoit d'Aniane, advisor to Charlemagne, is thought to have planted a vineyard here in the 780s. And offered the wine to the – first – king of France. If that be true, the Languedoc has had royal patronage as early as Burgundy.

Fast forward to the 20th century. In 1970, Veronique and Aime Guibert (1924 - 15 May 2016) visit the hinterland of the Herault in search of a family home. Little did they realise the seduction that was to befall them. At the bend of a path lined with pines, they fell under the spell of an old farmhouse and an abandoned mill. The light was magical. The land and the house on it belonged to the Daumas family. The Gassac river waters it with life. Veronique and Aime entrusted their destiny to this newfound adventure. Everything on that day had a shimmering quality that was to change their lives and those of their children.



Strangers to the vine, the couple did not know what to plant on the land. Was it to be corn, olive or grapes? Aime Guibert called on a friend from Aveyron, a geology professor at the University of Bordeaux whose speciality was the relationship between the soil and grapes. Henri Enjalbert (1910 - 19 June 1983) was considered the eminent specialist in wine geology. His expert opinions frequently overlapped into the fields of oenology and terroir. Sometimes also called “Bordeaux’s Most Diligent Geologist”, Enjalbert has also been described as “the Discoverer of Mas de Daumas Gassac”. His books include *The History of Wine and the Vine* and *The Origin of Quality*.



Such was their friendship and regard for each other that the following year, 1971, Enjalbert came south to visit Mas de Daumas Gassac. The geology specialist spent several hours walking the valley to survey the landscape. He came back full of enthusiasm. Professor Enjalbert informed that the soil consisted of glacial gréses, comparable to the best terroirs of the famous Golden Slope or Cote d’Or of Burgundy. Bordeaux’s most respected





The winemaking and management of Mas de Daumas Gassac has passed on to the second generation of Guiberts. On the go are brothers, from left, Roman, Samuel, Gael, and Basile (who is now based in Singapore together with his wife Marie-Alix Guibert de Grully).

geologist pronounced that “a great wine can be created here but it will take perhaps 200 years for it to be recognized and accepted as such!”.

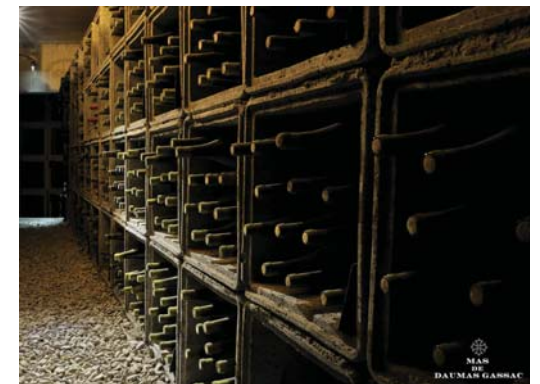
The new owners of Mas de Daumas Gassac were hanging on to every syllable and word spoken by Professor Henri Enjalbert. And when the expression “Grand Cru” was used to describe the potential of the future vineyard, Veronique and Aime Guibert rose to the occasion. They stood up, so fired up were husband and wife by the verdict of the “Discover of Mas de Daumas Gassac”.



Enjalbert came to the conclusion that Daumas Gassac possesses a unique terroir to produce an exceptional red wine because of the underground sources of cold water and the influence of the surrounding Arboussas and Larzac massifs which bless the valley with its unique micro-climate. Here is a privileged terroir cocooned from the excesses

of the Languedoc, particularly the heat and high temperatures.

Time waits for no woman nor man. The next year, 1972, Veronique and Aime Guibert planted their first Cabernet Sauvignon. Being wise and far-sighted, they knew that uniformity is the enemy of quality. So, instead of getting plant material from a single source – which would have been so convenient – they bought different vines from a many top Bordeaux estates. The selection was based on quality and diversity, not on high yield and resistance to disease. Between 1972 and 1978, the Guiberts also started the building of a winery and a vat room on the site of an ancient Gallo-Roman mill. Having visited Mas de Daumas Gassac I can vouchsafe that it was very cool – and constant – in there even during summer because underneath are cold water springs from the Gassac River.



In 1978, on September 13th, Emile Peynaud (29 June 1912 - 18 July 2004), perhaps the greatest oenologist of his time and the world’s first consultant winemaker, visited Mas de Daumas Gassac. Just as Henri Enjalbert taught at the University of Bordeaux, so did Peynaud who was even more famous because he was consultant to the likes of Chateau Margaux, Lafite, Latour, Leoville Las Cases, and more. Following his visit, Emile Peynaud went back to Bordeaux to resume his teaching at the university and his consultancy work for the chateaux of Bordeaux. But, he had agreed to consult for Mas de Daumas Gassac. For free. Via the telephone (the mobile phone was not yet invited then).

When journalists asked why he was willing to consult for an unknown, obscure area – Aniane – in the Languedoc, Emile Peynaud replied, “I advise the greatest French wines but there, for the first time, I was lucky to witness the birth of a Grand Cru”.

And so it has remained. Mas de Daumas Gassac, the Grand Cru of the Languedoc.