

Baillage de Bergen visits Grand Chapitre de Hongerie in Budapest 2017

Bergen is a city of trade. For many years the Merchants of Bergen has travelled far and near to sell our fish and buy products of interests from our customers. The result is that most Norwegians and especially those from Bergen, love to travel.

Baillage de Bergen is no different. We have a tradition to invite our members on an annual trip to an interesting event, in order to taste the local food and enjoy the local wine, beer and spirit. This year the Hungarian Grand Chapitre was due to be organized in Budapest from 28th of September to 1st of October and seemed very interesting. We decided to participate and made travel arrangements with our local travel agent. My colleague, Erling Faksvåg, is a good organizer, so on Thursday 28th of September, our group of 9, one from Trondheim, the rest from Bergen, could set the course for Budapest.

We arrived safely and checked in at our small, but friendly Hotel Unio Superior, located only a few hundred meters from the official Corinthia Hotel Budapest. After a few hours rest we were ready for the Welcome Dinner Cruise on Danube, visiting both Buda and Pest, offering grandiose views of Budapest at night, including the spectacular Hungarian Parliament, the third largest in the world. The Hungarian dinner on board was generous and very special, including Cold appetizer variation served in pyramid "Armada" style, with smoked trout, Parma ham and rosemary foie gras. Duck Breast was served as main course, then Cheese and as dessert, chocolate soufflé with Cointreau essence. The wines were appropriate, served in generous amounts and suited the food very nicely.

On Friday 29th of September we decided to stray from the official Grand Chapitre and pay the famous Onyx Restaurant a visit. It was not a bad decision. Onyx has wonderful rooms that gives a luxury impression and the Chef's menu gave us a fantastic display of Hungarian cuisine at its best, with a generous amount of wonderful dishes accompanied with a very good wine pairing. The service was impeccable and made the meal perfect. This restaurant must be very close to its second star in the Guide Michelin!

On Saturday 30th of September we wanted to see Budapest and had decided to do "Taste of Budapest" – sightseeing tour. This included a visit to the 100 year old market hall where we could buy fresh foie gras and Beluga caviar, a visit to the enormously large St. Stephens Cathedral, before we had a nice light lunch at Budapest Bisztro. The meal was traditional and tasted very well. An interesting twist was that the dessert wine, Tokay Aszú 5 puttonyos was served for the ladies and Günczi Palinka for the men. Lucky for me, I managed one glass of each!

Saturday evening was the main event. First we attended the Induction ceremony in the wonderful Corinthia Hotel Budapest. Our new member, Tove Hundseth, was honoured to be inducted and I had the honour of putting the ribbon around her neck. It was a ceremonious moment. After the Induction, we had the pleasure of seeing the award ceremony of the Jeunes Sommeliers competition. The competitors had all shown great skills, but the winner, Piotr Pietras, from Launceston Place, London, United Kingdom, was slightly better than the rest. The Norwegian competitor, Henrik Dahl Jahnsen, from

Bølgen & Moi, Ny-Hellesund in Søgne, was honoured and pleased with his performance and enjoyed the event very much.

After these two ceremonies, we were served a glass of champagne to start the fabulous Gala Diner at Corinthia Hotel Budapest. The room was very nicely decorated and all of the dishes were based on different film themes. First we had a beautiful foie gras duo with goat cheese, from "Snow White and the seven dwarfs". The wine was, of course, a nice Tokaj Furint Late Harvest. Then we were served cod-fillet from "A river runs through it", accompanied by Kreinbacher Oreg, Somlo. Next came Champagne and gold sorbet based on Kir Royal from Katherine Hepburn in the movie "The Philadelphia story". The main course was Venison loin with sauce Grand Veneur inspired by "Julia & Julia", accompanied by Takler Cabernet Franc 2015. The meal concluded with a traditional "Somló galuska" nuovo from "Charlie and the Chocolate factory and a Bock Merlot 2014 from Villány.

After this wonderful event coffee, sweets and a very generous amount of Scotch Malt Whisky, Cognac and various Hungarian Palinkas was served in a separate room where we could buy photos taken on arrival. A very nice gesture and a Grand event.

That concluded our visit to the Hungarian Grand Chapitre. The following day we headed home, all of us with a little, happy smile, longing to come back to wonderful Budapest.

Best regards and
Vive la Chaîne

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