

# LOCALITY REINTERPRETED

## Arnaud Faye and originality at La Chèvre d'Or

By AILA STÖCKMANN



A new chef who is daring to do something different: reconsider ingredients traditionally viewed as 'peasant' food.

**G**ourmands of the region know only too well the secrets of La Chèvre d'Or — the golden goat — a two Michelin star restaurant in Èze, between Nice and Monaco. Perched high on a hill in the medieval old town, guests sit high above the sea and experience an almost deity-like state as one delicacy is served after the next. For a year now, chef Arnaud Faye has been writing the menu of the restaurant at this five-star Relais & Châteaux hotel and he has successfully mastered his number one goal: to keep the second Michelin star of the restaurant.

Lunch menu  
from 85€  
Evening menu:  
240€  
(main courses from  
68€)



As a chef accustomed to colder climes, Faye had to explore the 'cuisine du soleil' of the south so he departed to explore the area between the Mercantour mountain range and the Mediterranean Sea, from the Collines de Bellet vineyards in Nice to Piedmont in Italy. He met with local producers, chose the best produce he could find and began composing new — and different — dishes inspired by his surroundings.

"The Mediterranean-style of cuisine was, at its roots, nothing but a poor person's kitchen," says the 40-year-old. He did not hesitate to reinterpret typical local dishes: "Everyone likes Pissaladière or Socca!"

At the moment, his amuse bouches that precede each menu are typically Niçois such as the Pan Bagnat or Soupe au Pistou, but presented in a surprisingly innovative way. The Pois Chiche dish (pictured) is ennobled with giant prawns, octopus and anise. Fleurs de courgettes are also on the menu as are typical fish from the region combined with lemon from Menton or sometimes with liquorice.

Guests appreciate the rabbit dish with smoked squid the most and General Manager of the hotel Thierry Naidu reveals how his skepticism has been transformed: "And to think at first that we were unsure whether to put it on the menu at all!"

For dessert, there is no way past the signature dessert of equally gifted chef pâtissier Julien Dugourd: the Vision d'un Citron de Pays with basil and mascarpone. Dugourd and Faye have known each other for a long time and are the perfect team. Their good humour translating into their sunny creations.

Faye has not long fallen to the allure of 'cuisine du soleil', but here, between mountains and sky, his menus unfold more taste and flavour than could be achieved anywhere else. ▀

