

Culinary Haven

The renowned chef Joël Robuchon remains faithful to the principles that have made him a legend in French fine-dining, writes Maritess Garcia-Reyes

THE CHEF JOËL ROBUCHON DOESN'T HOLD the title “Chef” of the Century” for nothing. His restaurants, spanning from Paris and 10 other major cities around the world, possess a total of 25 Michelin Guide stars amongst them—the most of any chef in the world. Drawing inspiration from the simplicity of cuisine, he is recognised for leading a more delicate style respectful of natural food ingredients—a combination of classic French cooking and *nouvelle cuisine*.

In Bordeaux, the world's wine capital, Joël Robuchon's culinary masterpieces have found a home in the newly-opened La Grande Maison Bernard Magrez. By establishing his eponymous restaurant and a lounge bar in this luxury hotel, and with the help of his long-time collaborators like the Japanese chef Tomonori Danzaki who brings the master's cuisine to life, and the restaurant manager, Jean-Paul Unzueta, Robuchon has raised the bar of the fine-dining scene in Bordeaux yet another notch.

The restaurant is tucked within La Grand Maison's beautiful white stone building built in

the classical architectural style of the late 19th Century. There is a great wrought iron gate that opens onto a luxurious garden, where *Pliny the Elder*, a 2000-year-old olive tree, stands like a guardian of wisdom. The first glimpse of art can be seen in a round sculpture that sits on the driveway, *The Earth's Skull* by the Chinese artist Shen Yuan. Once inside, you step into magnificent interiors finely decorated in a renovated Napoleon III-style.

In this elegant home, the chef has created a tasting menu that allows you to select four courses made up of three contemporary dishes, followed by a traditional French dish and personalised dessert plates. He has also revived the carving of poultry, beef or fish by the *maitre d'hotel*. “It is such a pleasure to see the actual carving in the dining room and this purely French serving tradition is an integral part of our culinary art,” says Robuchon.

The menu, which varies with the seasons, highlights Robuchon's signature dishes such as the



HAUTE CUISINE
THIS PAGE: Guinea fowl and roasted foie gras with potato confit



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FRENCH TWIST
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

The stylishly refined dining room at Joël Robuchon restaurant; caviar jelly in cauliflower cream; delightful breads baked in-house; the Japanese chef Tomonori Danzaki helps in the kitchen of Joël Robuchon restaurant at La Grande Maison Bernard Magrez

To perfectly complement the cuisine, a master sommelier offers an unrivalled collection of 259 Grands Crus Classés de Bordeaux and exceptional wines, including Pomerol. The menu, wine list, and service form an inseparable trio, giving patrons an unforgettable gastronomic experience. After all, dining at one of Robuchon's restaurants is always a must on every foodie's bucket list. **T**

INSET: The French chef Joël Robuchon

