

LOUCALEN

PROVENCE

PRESS RELEASE - Monday, March 29, 2021

Chef Benoit WITZ joins the Lou Calen project as Group Executive Chef



In the heart of Provence Verte, in the fabulous village of Cotignac, the Lou Calen estate extends over 3 hectares of magnificent countryside intimately linked to the profound history of the village since the 17th century. With one side opening onto the central village square and the remainder surrounded by tranquil nature, Lou Calen is distinctively situated to allow guests to enjoy both village and country life.

While the serene surroundings will naturally invite guests to relax and unwind, Lou Calen will also offer unique experiences, in collaboration with the inhabitants of the village, to discover the history, lifestyle and know-how of this peaceful “Forgotten Provence”.

Benoit Witz has enjoyed the most amazing culinary adventures of which a young chef could dream. Benoit developed a taste for high-level cuisine while growing up on the family farm where country life and large family meals nourished his desire to create, transform and delight.

His vocation was confirmed in the most prestigious kitchens of France under the direction of Paul Bocuse at Mont d’Or in Collonges and Alain Ducasse at Louis XV in Monaco. The latter, who says “he is one of the best”, entrusted Benoit with the keys to Michelin-starred restaurants such as the Bastide de Moustiers and Abbaye de la Celle in Provence, and ultimately as executive chef of the Hermitage Hotel restaurants in Monaco.



Seduced by the enchanting setting of Cotignac and by the owners' desire to have him accompany them on this adventure, Benoit rediscovers his roots and finds a new source of inspiration here.

Creating delectable dishes, promoting simple and noble local products, and working in partnership with regional farmers, gardeners, breeders, and wine producers to help develop the local economy are the values he cherishes most.



Installed in Cotignac for a few months now, Benoit has been privately refining his range of tantalizing dishes while awaiting the opening of Jardin Secret. His aim is to show you his concept of happiness and to welcome you as friends in the warm family atmosphere of a country house built 200 years ago amid vineyards and olive trees. In this cocoon, he will deploy his talent to elevate the flavours of Provence and create an intimate, personalized cuisine, deeply rooted in the Cotignac and Var regions.

In the fall, he will also take over the reins of Lou Calen's "Bistrot" with the theme of wood-fired grills. In the footsteps of Huguette Caren, former owner and acclaimed in her time by Gault & Millau, Benoit will aim to restore the distinction of this venue, which can accommodate more than 100 guests. In addition, Benoit is also looking forward to creating a menu of tapas for the wine bar by Didier Romieux, the artisanal microbrewery Le Tailleur de Biere by Renaud Hecq, and the pastis bar – 3 venues with varied atmospheres to meet everyone's desires.



Benoit is keen to carry out his mission as executive chef in the sustainable spirit of the Lou Calen project. Its restaurants will employ a reasoned and ecological approach that favours local cuisine, including produce from Lou Calen's own gardens, and zero waste. Benoit Witz looks forward to welcoming you to the Jardin Secret and Lou Calen's other dining venues where seasonality and provenance will take centre stage.

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