

Petite Ermitage: West Hollywood's Most Exclusive Club



It's not easy to find an undiscovered gem in Los Angeles. Anything of quality here tends to get marketed, advertised, celebrity-ized and bastardized within months. But the Private Rooftop Club at Petite Ermitage is different. Quite different.

First of all, the property itself: Overseen by Stefan Ashkenazy, of the family who controls the L'Ermitage brand, and inspired by the original Bohemian lifestyle, Petite Ermitage is a boutique hotel that is in many ways the antithesis of most hip hotels today of any size. The rooms are eclectically anti-fashion, with custom mattresses, high thread-count linens and elements from all corners of the globe (Turkish carpeting to Sonoran desert cacti). The art on the walls—from the Miro in the lobby onward to works by Erte, Rauchenberg, Dali and DeKooning—is all genuine. The service is personal and friendly.

And then there's the multi-level rooftop terrace, which forms the hotel's main common areas. With 360 Degree views of the Hollywood Hills, the rooftop club includes a Butterfly Bar and Garden, a dramatic communal cabana by the saltwater pool, a sunken fireplace deck (at top), and an interior Masters Lounge (below) adjoining that level's exclusive Masters Quarters suites.



This is the Private Rooftop Club, a members-only enclave which is recognized by the National Wildlife Federation as a Butterfly and Humming Bird Sanctuary (they receive a portion of profits from every event).

By E. C. Gladstone on September 22nd, 2010

Membership, they say, has its privileges. And it's hard to find a greater privilege than access to the personal cooking of Chef Joseph Antonishek. Having worked under Wolfgang Puck, Charlie Palmer, Bobby Flay and Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Antonishek - who's also been recognized by the James Beard Foundation - is one of our city's hidden talents.



I know, because I was lucky enough to enjoy a menu tasting with him recently. It began with a trio of bright, creamy foie gras punctuated by verjus, port and fig jellies (above) and a soy cured filet mignon carpaccio that practically dissolved before even reaching my mouth! A buttery, rich escargot en crouete followed (with tarragon and portbello) setting the stage for his signature octopus and merguez sausage tagine (below), a remarkable presentation of color, aroma, flavor and texture. Desserts like orange cardamom crème brulee, chevre cheesecake and chocolate chili espresso cake (bottom pic) all held up their end of the affair. It's been some time since I've had such a consistently strong meal in Los Angeles.

The club also offers handmade signature cocktails like the Rasputini and Babishka, as well as a select wine list. Every Thursday, special meals with unique one-time-only menus are created for members and their guests, while lobster and champagne are offered poolside every Saturday and Sunday. Other wine dinners and informal movie nights happen frequently as well. Even breakfast receives equal attention to detail: Antonishek actually cures his own bacon in-house.



Membership is by invitation only. However, if you don't know a current member, my best suggestion would be to book a room and ingratiate yourself. It's worth the humility.