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# Epicure's Dinner

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October 28, 2021



Master Auguste Escoffier's 175th  
Anniversary Celebration  
(1846 – 1935)

Auguste Escoffier Foundation  
Disciples Escoffier International Association

2021

Auguste Escoffier's 175th anniversary



*Under the Patronage of Guillaume Gomez,  
French Ambassador for Gastronomy*

In 2021, on their great Master's 175<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary, the Disciples Escoffier as well as epicureans from all over the world will unite on the evening of October 28<sup>th</sup> under the same menu and the same ambition; the same dreamed 109 years earlier by the "Cook of the Kings and King of Cooks".

On that day, in more than 30 countries, thousands of people will toast to Auguste Escoffier and French Gastronomy.

# Auguste Escoffier

## A visionary humanist

Auguste Escoffier, born in Villeneuve Loubet in 1846 and died in Monaco in 1935, «Cook of kings and King of cooks», is considered the father of modern cuisine. With César Ritz, he promoted the «Palaces» of the Belle-Époque and revolutionized French cuisine, notably with his *Culinary Guide* (1903), still considered the «Bible» of cooks. He created many recipes, including the famous “Pêche Melba” and changed the structure of kitchen work with the brigades.

### His social commitment and humanism

A less well-known facet of the general public, his altruism guided his actions throughout his life. A profoundly generous man, he never ceased to think and act in the interest of the poorest: anti-waste actions in favour of the association of the «Little Sisters of the Poores », creation of the first British health insurance for cooks, creation of a relief committee for the families of cooks mobilized during the First World War, drafting of the *Projet d'assistance mutuelle pour l'extinction du paupérisme* in which Auguste Escoffier proposes solutions to alleviate poverty, and of course, the creation of the first charity dinners, "Les Dîners d'Épicure"...

On November 11, 1919, on an official visit to London, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Armistice of 1918, President Raymond Poincaré made him **Knight of the Legion of Honour**. He is the first Chef to receive this distinction. In 1928, he was elevated to the rank of **Officer of the Legion of Honour** by Edouard Herriot, Minister of Public Instruction.

# The Auguste Escoffier Foundation

The Foundation, recognized as a public utility, has for more than 50 years managed the Escoffier Museum of Culinary Art, as well as the Joseph Donon Institute, a research and documentation centre. It perpetuates the memory and work of Auguste Escoffier through these three essential roles:

- Conserving and enriching the Museum's collections in order to transmit and promote gastronomic heritage.
- Contributing to the maintenance of a high level of knowledge among chefs in France and abroad.
- Participating in the promotion of cuisine by organizing seminars related to restauration, as well as "Epicure diners" for charitable purposes, inspired by those created by Auguste Escoffier in 1912.

## The Escoffier Museum of Culinary Art



Only Museum of culinary art existing in France, it was inaugurated in the birthplace of Auguste Escoffier on May 2, 1966 in Villeneuve-Loubet on the French Riviera. It presents a complete panorama of the universe of French cuisine. We can discover the charm of an authentic Provençal village house of the eighteenth century, full of memories and articulated around the family hearth.

Ten exhibition rooms spread over 300 m<sup>2</sup>: old stoves, a Provençal vegetable garden, a menu collection, sugar and chocolate sculptures, the master's office and library, an interactive space for children and a thematic library on Culinary Art made of 3500 books.

In 2016, the Museum received the «Maisons des Illustres» label awarded by the Ministry of Culture and Communication and became a member of the «Fédération des maisons d'écrivains et des patrimoines littéraires» in 2019.

# Who are the Disciples Escoffier?



The Disciples Escoffier is an Association created in 1954 by Pierre Sauvan on an initiative of Jean Ducroux, head chef in the city of Nice.

Since 2017, the international president is Nicolas Sale, he was the tenth leader to practice at the Ritz Paris after Auguste Escoffier.

The headquarters of the international association is in Villeneuve Loubet, the birthplace of Auguste Escoffier, close to the Escoffier Museum of Culinary Art.

Since 1954, the members of our International Association have perpetuated the «Escoffier Spirit» throughout the world. It is the only association bringing all gastronomy related professions together.

## « The Escoffier Spirit »:

### Equality of appearance

The Disciples Escoffier have no difference of rank, their enthronement is identical.

### Knowledge and Transmission

The Disciples Escoffier strive to share and transmit their knowledge.

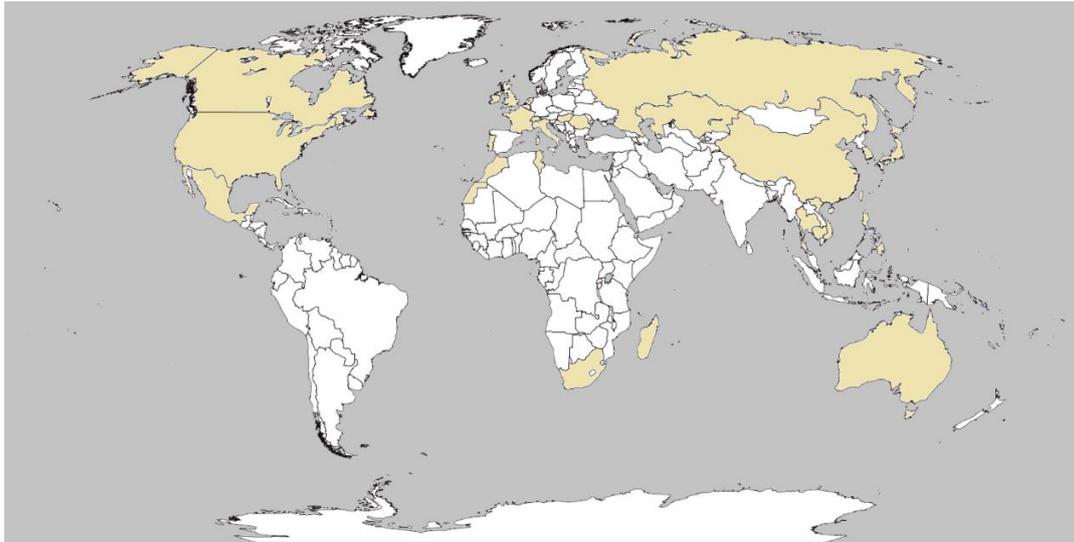
### Culture and Modernity

The Disciples Escoffier respect culinary history and advocate a perpetual evolution.

### Generosity and Unity

The Disciples Escoffier support a charitable cause.

# A global force



Since 1954

45 delegations in the world



75% are chefs



30 000 inductees since its creation



1 000 inducted per year

10 000 active members



## The Disciples Escoffier's goals

- To honor the memory of Auguste Escoffier, Master of French and International Cuisine, by perpetuating and promoting his work and maintaining the great traditions of cuisine.
- To promote the cooking and catering industry professions in the field of school education, secondary training, higher education, or professional training of cooks, as well as in apprenticeship, the traditional path taken by 80% of starred chefs.
- To organize an international competition "Young Talents Escoffier" aimed at young professionals under 25 years of age in the cooking and service professions.
- To bring cookery and restaurant services together, as he has defended it during his entire life by working with César Ritz to improve the quality of fine dining restaurants.
  - To promote quality products by honouring producers, distributors and winemakers.
  - To organize gastronomic events worthy of Epicure's Dinners as well as distinguishing individuals who serve great French Cuisine.
- To instil the humanist spirit of Auguste Escoffier, a profoundly selfless man of heart, into the hands of food professionals, whether they are apprentices, employees, or commis chefs.
  - To organise caritative actions to support some associations.

# The Disciple Escoffiers principles

Equality between Disciples without distinction of rank, transmission of knowledge, respect for the culture and the perpetual evolution of cuisine, organizing Epicure's Dinners and Chapters of enthronement, realizing and constantly searching for actions for a charitable cause, values that the President recalls at the opening of each ceremony of induction of a new Disciple.

This is the meaning of the oath that each one takes at the time of his or her enthronement :

*“I take an oath to transmit, serve and honour the Cuisine, its culture and its ongoing evolution.”*

The title of “Disciple” requires a solid professional background.

A sash and a diploma are thus given to the new Disciple:

## The Disciples Escoffier sash colors:

Red for food professions

Purple for all catering, service, sommellerie and oenology professions

Green for talented producers and quality winegrowers

Blue for celebrities, Epicureans, and gourmets

Orange for the Young Hopes.



# The Epicure's Dinner

The same menu served on the same day *«wherever men of taste can meet around a good table»*, is the principle of the Epicure's Dinners created by Escoffier whose *«aim was to demonstrate the excellence of French cuisine in the world»*, and that his Disciples now resume every year.

According to Escoffier's guidelines, when creating Epicure Dinners, restaurateurs can make changes.

He even said that if they *«are not able to get the fish or the first fruits indicated in the menu, they will not be required to kill themselves for that»!*

It is therefore up to each Chef to establish his menu based on this model and to set a reasonable price.

What matters - and it was Escoffier's great idea that was specified during the creation of these Dinners - is to simply gather gourmets around a table that has

*« above all a character of family simplicity ».*

## Its organization according to Auguste Escoffier

- The same dinner served on the same day in all countries
  - A luxuriously edited menu, to become a work of art
  - A portion of the profits must be donated to a charity
- The last toast made will be obligatorily in honor of the French Cuisine and in the presence of the chef who will have executed the Dinner.

## Epicure's Dinners : the story

A few months after founding the *Carnets d'Épicure*, Auguste Escoffier created the *Ligue des Gourmands* with friends. The idea came to them during one of their conversations about food and cuisine on February 25, 1912.

With Escoffier, things never dragged on! From March 3, the League took shape: creation of a Committee made up of twelve members, head office in London, subsidiaries in France and Belgium, statutes drawn up; immediate information to readers of the *Carnets d'Épicure* and encouragement to mobilize to create local committees. Its objective was to **“demonstrate the excellence of French cuisine all over the world”**.

The creation of the League des Gourmands was what allowed Escoffier to realize one of his old dreams: **a planetary dinner called Epicure's Diner** and at the same time to demonstrate that French cuisine is far from being on the decline like some sorrowful spirits were arguing then.

The menu **drawn up and signed by Escoffier** (with new recipes) had to be luxuriously edited, to become a work of art. The chefs of the restaurants affiliated with the League would receive this menu and the recipes only ten days before, **in a sealed envelope**. They had to keep it a secret. If they betrayed him, they would be excluded of the League. The English and French newspapers informed of the project were faced with a refusal of more information, which only increased the suspense and the reservations in the restaurants.

The Carlton was considered too select, and since Escoffier didn't want to mix genres, the Cecil Hotel in London was chosen for **the first Epicure's Dinner. It took place on May 25, 1911**, bringing together 300 people at the Cecil Hotel and **more than 4 000** in the 37 restaurants scattered around the world but linked by telephone and telegraph that evening. The first telegram came from Sarah Bernhardt, his faithful friend. “I am here among you; I take part in this beautiful French festivity; I reach out to our great poet Richepin, to my dear friend Escoffier, to you, Gringoire who sings so beautifully about fruits and flowers, to you all, finally, friends of poetry and delicate gourmets of realities.”

Then comes that of Jean Richepin: “Long live the diners and doners whom I wholeheartedly join in celebrating the true great art that our cuisine was and must remain, this unique rose watered by the wines of France.” All the international press echoed this **“world event”**.

It was on this occasion that Escoffier created, among others, the **Fraises Sarah Bernhardt**.

Every two months, these dinners followed one another, bringing together more and more guests. There were more than 140 restaurateurs around the world (London, Paris, New York, Pittsburgh, Bombay, Lahore etc.) when the last Epicure's Dinner takes place on June 14, 1914.

The First World War brought them to an abrupt halt, as well as the *Carnets d'Épicure*.

## October 28<sup>th</sup> 2021 in figures

1 menu inspired by Auguste Escoffier

1 iconic chef in the drafting

40+ exceptional dinners in prestigious locations

Taking place on the 5 continents

10 000+ gourmets gathered to celebrate French  
gastronomy around the world and honour the  
humanist values of Auguste Escoffier

100 000€+ donated to associations fighting poverty  
in the world

Some participating cities:

Zurich, Paris, Monaco, Bordeaux, Deauville, Shanghai,  
Lyon, Hong Kong, Canberra, Almaty, Moscow,  
Johannesburg, Chicago, Montreal, ...

## The main participants

A menu inspired by Chef Escoffier and led by:

Nicolas SALE

2\*\* Michelin

President of the Disciples Escoffier International Association.

Under the Patronage of:

Guillaume Gomez

French Ambassador for Gastronomy

An event organized by:

The Auguste Escoffier Foundation,  
founded in 1966,  
chaired by Michel Escoffier his great-grandson  
and  
the Disciples Escoffier International, Loi 1901  
Association founded in 1954.



# Disciples Escoffier International

Association pour la transmission et l'évolution de la Cuisine

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