

VIKING LINE

Viking Line's new spring menu created based on wines –Marilyn Monroe's favourite restaurant was an inspiration

Viking Line's new Jean Leon menu in its à la carte restaurants was developed in an unusual way – based on wine. First the wines were chosen from Penedès in Spain and then the dishes were created. Inspiration came from the restaurateur Jean Leon's Italian-influenced restaurant La Scala in Beverly Hills, where the biggest Hollywood stars of the 1950s gathered around its tables.

After Easter, guests in Viking Line's à la carte restaurants will enjoy a menu that got its name from the restaurateur and wine producer **Jean Leon**.

The story of Jean Leon brings together top-quality wines, a background in restaurants and a fascinating life's journey. He owned the legendary restaurant La Scala in Beverly Hills – the ultimate hangout for the biggest stars of cinema, from **Marilyn Monroe to Marlon Brando**. Leon later founded a winery in Penedès, Spain, named after himself. Today the Jean Leon winery is owned by the Torres family.

"We decided to build the menu around the Jean Leon wines. We went at it in the reverse order compared to normally: first we selected the most interesting wines and then we created dishes that enhance the flavour profile of the wines. La Scala's menus from the 1950s were an important source of inspiration," says Viking Line's Restaurant Manager, **Janne Lindholm**.

The result is a multifaceted spring menu that combines Mediterranean influences with a modern, slightly Nordic style. Pasta is a fairly rare feature in Viking Line's à la carte restaurants, but with the Italian-inspired theme it plays a natural role on the menu.

Dishes include a ceviche of whitefish and perch, broiled cod cheek and linguine pasta topped with langoustine. The speciality on the menu is a generous schnitzel for two, served on a platter. The meal is rounded off with a nostalgic combination of chocolate cake, banana mousse and salted caramel.

"The star of the menu is the interplay between the wine and the dish. During our development work, we adjusted the dishes several times to be sure that the wines and the food work optimally together. For example, if a wine brings out the acid in a dish too much, we adjusted the recipe accordingly. That's why I recommend that people try the combination of wines and dishes," says Lindholm.

The wines for the Jean Leon menu were selected from the winery's 3055 series and Single Vineyard series, where the wines are produced from grapes grown by the same vineyard.

"Of particular interest, for example, is the Vinya Gigi Chardonnay, named after Jean Leon's daughter Gigi, and the Vinya La Scala Cabernet Sauvignon Gran Reserva, which was served in his Hollywood restaurant. The fresh, expressive Xarel-lo wine is made from the Penedès region's signature grape," Lindholm adds.

The Jean Leon menus will be served in the à la carte restaurants on board Viking Glory, Viking Grace, Viking Cinderella and Viking Gabriella from April 9 to June 24.

4 facts about the Jean Leon wines

- The Jean Leon 3055 series is a homage to Jean Leon's early years in the US. The number 3055 refers to his New York City taxi medallion number.
- Jean Leon wines have won international recognition. Among others, *Wine Magazine* named his Cabernet Sauvignon as one of the eight best wines in the world.
- Jean Leon wines have also been served in the White House. Jean Leon and **Ronald Reagan** were friends even before Reagan became President, and at his 1981 inauguration *Vinya La Scala Cabernet Sauvignon Gran Reserva* and *Vinya Gigi Chardonnay* were served.
- In 1994, Jean Leon sold his winery to the Torres family.

For further information

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