

## La Dame de Pic

### Four Seasons Hotel London at Ten Trinity Square

Words: Harry McKinley

Ten Trinity Square is one of those buildings that sums up the longstanding prosperity of the British capital. An arresting Beaux Arts behemoth designed by Edwin Cooper, it was formerly the Port of London Authority headquarters and, in 1946, hosted the UN General Assembly. Now a Four Seasons hotel, it stares across to citizenM Tower of London – the two personalities of London squaring off against each other; one the epitome of youthful, accessible modernity, the other a stronghold of refinement and exclusivity. With its Corinthian columns and looming statue of Father Thames, the entrance to Four Seasons Ten Trinity is as grand as they come.

The hotel plays host to La Dame de Pic, the first UK restaurant from French three-Michelin-star chef Anne-Sophie Pic. Pic began her cooking career at 23 and, with no formal training, is only the fourth female chef to be awarded three stars, for her restaurant Maison Pic in the southeast of France. In its 2018 guide, Michelin has also recognised La Dame de Pic with a star – an accolade bestowed just eight months after opening.

The restaurant is one of two accessed via the cavernous Rotunda Bar and Lounge, itself topped by an impressive dome lit in ambient hues. For guests who have ascended through the hotel entrance and the lobby – as opposed to

the restaurant's dedicated off-street door – the grandeur level is high and a palpable sense of expectation created. The restaurant was designed by Bruno Moinard of Paris-based architects 4BI and, for the most part, the building's original features continue to take centre stage and have been allowed to shine. Great pillars stretching up to the particularly high ceilings feature ornate carved woodwork and bevelled mirrors, whilst sleek wide windows create the impression of a bright and open space. The dining room also benefits from natural wood flooring, balanced with the warm leather used on curved banquettes. In the centre of the room hangs a large chandelier that nods to La Dame de Pique, the French card game that inspired the restaurant's name. A 14-seat private dining room sits alongside the main restaurant.

As the company line goes, Michelin does not award stars based on any element bar the food, and it is in the cuisine that La Dame de Pic expresses itself most fluently. Pic's food is accomplished, presented with the kind of artful flair that befits a venue of La Dame de Pic's calibre. Guests familiar with Pic's restaurants will be pleased to see some of her classics on the menu, including her signature dish, berlingots. More famous to the French as a hard candy made from fruit syrup, Pic has taken the signature pyramid



Left: Sencha Vacherin, Right: Brittany Pigeon



shape – berlingot translating as sachet – and created pasta parcels filled with a lightly smoked Pélardon cheese. They are accompanied by seasonal wild mushrooms and a tonka bean and voatsiperifery pepper foam. It's a variation developed specially for the London restaurant. Elsewhere Pic mixes classic British ingredients with less expected elements. Scottish langoustine is paired with a bouillon infused with pine tree buds and geranium, and Ibaïama pork is marinated in Scottish dark ale, cauliflower, juniper and Meyer lemon. For red meat and game, diners are provided with a Katana knife to unsheathe at the table in an almost ritualistic experience – a civilised take on the primal desire to chow down on a glistening block of Welsh lamb or a corpulent Brittany pigeon. Desserts are handled with equal skill. The White Millefeuille – featuring Tahitian vanilla cream, jasmine jelly and voatsiperifery pepper foam – is presented as an architectural white cube, a vision of prim perfection waiting to be demolished by an eager spoon.

Whilst the menu is grounded in the traditions and techniques of French cooking, Pic has an altogether more worldly approach, drawing on multiple global influences. The result is dishes that could be described

as modern international fare with a French accent.

With La Dame de Pic, Four Seasons at Ten Trinity is going all in. Setting aside Rotunda which is, for all intents and purposes, a lobby bar and lounge – and unlikely to set local hearts aflutter in a city with a highly developed and competitive hotel bar scene – it is one of just two destination restaurants at the hotel. Whilst that's a more than adequate number, for a property of Four Season Ten Trinity's scale and repute, it does mean that both must deliver experiences that are not just good, even excellent. They must be the kinds of dining destinations that get people talking, encourage gourmands to want to know what the fuss is about and, perhaps most importantly, make everyone else believe that a dinner at either is not a wasted opportunity to try one of London's many other fine dining spots. The announcement that La Dame de Pic has been awarded its first Michelin star goes some way to indicating the restaurant's early success and is likely to inspire as yet uncertain diners to pass under Father Thames

[www.ladamedepiclondon.com](http://www.ladamedepiclondon.com)

**IN A BITE** Covers: 78 • Executive Chef: Anne-Sophie Pic • Chef de Cuisine: Luca Piscazzi • Head Bartender: Michal Maziarz • Interior Design: 4BI & Associates Architecture: Aukett Swanke • Owner: Reignwood Group • Operator: Four Seasons Hotel and Resorts • Tableware: Jars Ceramistes, Raynaud • Glassware: Baccarat, Riedel