The Victoria Bailliage Truffle Trek
May 31, 2025

The Truffle Farm's lush 40 acres in Parksville are nestled at the end of a long, leafy country road, side by side with the *Little Qualicum Cheese Works* and its dairy farm. https://thetrufflefarm.ca/

This Dinner Amical event was more than 2 years in planning and organization. Without a doubt, it was well worth the wait, as members and guests thought

it one of our best events, ever.

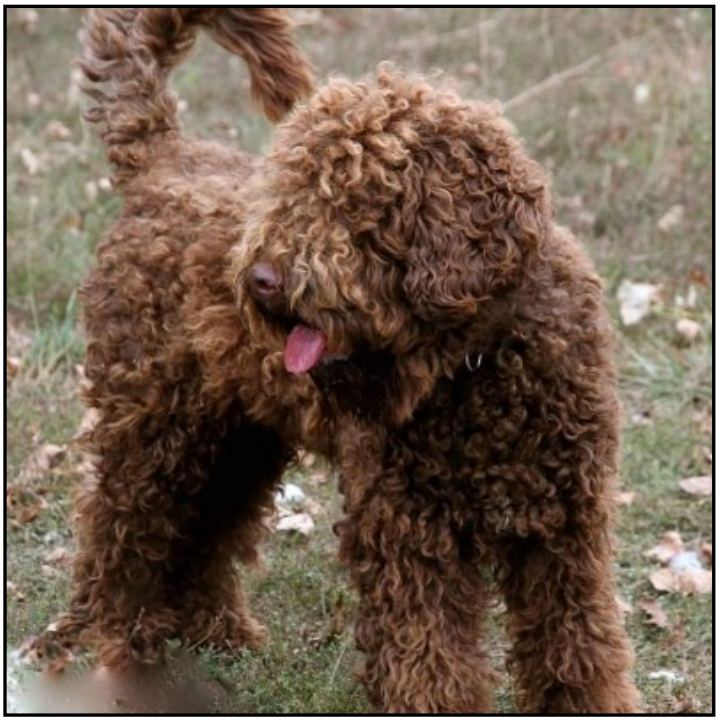
Those who did not attend, really missed out on enjoying a superlative event. Kudos to *The Truffle Farm* hosts, Virginia and Peter Brietzke, and Executive Chef Nick Mackay-Finn, who designed and delivered an entire menu based on truffles grown on the farm.

The farm's cavernous and newly renovated barn is now the function area, where Virginia and Peter host information seminars and informal classes on cooking with truffles, yet still manage to spend long days

working on the truffle farm while their son, Garret, lovingly cares for the sheep, lambs, turkey chicks and hens.

Success becoming growers and exporters of truffles has come after the family's more than 20 years of dedicated research, and in experimentation. Both needed to identify local tree species that can be inoculated to promote truffle growth in the area of their surrounding soil. The Garry Oak, indigenous to Vancouver Island, has proven to be a perfect host for the black truffle.

Locating buried truffles, long recognized in France, as the particular skill of certain pigs, is also that of Italy's Lagotto breed of dogs. *The Truffle Farm* is a registered breeder of these gorgeous puppies. The



farm 's senior stud Lagotto , "King Caesar ", or Buddy, with his soft brown , curly coat , is now retired from his puppy siring duties, and greets visitors, when he is not off on a truffle hunt.

While the farm owners have developed kitchen and some event facilities in their converted barn, these are not "restaurant formal" and are delightfully rustic in style. For this Chaîne event, almost everything needed, was brought in, from furnishings, to the menu ingredients, the wines, and of course, the services of Executive Chef Nick and his team.

The day before the event was brilliant sunshine when decorations, table positioning and place settings were done. However, pouring rain greeted

us on Saturday, calling into question whether the pre-dinner outdoor truffle seminar could take place.

Never underestimate the hardiness of Chaîne members! Rain did not deter most from joining Peter as he introduced them to truffle farm practices, including visits to some of the truffle-producing trees.

Although slightly damp, all were greeted on return to the barn with a glass of our traditional "Bubbles". Today, a Bailli Lapierre Crémant de Bourgogne, Oysters on the half shell garnished with lemon "pearls"

were passed as were delicately "stacked" marinated mushroom caps, layered on tiny slices of house-made sour dough bread featuring truffle and herb flavoured cream cheese.

The next phase of the seminar continued. The Bailli had issued a challenge to the attendees, to taste and identify the country of origin of a second "Bubble", cloaked in a chilled sleeve to hide its colourful and iconic label. This wine was given a "thumbs-up" as well rounded and delicious. Early guesses were traditional producers, Spain, Italy, and moved on to the wilder, but still were incorrect. Someone suggested Sri Lanka, which prompted Max Izard to call out "India", and we finally had a winner. The wine was Sula Vineyard's Tropicale Rose from Maharashtra, India. A delighted Max's prize was a ticket to our next event on June 29th. Chef Nick was now ready to address the menu, and begin the dinner service. (The full menu and wine list can be found at the end of this review)

T'was the season for local Spot Prawns and Dungeness Crab. All being seafood lovers, we relished the very generous portions of both, served in courses one and two. Chef Nick's plating was first class, and the wine from our cellar, a Domain de la Chaise Touraine Chenonceau 2020 was perfect and at its peak.

A new wine to many, and an excellent pairing for the Butter lettuce & Charred Radicchio Salad course was a Gruner Veltliner Burgenland-Biokult Organic, from Austria. Chef's palate cleanser followed and prepared our tastebuds for his meltingly delicious house made Bucatini presented in a traditional dish of *Cacio E Pepe with Truffles & Arugula.*

A simple but memorable choice, designed to feature the farm's exquisite crop, with just a whisp of olive oil, adding a delicate creaminess to the pasta and truffles.

Truffles in dessert? You bet! Chef's Truffle, Goat Cheese Gelato, tucked into a freshly made scone, perfectly complimented the selection and flavours of the wild berries. The wine pairing, showing delicate berry notes in a gently petillant Rose, was "Confidence", from B.C.'s 8th Generation Vineyard.

The Bailli presented gifts and certificates to Chef Nick, his team and Farm owners, Virginia & Peter. In delivering the Accolade, the Bailli expressed our enjoyment and appreciation to all for their outstanding efforts in delivering this unique event. Virginia closed the evening announcing that Bailliage member and Bailli Honoraire, Stephen Burchert, was the lucky winner of a draw for a gift pack selection of the Farm's truffle products.

Review: Gail Gabel Bailli du Victoria
Photos: The Truffle Farm
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Parksville

May 31 2025

The
Truffle Farm

Reception, Truffle Farm Introduction & Seminar

FRESH LOCAL OYSTER — Lemon pearls

HERB MARINATED MUSHROOMS — truffle cheese, champagne herb oil, sour dough

Crémant de Bourgogne Bailli Lapierre

Dinner

FIRST

DUNGENESS CRAB WITH TRUFFLES AND CAVIAR

V.I. Dungeness crab shaved Perigord truffles, gold flakes, caviaroli drops,

Domaine de la de la Chaise Touraine Chenonceau 2020 - from our cellar

SECOND

SPOT PRAWN COCKTAIL

cucumber carpaccio (vinegar sea salt Vancouver Island honey), roasted heirloom tomatoes, fresh horseradish, preserved lemon

Domaine de la Chaise Touraine Chenonceau 2020 - from our cellar

THIRD

BUTTER LETTUCE AND CHARRED RADICCHIO SALAD

charred radicchio, shaved fennel, celery leaves, house made mustard, grilled lemon vinaigrette

Gruner Veltliner Burgenland- Biokult Organic - Austria

PALATE CLEANSER

FOURTH

CACIO E PEPE WITH TRUFFLES AND ARUGULA

house made bucatini, pepper, olive oil, truffles, arugula

Domaine de Caprioles Diaclase Regnie 2022

FIFTH

WILDBERRY AND GOAT CHEESE SHORT CAKE

summer truffle, goat cheese gelato, scone, salmonberry, gooseberry, blackberry

8th Generation Confidence. Petillant Rose - B.C.