

Rockliffe Hall sommelier toasts national accolade

Submitted by: Query Click Ltd

Monday, 6 August 2012

Five star hotel resort (<http://www.rockliffehall.com/>), Rockliffe Hall, has again received national recognition for its outstanding staff.

Sommelier, Grace Matterson, has been named Laurent Perrier's Sommelier of the Month thanks to her knowledge, skills and experience of the sector and her exceptional levels of customer service.

Grace, from Stockton, is one of the UK's youngest fully-trained sommeliers, at just 21, and started her career at the age of 18 carrying out a range of Wine Spirit and Education Trust (WSET) qualifications.

Grace joined Rockliffe Hall as commis sommelier in 2010 and, having been promoted to sommelier, is now responsible for compiling and managing the extensive wine list.

In addition, Grace works closely with Rockliffe Hall's director of food, Kenny Atkinson, to carefully put together a range of interesting wines to complement Kenny's dishes and enhance the dining experience at Rockliffe Hall's three distinctive restaurants in County Durham (<http://www.rockliffehall.com/dining/>)- The Clubhouse, The Brasserie by Atkinson and The Orangery. With over 400 bins, the ever-expanding list showcases a large selection of wines from all over the world, covering a broad range of styles and grape varieties. The list has a combination of fine wines made by iconic producers and a varied selection of some more unusual wines.

The Orangery is the home of fine dining in the North East (<http://www.rockliffehall.com/dining/>), achieving triple AA rosette status just months after opening. Kenny Atkinson, a celebrated Michelin-starred chef, offers the ultimate culinary experience with regularly-changing tasting menus featuring stunning dish combinations.

The ten, eight and six course tasting menus in The Orangery showcase regional dishes and producers, including North East coast mackerel with Spillman's Yorkshire gooseberries, English mustard and lemon; Cumbrian rose veal tongue 'n' cheek, celeriac, English celery and truffle; and vanilla Arctic roll, Spillman's raspberries, hibiscus and honeycomb.

Grace commented: "Each and every wine on Rockliffe Hall's wine lists throughout the resort has been selected based on its exceptional quality and distinctive flavour. Because I have full control over the wine lists, it's important that I constantly review and update them to perfectly suit the range of food we serve across our three restaurants. I work closely with Kenny to pair the wines with his stunning dish combinations and we get great customer feedback about the variety of wines we offer and how well they work with our dishes. It's a complex business but one I love- and to be recognised by Laurent Perrier is very exciting."

Kenny Atkinson added: "I have worked with many sommeliers at some really outstanding locations over the years and I appreciate what a vast role it is. But Grace really is exceptional and is brilliant at simply explaining to customers why a certain wine works. Wine shouldn't be over-complicated and Grace often advises customers of how to find specific wine to suit their palates to enjoy at home. She really does

deserve this recognition from Lauren Perrier.”