

CHRISTOPHE HAY & FLEUR DE LOIRE

PRESS KIT



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FOREWORD

Along the River Loire, historical heritage and natural landscapes provide unique getaways. With its 23 castles, the Loire Valley narrates some of the greatest chapters of French history. From Blois to Amboise, Azay-le-Rideau to Chambord and Chenonceau, the architectural legacy of the Loire Valley is best discovered when exploring the corridors of time. The last wild river in Europe also boasts mosaic landscapes of vineyards, from Touraine to Cheverny, via Chinon. Whether hiking, cycling, boating or even in a hot air balloon, visitors who travel through the Loire Valley will discover a myriad of scenescapes and an extraordinary wealth of wildlife.

Halfway between Orléans and Tours, Blois definitely encompasses all the treasures of the Loire Valley with its royal castle, cathedral, wild river, terroir and natural resources. There, Fleur de Loire, a project designed by the Chef Christophe Hay, finds the roots of a unique identity; a timeless experience for guests to discover and share.



CHRISTOPHE HAY

CAREER PATH

Born in Vendôme, Christophe Hay's love of the terroir and his aspiration to be a chef are rooted in his childhood memories. He grew up in Cloyes-sur-le-Loir, a village bordering both the Beauce and the Perche regions.

He made his debut working alongside Eric Reithler at the restaurant Au Rendez-Vous des Pêcheurs* in Blois. In 2001, the chef introduced him to Paul Bocuse, a pivotal encounter which would have a deep impact on Christophe Hay, both personally and professionally.

He then joined the brigade of "Monsieur Paul", who quickly offered him a position as head of the kitchens at the Bistro de Paris, a fine dining restaurant in the Epcot theme park in Orlando (Florida).

His Paul Bocuse adventure across the Atlantic lasted five years, during which Christophe Hay promoted French products and was already encouraging organic productions and short distribution channels.

In 2007, the Hay family returned to Paris for personal reasons. Initially in charge of the kitchens at the Hôtel de Sers, he was later appointed as catering manager for other establishments in the B Signature Hotels & Resorts group. Thus, he was involved in the opening of the restaurants at the hotel Edouard VII and Bel-Ami in Paris. This experience exposed him to some highly instructive economic and human realities, yet the chef yearned for authenticity, simplicity and for the serenity found on the banks of the Loire.



CHRISTOPHE HAY

CAREER PATH



This is when Christophe set his heart on a restaurant for sale in the village of Montlivault, near Blois. As a result, La Maison d'à Côté opened in 2014, quickly followed by that of a small adjoining hotel. Côté Bistro opened two years later, a place designed to make gastronomy accessible to everyone. In 2019, and with the same commitment to quality, the Chef opened a second restaurant, La Table d'à Côté, located between Orléans and the Sologne region.

Soon, his restaurants were winning awards from gastronomy guides. In 2015, only a year after opening, La Maison d'à Côté was awarded a first Michelin star, followed by a second in 2019, while La Table d'à Côté in Ardon (45-Loire department) was awarded a first Michelin macaron the same year.

In January 2020, the Michelin guide awarded the two-star restaurant a green star for the authenticity of its work, described as "sustainable gastronomy" and Gault & Millau declared him "Chef of the year 2021". These awards acknowledged the work and commitment of the Chef, who had known from an early age that the key was to "be as close as possible" to people, products, seasons and to one's environment in general.

In June 2022, Christophe Hay closed his establishments in Montlivault and inaugurated Fleur de Loire, his new gourmet establishment in Blois.

A few weeks after it opened, Fleur de Loire joined the prestigious Relais & Châteaux organisation. In 2023, Michelin awarded two red stars and one green star to the signature Christophe Hay restaurant which is now also a member of the organisation Les Grandes Tables du Monde. Fleur de Loire was awarded the New Arrivals of the Year 2022 prize by La Liste 2023.

CHRISTOPHE HAY VALUES

A FARMER CHEF

Christophe Hay's culinary approach is inspired by the Loire and Sologne terroirs. Whether it's preparing fish from the Loire, celebrating game from Sologne, picking produce in his kitchen garden, the farmer chef's cuisine goes far beyond the mere content of a dish. His cuisine's character stems from the natural environment, the expertise of local women and men and local products. In itself, his cuisine embodies common sense, naturalness and product awareness. His signature dishes are crafted using the region's bountiful resources and inspired by local historical and cultural heritage, as evidenced in the "Carpe à la Chambord", "Lièvre à la Royale" or his Wagyu beef farm, an exceptional product.

Christophe Hay developed a passion for authentic products at an early age, thanks to his maternal grandparents who bred dairy cows and farmed a hundred and thirty hectares of land, and to all the farm gestures and smells he remembers. As a young chef, he learned to prepare meat, terrines and charcuterie with his father who was a butcher. His childhood memories linked to the terroir, his passion for the products of the land, his grandparents' patience and rigours of their trade left a deep impression on the farmer chef who already knew, when he was eight, that he would become a cook.

Today, as a fully-fledged and experience chef, he knows how to adapt his approach to the territory in which he works, by immersing himself in local techniques, and products, and by meeting producers and artisans. His guiding principle? The land and those who shape it, wherever they may be. Long known for his work in the Loire Valley terroir, Christophe Hay now transcends these borders and stands out for his ability to infuse his cuisine with the taste of the places he visits in France and abroad.



CHRISTOPHE HAY

VALUES

AN ECO-RESPONSIBLE CHEF

From the authenticity of the products he selects, promotion of the producers' know-how, commitment to environmental sustainability; from land to plate, Christophe Hay's approach is consistent and circular. Each of his recipes conveys emotion, evokes the gentle way of life of his region and reflects the talent of the women and the men who make it flourish.

At the time he opened his first restaurant La Maison d'à Côté, in 2014, Christophe Hay developed a network of producers with ancestral know-how and a reputation for reliability and impeccable workmanship. Over time, he forged strong ties with the people who strive every day, through passion for their work, to farm and produce in an environmentally sustainable fashion. The Chef never forgets to acknowledge their work when describing his dishes.

From the outset of the building of Fleur de Loire, he envisioned the site in a sustainable and environmentally friendly fashion, in line with his longstanding commitments. The 5,000 square metres of this lieu of gastronomy were designed with the environment in mind, a major challenge that the Chef, his team and partners had to overcome during the renovation and upgrading of the premises. In opting for natural products and materials, waste prevention and management, maximum energy efficiency and rainwater harvesting, Fleur de Loire has clearly set choices for a more sustainable world and a unique customer experience.

The Chef's passion for products, regard for the people who make them, and his longstanding commitment to environmental sustainability contributed to his being awarded a Michelin green star for the authenticity of his work, described as "sustainable gastronomy".

«This award means a lot to me. It honours over 6 years of work and investment in a project that goes beyond my passion for cuisine... A project that reflects, above all, the cultural heritage of my region, the Loire Valley, and that pays tribute to the work and talent of the women and the men who contribute to the region's wealth: farmers, fishermen, pickers, etc.» Christophe Hay



CHRISTOPHE HAY UNIVERSE

THE FLEUR DE LOIRE VEGETABLE GARDEN FARMED BY ALAIN GAILLARD

A few steps away from Fleur de Loire, Christophe Hay created a 1.5-hectare permaculture vegetable garden whom he entrusted to Alain Gaillard, also a saffron producer. Through a partnership with the conservatory for local seeds of the Centre-Val de Loire region, they restored ancient vegetable varieties such as purple celeriac from Tours, Sucrine du Berry lettuce or Sucrin de Tours melon. Christophe Hay and his teams are currently developing an asparagus patch, which will ultimately list 50 varieties, as well as an apple conservatory to restore the market garden lands of the Val de Blois in the very heart of the town centre.

Local and exotic plant species alike (South American and Asian seeds such as Sichuan or Goji berries) are grown organically and without pesticides, allowing the Chef to remain self-sufficient for almost half the year. There, the Chef and Alain Gaillard experiment with aromatic herbs such as hysope, agastache and celtuce to invite the customers' senses to travel even further during their journey of flavours.

THE CITRUS GREENHOUSE

On the Fleur de Loire premises, the Chef had a greenhouse built to grow local and exotic citrus fruit varieties which he uses in his recipes. He has always had a special fondness for these precious fruits. As part of his commitment to sustainability and local sourcing, it made sense to grow the citrus fruit he loves right next to his kitchen. The greenhouse boasts a selection of citrons, limes, lemons, kumquats, as well as combawas that thrive by the River Loire.



CHRISTOPHE HAY UNIVERSE

WAGYU BEEF CATTLE FARMING

In his search for rare products to honour, Christophe Hay purchased a herd of Wagyu cattle in 2019, which he entrusted to farmer friends of his in the Maine-et-Loire. As the son of a butcher, he was determined to master the farming of the meat he cooks.

To obtain the exceptional marbled meat typical of Wagyu beef, the animals require specific rearing techniques. Once they are born, they spend 36 months at pasture, then six to nine months in stalls that are tended to daily, with relaxing background music to spare them from stress, anxiety or solitude. The animals are massaged and fed a mixture of cereals and flax, techniques that produce meat with an umami taste, the core fifth sense identified by the Japanese and which coats the palate.

The meat from these 650-kilo animals is shared between Christophe Hay's three restaurants (signature fine dining Christophe Hay** restaurant, fine dining Amour Blanc restaurant as well as La Table* in Ardon).



SYLVAIN ARNOULT'S FISH FROM THE LOIRE

The Loire boasts an amazing variety of fish which Christophe Hay is keen to reinstate in his cuisine. These fish are often overlooked and sometimes under-estimated. Depending on the season and mating periods, he fishes responsibly for shad, zander, pike, lamprey, mullet and carp aboard Sylvain Arnould's—one of the last professional Loire fishermen—"chaland de Loire" (a typical flat-bottomed boat from the region). In fact, Christophe Hay has decided to stop serving seawater fish in his signature restaurant Christophe Hay**.



TRUFFLES, FLEUR DE LOIRE'S BLACK GOLD UNIVERSE

Christophe Hay bought Jean-Pierre Chaussard's truffle farm between the villages of Chambord and Cheverny and a few miles from Fleur de Loire in January 2021. The fantastic 5ha farm deep in the Loire is home to two types of truffle trees (300 in total): netleaf oak and holm oak.

INTEGRATED FARMING

Jean-Pierre Chaussard has taken the utmost care over his oak trees since the 2000s. Plantations are staggered every five years to uphold the soil quality and give the trees the best possible conditions to grow.

Christophe Hay and his gardener, Alain Gaillard, are continuing their farmer friend's work in keeping with nature and the surrounding elements. They grow two varieties of truffle with the help of dogs: the black truffle and summer truffle.

AN ICONIC LAND

The Loire Valley has always set the benchmark for truffle farming. Its humid climate and clay-limestone soil enable the world's most sought-after mushroom to thrive in an ideal setting. So when Jean-Pierre Chaussard suggested Christophe Hay take over the truffle farm, he agreed without a moment of hesitation.

“LA CARPE À LA CHAMBORD”, A TRIBUTE TO THE LOIRE VALLEY'S BLACK DIAMOND

Christophe Hay's signature “La Carpe à la Chambord” dish is a celebration of the Loire Valley truffle. Christophe Hay's fresh take on the recipe sees truffle gently shaved onto a piece of grilled carp, as opposed to served whole as a garnish for the stuffed carp when the dish was first created for the Count of Saxony at Château de Chambord.



FLEUR DE LOIRE

SHOWCASING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND KNOW-HOW OF THE LOIRE VALLEY



In the building imagined by Gaston d'Orléans, son of Henry the IV and Marie de Médicis, Fleur de Loire faces the old town of Blois, its royal castle and the history of France as embodied by the town. Located on the left bank in Blois-Vienne, Christophe Hay's gourmet establishment is housed in a former U-shaped hospice overlooking the royal river. Achieving a fine balance between gourmet excellence, genuine warmth and hospitality, Fleur de Loire was decorated by architect and interior designer Caroline Tissier.

With its historic building, enchanting environment and landscaped gardens, the estate boasts an exceptional setting and the promise of unforgettable experiences. Fleur de Loire guarantees guests a bespoke experience through personalised attention and warm hospitality.

FLEUR DE LOIRE AWARDS

The signature fine dining restaurant Christophe Hay was awarded two red stars and one green star by the Guide Michelin in 2023.

Fleur de Loire is a member of the prestigious organisations Relais & Châteaux and Les Grandes Tables du Monde. The establishment was awarded the New Arrivals of the Year 2022 prize by La Liste 2023.



FLEUR DE LOIRE

AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PROJECT

In order to meet the goal of limited environmental impact, careful attention was brought to every detail. A closed water air-conditioning system was installed to avoid power losses and the use of energy-intensive heat pumps; Fleur de Loire's gardens are watered with rainwater and the building runs 100% on wind power.

The shower gel, shampoo and conditioner provided in the rooms are made by the Muids soap factory, 20 kilometres from the establishment. Each product is carefully crafted from ingredients sourced in the Loire Valley, including Guénard oils, Martin-Pouret vinegars and honey from the Fleur de Loire gardens.

The use of plastic has also been reduced: the keys to the rooms are made of wood to replace disposable plastic key cards. Lastly, the hotel's furniture is sourced from sustainably managed forests and has received an environmental certification (FSC or PEFC).

The appliances used in the kitchen (oven, dishwasher) are state-of-the-art and powered by renewable wind energy, with low water and electricity consumption. Waste is sorted and transformed through compost and recycling. To limit the use of plastic, the Chef has opted for biodegradable vacuum bags. Fleur de Loire has also chosen to renew its partnership with Green Care Professionnel (Werner & Mertz), an organisation committed to developing environmentally friendly products sourced from natural ingredients. Both Fleur de Loire's restaurant kitchens are fully designed in keeping with environmental standards, in partnership with the brand Enodis.

This attention to detail and commitment to sustainability have earned Fleur de Loire the Clef Verte certification in 2023.





FLEUR DE LOIRE

THE RESTAURANT CHRISTOPHE HAY***

While hotels usually offer fine dining cuisine as a complement to hospitality services, Fleur de Loire is above all the epitome of Christophe Hay's story with gastronomy, which the Chef has orchestrated and expanded into a hotel establishment.

The "Christophe Hay" signature restaurant, the beating heart of the project, takes pride of place at Fleur de Loire on the first floor of the main building. On either side of the restaurant, the two wings of the U-shaped building welcome visitors to this hotspot of gastronomy.

The signature restaurant boasts an exceptional view. On one side, the dining room gives out on the majestic river, on the other, it provides a view of the church and stained-glass windows which reflect the peaceful and warm atmosphere of the premises. From the open kitchen, set in the middle of the 35-seat dining room, Christophe Hay develops his culinary identity, guided by the cycle of local nature.

A champion of committed and respectful gastronomy, and a master of the balance of flavours, his cuisine is one of pure inventive, audacious and creative taste, inspired by the surrounding nature. Featuring fish from the Loire, Wagyu beef from his own farm, citrus fruit, Sologne caviar, Mont-Prés-Chambord truffles, Cheverny wines, ancient vegetables from the permaculture garden a few steps away from the building, and honey from the garden, the Chef's cuisine pays tribute to a host of local products.

Through flavour, colour and original aroma, the Christophe Hay restaurant harnesses the emotional power of the treasures found in the Loire and Sologne terroirs.







FLEUR DE LOIRE THE RESTAURANT AMOUR BLANC

The Restaurant “Amour Blanc”, named after the eponymous freshwater fish—known as grass carp in English—a favourite of the Chef’s, is housed in a contemporary stone and glass building, built as an extension of Fleur de Loire’s left wing. “Amour Blanc” is not a bistro, it is a gourmet restaurant where the Chef’s quality signature is reflected in every dish.

With a cellar for maturing Wagyu and Percheron beef hot stone meat grills, saltwater fish, the Chef gives free rein to his love of sharing and conviviality. From the restaurant’s terrace, guests can enjoy the stunning panorama over the last wild river in Europe.



FLEUR DE LOIRE THE PASTRY BOOTH

On the ground floor of Amour Blanc, the pastry booth is a home of sweets at the Relais & Châteaux Fleur de Loire in Blois.

Part boutique, part tearoom and part delicatessen, this gourmet haven invites guests into a sensitive world of signature creations, such as a custard flan and trompe-l'œil chocolate sausages. With its refined harmonious decor and exquisite creations, the booth is the epicurean rendezvous of pastry gourmets in Blois.



FLEUR DE LOIRE ROOMS AND SUITES

Windows wide open onto the Loire Valley scenery, designed as elegant cocoons, 44 rooms and 12 suites at Fleur de Loire offer a relaxing interlude.

Inspired by the Loire, its banks and rich vegetation, the decor guarantees a uniquely peaceful environment. The artist Lauren Collin plays subtly with textures and materials to recreate, inside the building, the unique character of the enviroing nature.

While the luxurious materials and contemporary equipment reflect the hotel's commitment to a high standard of comfort, the staff's attentions ensure that guests will enjoy a unique experience of warm hospitality.

On the ground floor, the rooms and suites give out onto private and quiet terraces, while guests on the first floor will enjoy an elevated and privileged view on the River Loire.

Featuring modern amenities in a historic building, Fleur de Loire is the perfect setting for a timeless stay in the Loire Valley.



FLEUR DE LOIRE SISLEY® SPA

Located in the right wing of the building, the 450 m² of the Sisley Spa are an invitation to enjoy an interlude of well-being. In keeping with his local approach, Christophe Hay has partnered with the brand Sisley®, whose production centre has been based in Blois for many years.

Phytoaromatic treatments, beauty rituals and massages, the Sisley® Spa uses the best of essential oils and natural plant extracts for exceptional well-being treatments.

Whether to awaken the senses, revitalise, multi-sensory stimulation, treatments are designed to meet every need and desire.







[PHOTO GALLERY AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOADING HERE ICI](#)

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