

La Paulée de New York

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Last month, Daniel Johnnes, the wine director at one of New York's most expensive restaurants, Montrachet (which is French for "Give me your wallet"), persuaded eighteen winemakers from Burgundy to come to New York to show off the subtleties of their stuff. There was a wine tasting in the afternoon, and a grand meal in the evening, and, in addition to the many wines on offer, in varying flamboyant sizes of extravagance (magnums, Methuselahs, and an unknown thing, poured by two people at once, that looked like a small tanker truck), there were bottles brought by the guests, a hidden admission cost that resulted in there being quite a lot to drink.

The evening, which was called Paulée de New York, and was inspired the harvest festival in France (it remains unclear what harvest was being celebrated in midtown in the month of February), was organized around the cooking of several notable chefs. The entertainment was provided by Les Cad de Bourgogne, and consisted of a dozen old men singing an oompah-pah song every ten or fifteen minutes, which sounded like a French interpretation of the hokey-pokey. In their version, you stand up, and then, rather than putting your left foot in, or your right foot on, you merely flash your hands in one direction, and flash your hands in another, and then clap a few times. It didn't seem particularly subtle, given that subtlety was the theme of the evening.

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