

DESTINATION COUTANCEAU



CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU



LA VILLA GRAND VOILE



LA YOLE DE CHRIS





A PLACE WITH  
A SPECIAL SPIRIT



ODE TO THE OCEAN



Although the history of the Michelin-starred Restaurant Coutanceau began in La Rochelle four decades ago, **Christopher Coutanceau** and **Nicolas Brossard** have infused it with a breath of fresh air for over thirteen years now. Overlooking La Concurrence Beach, not far from the city's majestic towers, the two partners engage in writing the history of the House on a daily basis, where pride of place is given to the ocean, this splendid scenscape which invites to be admired next to the restaurant. It's this omnipresent element which inspires the cuisine and drives the aspirations of the three-starred chef for whom the sea has been his favourite playground since childhood. Nicolas Brossard, the Master of the House, is committed to welcoming guests with great attention to detail and to orchestrating, harmonizing and centre-staging the chef's iodized cuisine.

Since the duo bought the gastronomic restaurant in 2007, life has sprinkled a host of opportunities on their path which they have brilliantly seized. Today, they are at the helm of a three-masted vessel which they steer together: The Relais & Châteaux Christopher Coutanceau, the marine bistro La Yole de Chris, which opened in 2018, and the hotel Relais & Châteaux Villa Grand Voile in the city centre, opened in 2020. A fabulous human adventure during which Christopher and Nicolas were joined by their wives, Alice Coutanceau, in charge of the Group's public relations, and Caroline Brossard, Managing Director of the hotel. Christopher Coutanceau's establishments, a real destination, an unforgettable experience.





≈  
Becoming a marine-themed destination in our own right offers us the opportunity to fully share our culture and our passions, to invite our guests to immerse themselves in the art of La Rochelle-style living. Like a salty-sea cure alone with the ocean, as a mark of respect for the blue lifeblood of our Earth. ≈

≈ CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU

# CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU

≈ Head chef and co-owner

After studying at La Rochelle Hotel and Catering School, Christopher Coutanceau began his professional career in 1993 in Biarritz, at the Hotel Restaurant Le Miramar (1\*) with André Gaüzère, then at the Café de Paris (1\*) with Didier Oudill and Edgar Duhr in 1994. A year later, at the age of 17, he went to work for Michel Guérard (3\*) in Eugénie-les-Bains. He then joined Chef Ferran Adrià's brigade in 1998, at the famous El Bulli Restaurant (3\*) in Catalonia. In 1999, he worked in Le Laurent Restaurant in Paris (2\*), alongside Joël Robuchon. In 2000, Christopher Coutanceau decided to return to La Rochelle to open his own restaurant, Le Vieux Port, a bistro located on Place de la Chaîne, overlooking the historic towers of La Rochelle. In October 2002, his father, the chef Richard Coutanceau (2\*) asked Christopher to come and work with him in the restaurant that bore his name which he had opened in 1984 with his wife Maryse Coutanceau, on La Concurrence Beach, in La Rochelle. He joined the team in the Richard Coutanceau Restaurant as head chef and worked in tandem with his father for 5 years. In July 2007, when Richard and Maryse Coutanceau chose to step down, Christopher bought the restaurant from his parents with Nicolas Brossard, head sommelier.

## ≈ Deeply-committed ≈ chef-fisherman

**The chef from La Rochelle, passionate about the sea and a sailor since childhood, is a fervent advocate of sustainable fishing and zero-waste cuisine.**

**Every morning at the fish auction, this "chef-fisherman" carefully selects only the finest produce from local, artisanal fishing: seafood, shellfish and line-caught fish and places his highest priority on strictly respecting the sea's seasons by excluding threatened species and those in their breeding period from his menu. Cuisine... from-the-ocean-to-the-table.**

≈ My grandfather, André Coutanceau, taught me everything. This man who I loved and admired passed his passion for fishing and observing the sea on to me. When we'd come back home after being out on the boat, my grandmother Guiguitte would cook our catch of the day like a great chef: fish, seafood and shellfish. And that's why I wanted to become a great chef and a real fisherman. ≈

≈ CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU

The chef, who has observed respectful fishing practices since childhood, sails off on his rigid inflatable boat as often as he can: ≈ The sea needs time to replenish itself, fish need to be left alone during spawning and catch sizes need to be respected. ≈

Today, through his profession and his passion, the chef is deeply committed to making people aware of the cause. Christopher Coutanceau works hand-in-hand with a wide range of marine resource preservation associations. As a campaigner for artisanal fishing, he played a proactive role alongside the NGO Bloom to ban deep-sea trawling and electric pulse fishing in Europe.



≈  
Twenty years ago,  
my return to La Rochelle  
was marked by a fabulous  
encounter with a family  
and a region. We wished  
to pursue this human  
adventure by opening a  
hotel: a dream, an ultimate  
goal! Now, it's come true  
and it's vital for us to be  
able to invite our guests  
into our own Home ≈

≈ NICOLAS BROSSARD



## NICOLAS BROSSARD

≈ Restaurant manager and co-owner

The career of Nicolas Brossard, vintage 1971, driven by a passion for fine wines and his work, was forged through encounters. Even when he was just 10 years' old, this Romorantin (Loir-et-Cher) boy, dreamt of doing this job. After studying at the Tourism and Hotel School in Blois and obtaining a distinction in Sommellerie in Saumur, he began working at the Lucas Carton (3\*) with Alain Senderens in 1990. In 1996, he moved to the Côte d'Azur and joined La Réserve de Beaulieu (3\*) where he took on his first head sommelier position at the age of 25. In 1998, he met Alain Ducasse who invited him to become head sommelier at the Louis XV (3\*), in Monaco. He stayed there for five years. Destiny would play a role in 2003, when he encountered Richard and Maryse Coutanceau, who were looking for a head sommelier. From the moment he arrived, he felt "at home" in this La Rochelle establishment. And when the Coutanceau couple decided to retire, after having spent five years in the business, Nicolas was the perfect candidate to partner with Christopher. In 2007, they bought the restaurant together, in equal shares. Nicolas Brossard, the Master of the House, ensures each moment is one of excellence and forever wishes to offer guests a chance to dream and to delight. The two 'skippers', who have highly-different characters yet share the same philosophy and same taste for perfection, are inseparable and complementary.

≈ Service is something that has to be innate, intuitive; it means really loving your guests: putting yourself in their shoes, understanding them and offering them maximum attention. Of course you need knowledge but, actually, it's so subtle and almost indescribable... Everything must be done naturally, so that our guests feel welcomed as if they were in my own home ≈

≈ NICOLAS BROSSARD



## CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU

Cuisinier Pêcheur

LA ROCHELLE, 2023 ≈ PAGE 07



WWW.CHRISTOPHERCOUTANCEAU.COM

≈  
**THE SHIP'S HISTORY**  
≈







## Relais & Châteaux RESTAURANT CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU

The history of the gastronomic Coutanceau restaurant began in La Rochelle some 40 years ago. Michel Crépeau, then mayor of the city, wished to renovate this old pergola which overlooked the ocean on La Concurrence Beach. In 1984, Richard and Maryse Coutanceau open the restaurant, which is honoured with two Michelin stars two years later.

In 1988, the establishment becomes a member of Relais & Châteaux. Christopher Coutanceau joins his father Richard in 2002 as head chef, then Nicolas Brossard becomes head sommelier in 2003. In 2007, when Richard and Maryse Coutanceau wish to step down, Christopher Coutanceau and Nicolas Brossard form a partnership to buy and run the establishment, now named Christopher Coutanceau. In 2013, the restaurant becomes a member of the Grandes Tables du Monde.

As a logical continuation and so they can write their own history today and invite the ocean into the establishment, the two partners decide to totally redesign the dining area of the Restaurant Christopher Coutanceau in 2017, hand-in-hand with an architect from La Rochelle, Bertrand Pourrier. Ocean-blue carpet, sand-tone leather walls and aluminium crystal drops swaying freely from the ceiling mirroring the to-ing and fro-ing of the sea ... The tableware also conjures up aquatic elements in a superb dreamlike way. Everything has been considered down to the finest detail and is bespoke-made: hand-blown water-droplet-shaped salt shaker inlaid with silver-leaf, butter knife signed by the La Rochelle cutler Farol ... Decorative culinary art which echoes the chef's marine-themed creations. In this incomparable setting on La Concurrence Beach offering a breathtaking vista over the whole bay, the ocean takes pride of place.



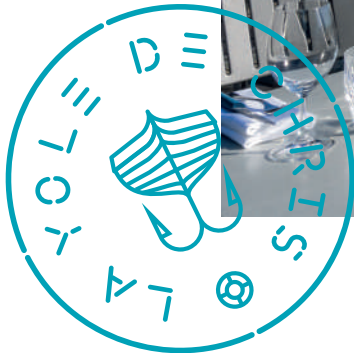


≈ HEAD-TO-TAIL SARDINES, BOUFFI-FLAVOURED ICE CREAM ≈

## LA YOLE DE CHRIS

Christopher Coutanceau and Nicolas Brossard opened their marine-themed bistro during the summer of 2018, in the premises adjoining their gastronomic restaurant, on La Concorrence Beach. The two kitchens are connected by a single corridor!

La Yole de Chris, named after the traditional, charming narrow skiff, invites you to relax by the ocean and enjoy the catch-of-the-day imagined and interpreted in its purest form. Seafood, fish and shellfish, carefully selected at the fish auction every morning, are the finest produce from local, artisanal, eco-responsible fishing, which respects the ocean's seasons. Carpaccio, wood-fired cuisine, whole fish and seafood platters invite to be shared on the wind-sheltered terrace or our inside space around long festive wooden tables. La Yole is open all day from breakfast through to evening dinner, for back-from-the-beach gourmet snacks (crepes, waffles, ice cream delights, etc.) or cocktails while you watch the sun set.







DESTINATION CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU



VILLA  
**GRAND VOILE**

CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU

LA ROCHELLE, 2023 ≈ PAGE 12

WWW.GRANDVOILE.COM





# LA VILLA GRAND VOILE

## CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU

### Relais & Châteaux

2020, also marks the opening of La Villa Grand Voile by Christopher Coutanceau and Nicolas Brossard: a hotel boasting eleven rooms and suites located just a few hundred metres from La Concurrence Beach restaurants. A wonderful strike of good luck for the two partners who had been dreaming for ever-so long of being able to invite guests to enjoy an incomparably-rewarding experience.

Just a stone's throw from the old port, the city centre's shopping streets and historical treasures, this former shipowner's residence dating back to 1715 takes you on a journey into a refined, discreet oasis. A wooded courtyard featuring a heated pool, nestling at the heart of this dwelling, beckons to delight in a pure, relaxing interlude.

### A CREATIVE WORLD

≈

A breath of fresh air, infused with a desire to look to tomorrow, has blown over this authentic mansion which elegantly boasts highly-contemporary, designer furnishings, genuine Art Deco works of art and the finest imaginable materials.

Through the talent of an architect from La Rochelle, the meticulous work of local craftsmen (Le Cormier, master carpenter) and the signature of renowned design brands (dix heures dix, Vitra, Hartô, Flos, Magis, Sancal, Ethimo ...), Villa Grand Voile blends tradition, renewal and ultimate comfort.



DESTINATION CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU



LA ROCHELLE, 2023 PIRELLA GÖTTSCHE LOWE

WWW.VILLAGRANDVOILE.COM



VILLA  
GRAND VOILE  
CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU

MEDIA RELATIONS Alice Coutanceau-Mahlberg +33 (0)6 11 10 42 94 presse@coutanceaularochelle.com



## VILLA GRAND VOILE, AN EVOCATIVE NAME

≈

What could be more obvious for Christopher Coutanceau and Nicolas Brossard than to invite the ocean into this one-of-a-kind setting... The bespoke-created 11 rooms and suites evoke seascapes, draw from the chromatic spectrum of ocean and sky blues, stormy greys and ever-so one-of-a-kind dusk-time pinks. A mainsail hoisted high by the duo, now at the helm of three Establishments at the heart of La Rochelle.

### n.m Mainsail

The largest sail rigged on the main mast of a sailing vessel with multiple masts

La Rochelle, historical capital of Aunis, historical province of France, boasts a proud maritime heritage, as illustrated through its Museum which hosts a collection of eight vessels, including seven each listed as a Historical Monument. La Rochelle Bay, not far from the islands of Ré, Aix and Oléron, is a major venue for international sailing races; the Marina hosts Pôle France Voile, centre of excellence for high-profile sportspeople; and, every year at the end of September, the Grand Pavois, one of the world's largest international boat shows, takes place there.

## THE ART OF HOSPITALITY

≈

Welcoming guests cordially and sympathetically as if they were in their own home. This is the House's primary focus to ensure each visit is an unforgettable moment.

Caroline Brossard, Nicolas Brossard's wife, driven by a passion for hospitality, was appointed Managing Director of the Villa Grand Voile. Caroline Brossard, a native of Luxembourg, studied at the Swiss Hospitality Management School in Lausanne. After forging her initial experiences in boutique hotels, in particular in Mexico, she joined the Hyatt Group for three years, first at the Grand Hyatt Amman in Jordan then at the Park Hyatt in Dubai. In 2011, she arrived in France where she worked for the Relais & Châteaux Association for four years before settling in La Rochelle to pursue her career at the Relais & Châteaux Hotel de Toiras & Villa Clarisse in Saint-Martin-de-Ré for two years. Caroline then became General Manager of the Central Park Hotel in La Rochelle.

## BESPOKE SERVICE

≈

Should you fancy a bite to eat or arrive late at the hotel, room service is on hand until 10pm, an invitation to enjoy a selection of dishes from the Michelin-starred Restaurant Christopher Coutanceau such as ≈ the gourmet stewed Breton lobster ≈, in your room or by the pool. Snacks available 24/7

The bar is open every evening should you care for a glass of wine, a cocktail or a cognac indoors in a cosy atmosphere or around the pool during balmy summer nights... Nicolas Brossard concocted the drinks menu. Valet parking and chauffeur.



LA ROCHELLE, 2023 ≈ PAGE 16

WWW.VILLAGRANDVOILE.COM







≈

## A GASTRONOMIC JOURNEY INTO THE DEEP BLUE

≈

≈ The ocean's my garden,  
my life! In a way, it has forged  
me and it's part of my daily  
life.

Through my cuisine,  
I tell my story. For me,  
the sea is an incredible source  
of expression into which  
I delve daily, to share only  
the best with my guests ≈

≈ CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU

≈

DESTINATION CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU  
A GASTRONOMIC JOURNEY  
INTO THE DEEP BLUE



CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU  
Cuisinier Pêcheur



## NOURISHING SEA

≈

Through his pure, delicate and iodized cuisine, the chef imagines a menu that is evermore eco-friendly as he pushes 'zero-waste' recipes to (and beyond) the limit. In addition to concern for the environment, you'll enjoy a real taste discovery, where fabulous species of fish which are still rather unknown, such as whiting and wrasse, are centre staged.

≈ To make a great dish, you need quality products. I make sure I select them at the height of their season so I can present them in the most fitting, most natural way possible. ≈

≈ CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU

Among the chef's signature dishes, ≈ **Whole Lobster** ≈. A surprising, creative dish which exalts all parts of the Breton lobster, zero-loss, zero-waste: lobster meat medallions, claw tartare, head-shell crystalline, lobster-coral espuma, brain vinaigrette and fine, clarified shell aspic..

Another iconic dish from Christopher Coutanceau's eco-friendly cuisine, ≈ **Head-to-tail Sardines, bouffi-flavoured ice cream** ≈. One of the chef's favourite fish, tricky to work with because of its delicacy and extremely healthy as it does not store mercury given its short life span. The sardine is worked with marinated, tartare of fillets, heads in vinaigrette, bones fried and in stock, cube-style dried and smoked fillets, bouffi-flavoured ice cream.

≈ When I was a kid, my grandparents would prepare raw sardine fillets on a slice of bread with slightly-salted butter for me, then they'd drizzle a few drops of lemon juice over it and add a pinch of fleur de sel from Île de Ré.

It's this childhood memory that inspired this dish,  
a tribute to my grandparents. ≈

≈ CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU



≈ THE LOBSTER STEW ≈





≈ NORI SEAWEED FROM THE ILE DE RÉ, AND HOT COLD CHOCOLATE ≈

## A SWEET, IODIZED WAVE

≈

**Benoît Godillon** is a rather discreet, highly-gifted pastry chef, who forged his career in three-starred establishments (La Bouitte, René and Maxime Meilleur; Le Petit Nice, Gérald Passédat) prior to joining Christopher Coutanceau's brigade in 2012. Benoit Godillon wows with his innovative, up-to-the-minute, must-indulge creations, such as his marine-themed dessert ≈ **Foreshore... a variation** ≈ and his ≈ **Smoked chocolate éclade / Cognac** ≈ What could be more obvious than to portray the foreshore, this strip of land which reveals itself to guests as the tide ebbs! A dreamlike way of accompanying guests to the culmination of the experience, a discovery into the chef's passions: French-toast-style sea-lettuce brioche, crème citron and crème caramel à la fleur de sel from Île de Ré, sugar oyster shell and oyster-lemon sorbet, algae eau de vie granita and sea-lettuce crystalline. Éclade is a typical preparation of mussels from Charente-Maritime beaches: flambéing the mussels on pine needles gives them a unique slightly-smoked taste. **Benoît Godillon** drew his inspiration from this for his ≈ Smoked chocolate éclade / Cognac ≈, chocolate cylinders and shells, with smoked milk and chocolate espuma, sprinkled with crunchy chocolate needles, drizzled with flambéed cognac table-side.

## THE CHEF'S TABLE

≈

The Chef's Table, a tasting oasis for the most initiated, is a space which can be privatized and boasts a fantastic behind-the-scenes glimpse of the restaurant: a liquid-crystal glass pane invites guest to admire the vibrant show of the chef's kitchen brigade. A door separates this space from the kitchen, and the chef himself presents the dishes to guests throughout the meal. From the bespoke menu through to the wine selection, 2 to 8 guests are invited to indulge in state-of-the-artness. An incomparable, unforgettable gastronomic experience, a privileged, intimate interlude.



## THE WINE CELLAR

≈

≈ Wine's all about geography,  
history and human endeavour! ≈

≈ NICOLAS BROSSARD

The wine cellar is a priceless treasure comprising over 22,000 bottles (14,000 in-house and 8,000 aging) covering 1,800 references, priced from 25 to 6,500 euros. It showcases over 40 years of work, of partnership and oenological passion. Today, it is unquestionably one of the finest in France, thanks to Nicolas Brossard's work. The wine selection places great emphasis on the most prestigious estates – Petrus, Romanée-Conti – and all regions of France are proposed:

≈ The major Alsace Rieslings, Provence and Corsican wines,  
as well as those from the vines of Antoine Arena and the Cuvée Faustine from  
Comte Abbattucci, are true marvels paired with Christopher's dishes! ≈

≈ NICOLAS BROSSARD



## LA VILLA GRAND VOILE'S MARINE-THEMED BREAKFAST

≈

≈ We wish to refine the journey even more and propose a marine-themed wake-up, to make the sea experience complete ≈

≈ CAROLINE BROSSARD

Scrambled eggs with smoked fish; smoked sea bass (or seasonal catch); oysters, algae French toast; eggs with samphire greens, and more... Here, produce jumps straight out of the sea into the plate, but more importantly, from the moment guests awake!

A baker works in-house every night making breads and pastries: madeleine cakes, chocolate bread, croissants, puff-pastry brioche, wholemeal bread, etc. And, the House invites to delight in fabulous local artisans' products: Charentaise galette with angelica, local jam, butter, honey, etc.

LA ROCHELLE, 2023 - PAGE 23



### NOS PRODUCTEURS

≈ **Société Promer**

≈ **Stéphane Boutin,**

fish trader at the fishing port of La Rochelle

≈ **Cédric Fortunier,**

salt merchant and sea gardener in Saint-Clément-des-Baleines (Île de Ré)

≈ **Régis Mesnier,**

truffle-harvester in Charente

≈ **Mathieu Duportal,**

salt merchant in La Flotte (Île de Ré)

WWW.CHRISTOPHERCOUTANCEAU.COM

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION AND PRICES

≈

### CHRISTOPHER COUTANCEAU



≈ On La Concurrence Beach, a stone's throw from La Rochelle's towers and a few minutes' walk from the city centre.

≈ 20 minutes' walk from La Rochelle train station  
10 minutes by car.

≈ 20 minutes from Île-de-Ré Bridge.

≈ 10 minutes from the La Rochelle – Île de Ré Airport / 1h30 from Nantes Atlantique Airport / 2h from Bordeaux-Mérignac Airport

≈ A dining area, seating up to 45 guests, boasting a panorama over the ocean

≈ **MENU 6 PRISES** ≈ 260 euros

≈ **MENU 8 PRISES** ≈ 310 euros

≈ The restaurant is open from Tuesday to Saturday

≈ 2 stars in the Michelin Guide

≈ Green Michelin Star

≈ 17/20 and 4 Gault & Millau toques

≈ Relais & Châteaux

≈

Plage de la Concurrence  
17000 La Rochelle

**T. 05 46 41 48 19**

≈

**www.coutanceaularochelle.com**

≈

 @christopher\_coutanceau  
 Restaurant  
Christopher Coutanceau



### VILLA GRAND VOILE

≈

A stone's throw from restaurants, the city centre and the Vieux Port  
170 to 750 euros, based on room category and the season

≈ Relais & Châteaux

≈ Covered car park in a guarded garage

≈

12, rue de la Cloche  
17000 La Rochelle

**T. 05 46 44 81 14**

≈

**www.villagrandvoile.com**

≈

 @villagrandvoile  
 Villa Grand Voile



### LA YOLE DE CHRIS

≈

≈ ALL YEAR ROUND, from 8:30am to 11pm

≈ **LUNCH MENU** 27 euros

**A la carte menu:** 27 – 100 euros

≈ Marine-themed bistro

≈

Plage de la Concurrence  
17000 La Rochelle

**T. 05 46 41 41 88**

≈

**www.layoledechris.com**

≈

 @layoledechris  
 La Yole de Chris





Editor

**Alice Coutanceau**

Photos

**Sylvie Curty**

**Olivier Roux**

**Philippe Vaures**