

# THE RITTENHOUSE

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**THE RITTENHOUSE WINE DIRECTOR JUSTIN TIMSIT ELEVATED TO ADVANCED SOMMELIER**

**PHILADELPHIA** August 20, 2015 – The Rittenhouse, Philadelphia’s premier luxury hotel, today announced that Wine Director Justin Timsit has reached the rank of Advanced Sommelier. After successfully completing a grueling examination process with the internationally-recognized Court of Master Sommeliers, Timsit became only the third Advanced Sommelier working within the state of Pennsylvania. He is the only Advanced Sommelier interacting with customers on a restaurant floor, and is one of only 292 sommeliers who have passed the examination in the entire United States. Since he was hired as the Wine Director at The Rittenhouse in December 2013, Timsit has revamped the hotel’s wine program and plans to continue expanding and improving the hotel’s exclusive and comprehensive wine selection. Timsit’s efforts have paid off, as the hotel recently achieved Wine Spectator’s Best of Award of Excellence for 2015, the highest wine honor awarded to an establishment in the state of Pennsylvania.

“This is great for Justin both personally and professionally, and also great for The Rittenhouse,” said Rittenhouse General Manager Reginald Archambault. “It’s no accident that we have the only Advanced Sommelier working on a dining room floor in the entire state. As we strive to be one of the best hotels in the United States, if not the world, Justin’s recent achievements are in line with the level of expertise that we demonstrate across the property.”

Timsit was surrounded by wine from a very young age. His father, a wine enthusiast who worked in the fashion industry, taught Timsit to appreciate that every bottle of wine has a unique story and experience. After a seven-year career in the fashion industry, during which he often traveled to Northern California wine country, Timsit decided to take an introductory sommelier exam and quickly decided that wine was a passion that he wanted to pursue full-time. Now, only one-and-a-half years later, Timsit has made one of the fastest known progressions to the Court of Master Sommeliers’ advanced level, a process that usually requires years of study and hands-on experience.

At the Rittenhouse Hotel, Timsit has improved upon a wine program with an already stellar reputation. He has hosted a number of dinners and tasting events featuring some of the best wine producers and importers in the world. In March, Timsit hosted an exclusive dinner with Philippe Pacalet, a top Burgundy winemaker whose extremely rare wines are very well respected but virtually unknown outside of a select group in the industry. Last November, Timsit was able to host sommelier icon & winemaker, Mr. Rajat Parr, for a special dinner and exclusive after hours tasting event in The Rittenhouse’s Library Bar. Parr’s wines had never before been seen in Pennsylvania, and had to be brought into the state under a special arrangement Timsit has established with the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board for exclusive access to wine that is typically out of reach statewide.

Of the 1,250 wines that The Rittenhouse stocks in its cellar, 40 to 50 percent are not found anywhere else in Pennsylvania. Timsit said that by stocking these rare and exclusive wines - including 50 served by the

glass - and caring for, serving, and presenting them properly at a competitive price, he hopes to create a thriving wine culture in Philadelphia on par with New York City or California.

“I love our program because we have the most depth of any cellar I’ve seen in the state and knowledgeable guests who want high end products, but at the same time we can also cater to guests who’d like a casual experience,” Timsit said. “We have great versatility at our restaurant Lacroix, and each bottle of wine has a story to share. Whether a guest comes in looking for a simple and approachable bottle of wine or an iconic bottle of wine, they’ll get the same level of VIP service throughout their experience.”

Following Timsit’s recent advancement, The Rittenhouse plans to continue upgrading and improving their wine program. The Rittenhouse’s wedding plans may soon include Timsit’s services, with specially chosen, unique wine pairings and with Timsit sharing his expertise on the reception floor. This fall, Timsit says he intends to host another world-class dinner and tasting at The Rittenhouse, featuring prominent wine makers from Corsica. In addition to wine dinners at The Rittenhouse, Timsit intends to foster an educational environment for wine enthusiasts, from people in the industry to the general public, with monthly wine classes and cellar tastings at the hotel.

“Philadelphia has the potential to become a central hub for people who take wine seriously,” Timsit said. “With The Rittenhouse’s vast cellar and our ability to stock rare and unique wines that are near-impossible to find anywhere else in the state, we are perfectly situated to pioneer a local wine culture that can compete on the national or even international level.”

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### **About The Rittenhouse**

The Rittenhouse, a 116-room independent luxury hotel that has received the prestigious AAA Five Diamond award for more than 20 years, is a member of Leading Hotels of the World and considered Philadelphia’s most distinguished address. Opened in 1989, The Rittenhouse is ideally situated on Philadelphia’s famed Rittenhouse Square, within walking distance to the heart of the business district and premier shopping corridor. Additionally, the hotel affords easy access to the Philadelphia Convention Center and all of the City’s numerous arts, cultural, dining and entertainment venues. [www.RittenhouseHotel.com](http://www.RittenhouseHotel.com)

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