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AUX LYONNAIS
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ALAIN DUCASSE



The Challenge

Taken over in September 2002, the "Aux Lyonnais" restaurant, "a Paris bistro dedicated to Lyonnaise regional cuisine", opened its doors on October 15, 2002.

Perch, pike, crayfish and frogs from la Dombes, open-range poultry from the farm, pieces of beef, cheeses from Isère, charcuterie, wines from South Macon to North of the Rhone... are just a few of the regional produce lovingly prepared by those legendary "Mothers" and by top chefs and other Epicureans. Now, in turn, the "Aux Lyonnais" bistro pays homage to this regional cuisine.

The Cuisine

"Without challenging the traditional taste combinations, we wanted to update the regional Lyonnaise cuisine so that more people could know and enjoy it. The flavors must state themselves distinctly both to the palate and on the plate", explains the chef, Francis Fauvel, who is directing the kitchen. For instance, "Sabodet" is a cooked sausage based on the meat from a pig's head.

However, rather than being cut into thick slices and hidden in a strongly flavored salad, at "Aux Lyonnais" it is instead gently poached in a flavorful broth, finely sliced and heaped with fine slivers of potato perfumed with a light gribiche sauce. The open-range chicken, rather than having a thick accompanying sauce is roasted to perfection and garnished with mushrooms, tomatoes and onions to keep it moist and impart flavor, before de-glazing the pan with vinegar and serving it in its own cooking juices. "Rigorous methods are used to reduce and bind the juices and bring out the flavors", the young chef also tells us.

Part of this update are the "*Coddled eggs*", the "*Lyonnaise chef pot*", our "*Famous quenelles, Nantua sauce*" (according to Lucien Tendret's recipe from 1892), the "*Calf's liver with parsley and garlic, tender potatoes*" or the "*Tart and floating island with pink praline*".

The Wines

G rard Margeon, chef sommelier for Alain Ducasse restaurants, and Rudy Reis, sommelier at "Aux Lyonnais", have expanded upon the contents of the bistro's cellar. They also regularly shop around, from Lyon to Dijon, through Bugey, the north of the Rh ne Valley and, for those resolute, a short detour through Bordeaux. A way to maintain and renew the "Lyonnais wine list", rich with over than a hundred references. They all come from very famous and acclaimed French vineyards (ex: M. Lafarge, S. Aladame, R. Jobart Th nard, Ph. Faury, G. Robin ...) or others still to discover (Ch teau Signac, A.S. Debavelaere, Vallet). "I wanted to celebrate French terroir within the vertical axis that goes from Burgundy to the Rh ne Valley and through the Lyonnais region, as well as its winegrowing, recognized for their age-old or budding "savoir-faire," explains G rard Margeon. An excellent example is Cerdon; a very rare effervescent ros  wine, produced using an ancestral method, or the Corton Grand Cru or the C te-R tie, which are served by the glass or in a crystal carafe. There are also some more playful wines, such as the Coteaux du Lyonnais, C te-Roannaise, or some local wines... It is up to the customer to choose or just let himself be tempted by the "daily selections" listed on the blackboard.

The Place

Rigor and quality yet total simplicity. This traditional bistro, first created in 1890, has kept its red wood façade and its bistro sign "Maison Lyonnaise". It cultivates the atmosphere of the traditional Lyonnais bistros or "bouchons".

On the sideboard an old piston-type coffee machine huffs and puffs steam. Behind the zinc and tin clad wooden counter a few wine bottles sit in a wine rack under a continuous stream of cold water waiting to be opened. Upstairs, customers on club chairs chat as they patiently await a table. Wood paneling and floral patterned moldings, nineteenth century "art pompier" light fixtures and "metro" tiles decorate the walls and ceilings. The creations of Jean-Claude Novaro, the famous glazier from Biot, are dotted here and there. Everywhere, beveled mirrors reflect the comings and goings of the two rooms on two floors as busy waiters deftly move between the tables carrying copper fry pans or orange-coated cast-iron pans.

On the steel-reinforced oak tables lie the white napkins and plates, mismatched silverware and faceted water goblets, and balloon wine glasses.

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Practical Information

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Open Tuesday through Friday for lunch and Tuesday through Saturday for dinner.

Lunch menu at 32 euros / Dinner menu at 35 euros