

Barbara Joy Cooley's Favorite Restaurants in Paris – 2009

[Google Map of Restaurant Locations and Web Sites](#)

15th Arrondissement

When we take a pleasant walk down avenue Émile Zola toward the Seine, we come upon a lovely restaurant called **Oh! Duo**. This place also has absolutely superb food. The chef is Joel Valero. Madame Valero runs the “front” of the house. She is a lovely, smart, and friendly person. Prices are reasonable. This place would be among our first choices almost anytime. Telephone 01-45-77-28-82; fax 01-45-75-09-31. 54 avenue Émile Zola. Closed midday Saturday; closed Sunday and Monday eve.

L'Épopée (89 avenue Émile Zola, 01-45-77-71-37), is a place where we are very warmly greeted and where we dine on absolutely excellent food. We'd been going there for years. Last year, it came under new ownership, a younger couple. But that isn't necessarily bad. We've been there twice since the change. If anything, the restaurant is better than ever, and it has had some new life added to the menu. The place is slightly expensive, but worth every penny. Don't miss the prawn ravioli with curry sauce appetizer. With the new owners, the curry sauce is spicier and the prawns are softly cooked to perfection. All of the food is exceptionally good, and décor is very pleasing.

Our “highest quality plus best value” selection is **Le Blavet** (75bis rue de Lourmel, Telephone 01-45-79-08-16). The chef here really has his act together. The food is fresh, seasonal, and beautifully prepared. We haven't had a mediocre or bad dish there yet. Madame is quirky, however. You must order all three courses at this restaurant. And you must decide at the beginning what dessert you are going to have. Plus you must each order your appetizer, then each one orders the main course, then each orders dessert, in that order, no exceptions. And you better hang up your coat when you come in the door. Madame is bossy and obsessive-compulsive. But once you accept that, her quirks can become a source of entertainment and amusement. Do not let her scare you away. The food here is just too good, and the value is too great.

Near the big La Motte Picquet métro station is a big traditional resto with lots of outdoor tables (and a lovely indoor dining room, too) and male waiters in white shirts with black vests. It is **La Gauloise**, 59 avenue de la Motte-Picquet. The pork ribs, when they are offered on the menu, are divine, and so is the leg of lamb. Best I've ever had. I mean it. And the filet (steak) is very good – hard to find in Europe. The steak comes with a rich, brown sauce. The crème brûlée is absolutely correct. Telephone (and do reserve if you want to eat outside with the smokers!) 01-47-34-11-64.

Even better on the avenue de la Motte-Picquet is **La Gitane**, an excellent restaurant. The menu is more modern than La Gauloise, and it also has great barbequed pork ribs from time to time. The reception is warm and friendly, and the choices on the menu give you a break from the traditional bistrot food. If you like seafood, the skate (*raie*) is not to be missed. Prices are quite reasonable, and the dining room is very pleasant. Even though the Eiffel Tower is not far away, this is a place with almost entirely locals; tourists tend to go to the nearby brasseries instead. 53 bis avenue de la Motte-Picquet. Telephone 01-47-34-62-92.

A newer discovery for us is **Marie Edith**, a charming place tucked away at 34 rue de Laos. The food is, while not inexpensive, a very good value. The service is quite nice, and the décor is warm. The *souris d'agneau* is wonderful – so tender it just falls apart. Telephone 01-45-66-44-60.

Another top choice: **Stephane Martin**, 67 rue des Entrepreneurs. The chef here has an Alsatian specialty, *jarret de porc*, that you just have to try. It is a large pork roast, tender, juicy & falling

apart, served with red cabbage that has been cooked in honey and red wine (not bitter at all). It must be ordered for two. All the other food there is very fine, too. Service is very friendly - they even step outside and wave hello to you if they see you walking down the street (i.e., when they get to know you). Telephone 01-45-79-03-31.

In our favorite corner of the 15th arrondissement is **L'Antre Amis**, 9 rue Bouchut. Try the tomato tarte with mozzarella. Yumm. There are lots of good things to eat here. Portions are nice and small – just right, if you ask me. Service is good, albeit slightly cool until they get to know you. The location just can't be beat if you want to eat outside because the square is so quiet. And this place is air conditioned, too. Telephone 01-45-67-15-65.

Just outside the métro stop at Émile Zola is a North African place called **Le Tipaza**. It is open 7 days a week, even on Bastille Day, and seems to have been open this entire month of August. It is really popular, and by 9pm the place can be packed. The couscous and roasted/grilled meats are great, and the prices aren't bad at all. A big pot of roasted vegetables comes with the couscous. The décor is fun – lots of very decorative plasterwork and tile, and a marble floor. 150 avenue Emile Zola, Telephone 01-45-79-22-25. Fax 01-45-79-22-65. While there are many North African restos in Paris, few are this good. (Note: the *sole meunière* on the menu is not really *sole meunière*, but merely a good, lightly fried fish.)

Le Minzingue, far away from the tourists and across from the charming St. John the Baptist of Grenelle church at the end of the rue du Commerce in the 15th arrondissement, brings something of the provinces to the big city. Specifically, it brings the cuisine of the Auvergne, artfully presented to you by Jean-Louis Piqueronies. If you have the nerve to try traditional Andouillette A.A.A.A.A., this would be a good place to do it. The wine list is extensive and you can order just about any wine by the glass. Address is 5 place Etienne Pernet, telephone 01-45-32-48-54.

A big, fancy Corsican resto, **La Villa Corse**, is at 164 boulevard de Grenelle. We've had excellent food there. It is expensive, and the food is very, very good. But the main attraction is that the place is SO comfortable, with upholstered leather armchairs, and it is air conditioned. Telephone 01-53-86-70-81.

When you are REALLY hungry, we must talk about **L'Os A Moelle**, 3 rue Vasco de Gama. This is a *prix fixe* place, and the menu is written by hand on a big blackboard that they bring to your table. There are something like five courses, and you get to choose among two or so items for each course. The food is copious and excellent. This is a traditional type of place, hard to find, so go for it. Telephone 01-45-57-27-27. And when you aren't feeling so gourmand, try the café run by L'Os A Moelle around the corner on rue Lourmel.

Our favorite local Indian restaurant is **Banani** at 148 rue de la Croix Nivert. The red fried onions (an appetizer) are out of this world – soooo wonderful. Telephone 01-48-28-73-92 or 01-48-28-68-73. Fax 01-40-45-04-45.

A new place (as of summer 2009) with handsome décor, fine food, and good prices is **Le Granite**, just off of the avenue Felix Faure on the peaceful corner of the rue Durantan and the rue Plélo, telephone 01-45-58-43-17. The rack of lamb is excellent, and the *aumonière* is a tasty, hearty dish for fish lovers. Service is attentive and friendly, and you will definitely not be surrounded by tourists here – just locals.

7th Arrondissement

A fabulous find for us was **Auberge D'chez Eux**, at 2 avenue Lowendal in the 7th arrondissement. This is French food at its best. Don't miss the escargot. They are just as good as those of the chef Tom Johnson – unbelievably good. Everything on the menu is good. The meals served here are copious, so bring your appetite. The place is famous for its *foie gras*,

which you can buy by the jar to take home. Everything that is good about southwestern French cuisine can be found here, in fine form. Telephone 01-47-05-52-55. Reservations are a must, I think.

Don't miss the oldest restaurant in Paris, **La Petite Chaise**. Unlike La Procopé, this restaurant has been in business continuously since 1680. The food is very, very good, and traditional. The service is as warm and friendly as can be. See the upstairs dining room; it is pretty, and it is packed with history. While slightly expensive, the three-course fixed-price menu does provide good value. 36 rue de Grenelle. Telephone 01-42-22-13-35.

The best for any brasserie is that of **Le Bourbon** on the Place du Palais Bourbon, in the shadow of the National Assembly (the French analogue of the House of Representatives). This brasserie is far better than most, and the prices are good. You will no doubt be sitting near important political or governmental people when you dine there. Check the blackboard for the specials. We did, and we had the best spaghetti with meat sauce ever. I'm not kidding. Great food, good prices, and outdoor dining in August! We did have one obnoxious server there, but hopefully he has moved on. 1 Place du Bourbon. Telephone 01-45-51-58-27.

At 31 rue Saint-Dominique you'll find **Le Square**, a restaurant facing the beautiful park in front of the lovely Sainte Clotilde Basilica. What a view! We each had veal piccata there, and it could not have been tastier or better prepared. The portion was quite small, but it was served with a large dish of delightful finely puréed potatoes and so we were quite satisfied. Prices on the appetizers and desserts are a bit too high. But we were able to just have a main course, and no eyebrows were raised. Telephone 01-45-51-09-03.

Situated just behind the Sainte Clotilde Basilica is **Le Basilic**, a bistro that says it specializes in Gigot (a lamb roast). We ordered the rack of lamb, and it was juicy, tasty, and very much medium rare (which suits us perfectly, but may not be okay with others). The accompanying sauce was fine and savory. I started with a terrine of aubergine that came with a salad and perfect vinaigrette. Tom had the chef's apple tart, which was very good (but not as good as Oh! Duo's or L'Épopée's). The prices are very reasonable for the high quality of the food. Service was excellent. 2 rue Casimir Perier, Telephone 01-44-18-94-64.

Tucked away at number 10, rue Amélie, is **Le Petit Niçois**, a gem of a restaurant with modern French cuisine. Don't be afraid of the prices. The food is worth it. The fish of the day, even with its per-person supplemental cost, will no doubt please you. This elegant restaurant is popular among working professionals in Paris, so it is best to reserve in advance, and probably essential to do so on weekends. Dress appropriately. You won't see many t-shirts or blue jeans here. According to *Le Monde*, the chef, a young man named Alain Hacquard and his partner, Carlos Romeira, are doing a "spectacular" job. Telephone 01-45-51-83-65.

When you find yourselves hungry near Bon Marché, try the **Café les Mouettes** at the corner of rue du Bac and rue de Babylone. It is a tiny corner café with the informal ambiance and décor of a diner. Prices are very, very reasonable, and the daily specials can be extraordinarily good. This is a good place for lunch – even a very, very late lunch – when you are tired of shopping or walking. 130 rue du Bac. Telephone 01-45-48-71-53.

6th Arrondissement

Our top recommendation in the 6th is **L'Épi Dupin** at 11 rue Dupin, near Bon Marché. It is only open from Monday through Friday. The place is small, so you better make a reservation. The food is fantastic, and creative; not too traditional. Don't miss this one. Plan ahead. Telephone 01-42-22-64-56.

A nice place for Sunday brunch is **Marie-Thé** at 102 rue du Cherche-Midi. On Sundays, the traffic isn't so bad and you can sit on the sidewalk to eat in peace without too much auto exhaust blowing your way. The food is very good, and very reasonably priced. Service is attentive and friendly. Telephone 01-42-22-50-40.

In the 6th arrondissement, at 14 rue Mabillon, is a place called **Bistrot de la Grille St. Germain**. Always very busy, but really very good, especially when you order from the specials on the blackboard. It may appear that the place is too full and there's no room for you, but know that there is a big upstairs dining room. Don't miss the homemade *terrine de la mere Brazier*. Telephone 01-43-54-16-87.

Everyone has to have a favorite big brasserie of the sort that Hemingway and Joyce used to go to. Ours is **Le Select**, at 99 boulevard Montparnasse. You can order a *croque monsieur* or *croque madame* on Poilane (country-style) bread – yummy, and filling. Prices are reasonable, and the service is experienced and fine. Seriously consider ordering from the blackboard. I did recently, and was served a whole dorade (Mediterranean fish) with a lemon *beurre blanc* that was absolutely delicious. Take time to visit the great old cat who lives at Le Select. He usually is napping somewhere near the top of the steps that lead down to the restrooms (*les toilettes*). Telephone 01-45-48-38-24.

Also on the boulevard Montparnasse, at number 145, is **Restaurant L'Abri Cotier**. It features Corsican food, with the emphasis on seafood. It is not pretentious, yet it is elegant in a simple, country sort-of way. The *sole meunière* is to die for. The *filet mignon de porc* is generous and extremely good. Desserts are delightful. Madame is very friendly. Don't miss the appetizer with Corsican ham. Choose your own lobster from the tank. Eat profiteroles stuffed with escargot for a starter, or filled with cream and doused with chocolate for dessert. Just be sure to go, and be happy. Telephone 01-43-26-03-89.

La Brasserie Saint Benoit is located in that busy Saint Germain area at 26 rue Saint Benoit. Very attractive, with a mirrored wall at the back making it look twice as big as it is, the brasserie offers friendly service and good traditional fare prepared correctly at reasonable prices. We're the kind of people who do not go to Café de Flore and the Deux Magots just BECAUSE they are too famous and trendy. We prefer a brasserie like this, just around the corner. Telephone 01-45-48-29-66.

If you want to eat good, very reasonably priced food in a stunningly gorgeous Art Nouveau restaurant, don't miss the **Bouillon Racine**, 3 rue Racine. (See the entry below for Chartier, for an explanation of "bouillon," For a very interesting history of the Bouillon Racine, [click here](#). It is obviously written by a native French speaker, not a native speaker of English, but that just makes the narrative more charming.) Bouillon Racine has modernized its menu more than Chartier has, and that may be a plus for many people. The food is good, reasonably priced, and the experience is priceless. Telephone 01-44-32-15-60.

If you prefer smaller, more intimate traditional bistrotts, try **Au Bon Saint-Pourçain** at the corner of rue du Canivet and rue Servandoni. This is a great place to try traditional fare such as leeks in vinaigrette, *sole meunière*, escargots, veal of all sorts, and the house wine, the Saint-Pourçain. We've been told that the *boeuf aux olives* is tasty and tender. Bring cash; credit cards are not accepted here. Telephone 01-43-54-93-63.

A slightly larger and more elegant place is **Chez Maître Paul**. The cuisine is traditional, and the restaurant does very, very well with poultry, meat, and vegetables. I would not recommend them for seafood, however. Desserts are great, and with the 36 euro three-course-plus-wine fixed-price menu, the prices are okay, and the ambiance of spacious, quiet elegance is very nice and relaxing. Address is 12 rue Monsieur le Prince, telephone 01-43-54-74-59.

Also in the 6th is **Séraphin**, 5 rue Mabillon. Updated, lighter, healthier food is served here, in a lively and friendly place with good shopping nearby. Good place for lunch – and breakfast, too. Telephone 01-56-24-41-00. You'll notice many other tempting restaurants (almost all **open in August**) around the corner from Séraphin on the rue Guisarde and the rue des Canettes – most cater to tourists.

Get away from the tourists and from French food and try the **New Aqib** restaurant. This is fine Indian cuisine in a warm, friendly atmosphere at 47 rue Monsieur Le Prince (recently moved there from the 17th arrondissement). The vegetable samossas are the best I've ever tasted, and the korma is divine. Also served are tandoori dishes with massala sauce. Prices are very, very reasonable. Telephone 01-43-54-59-49.

Elsewhere in Paris

If you find yourself up on the rue de Rivoli near the Tuileries, have lunch or tea at **Angelina's**, a famous tea room. It's elegance is looking a bit tattered these days, but the meals are good, and very reasonably priced. The large dining room is decked out with crystal chandeliers, and many people love the hot chocolate here. 226 rue de Rivoli, Telephone 01 42 60 82 00.

After wandering around Montmartre on a weekend day, find your way halfway down the hill (take the steps called rue M. Utrillo, to the right as you face Sacre Coeur) to a very pleasant square where rue Paul Albert and rue Muller meet. You can dine casually outdoors there at **La Passerelle**, and soak up some great ambiance. 6 rue Paul Albert, Telephone 01-42-58-33-05.

In the heart of the old part of Paris, on the somewhat hidden Place Dauphine, overlooked by the Palais de Justice on the Ile de la Cité is **Le Caveau du Palais**. This fine, comfortable restaurant is stretched out along the sidewalk facing a quiet, old neighborhood park where boules are always being played. Professional chefs are in charge of the kitchen, and you can tell. The food is traditional, and it is terrifically good. Bring your appetite; portions are generous. Don't miss out on the tender braised beef cooked in rich broth with carrots. And if you like truly authentic *Andouillette*, this is a great place to eat it. 17-19 Place Dauphine, Telephone 01-43-26-04-28.

In the 5th arrondissement, near the Pantheon, is **Le Petit Prince de Paris**, 12 rue de Lanneau. This place is good value. It isn't as small and intimate as our very favorite places, but when our neighborhood favorites are closed, this does very nicely. The *bloc de foie gras* is high-quality and well presented. Be sure to have the *porcelet* – pork with a rich red wine and honey sauce, served with Lyonnaise potatoes. The sauce is superb; the pork tender and juicy and tasty; and the Lyonnaise potatoes don't get any better than this. Telephone 01-43-54-77-26.

Café Hugo is where we go when walking in the Marais, and in particular, when we're in the Place des Vosges. I love their big salads. But they offer other good things, too. My friend Heather likes their onion soup and club sandwiches. I'd say the food is light, and corners are not cut here. Prices are very reasonable, and you just can't beat the setting, in the arcade of the old and attractive Place des Vosges. This is a super place for lunch or tea. 22 Place des Vosges, telephone 01-42-72-64-04.

Someplace that will save your life when you're starving as you walk along the Champs Élysées is a nice *terrasse*, **Le Petit Élysée**, at 49 avenue Franklin Roosevelt (phone 43-59-91-06). Sit in the shade and have an excellent salad with goat cheese (the cheese, on slices of French bread, is expertly broiled with spices on top). Prices are reasonable here, unlike on the Champs Élysées itself.

If you've shopped at the big stores on boulevard Haussmann until you simply must have lunch, or if you have to make regular pilgrimages to the Federal Express office like we do, be sure to stop

for lunch at the **Triadou Haussmann**. Order from the specials on the blackboard if you can; but know that the *travers de porc* (pork ribs), always on the main menu, are great. Lunch will be happily served as late in the afternoon as you can imagine -- right up to dinnertime. And dinner here would be fine, I'm sure. Service is friendly and even amusing. And it is a fantastic place for people-watching. This handsome, historic brasserie is more than a brasserie; I think it is a real restaurant, and a real treat. 80 boulevard Haussmann. Telephone 01-43-87-47-67.

Finding really traditional French restaurants is becoming increasingly difficult as their owners reach retirement age and sell the places to someone who opens a trendy (but not traditional) resto or something foreign, like an Italian ristorante.

But when you're tired from shopping in the big stores on the Boulevard Haussmann and you find yourself to the east of the stores, not to the west (where Triadou Haussmann is located), try Chartier's, an authentically traditional restaurant. Chartier's was once a chain, born of a movement that started in the 19th Century when certain butchers started making up a hearty broth and serving it to working-class customers. Some expanded the menu with other basic, traditional items. Then they somehow transformed into elaborate restaurants, serving traditional, inexpensive food.

There is only one **Chartier** left, located at 7 rue du Faubourg Montmartre in the 9th arrondissement. The place is gorgeous, and you can still see cubbyholes where the napkins of regular customers were kept until they returned. Servers still wear long white aprons and black waistcoats or vests. The food is traditional. Want to try *tete de veau*? This is your place. Telephone 01 47 70 86 29.

Ah, here's another traditional place, but not as inexpensive: In the 16th arrondissement, in the old Auteuil neighborhood, is **Auberge de Mouton Blanc**, 40 rue d'Auteuil. The specialty, juicy thin slices of tender lamb, is not to be missed. They have a pretty good deal on a fixed price 3-course menu that includes a half bottle of wine. Do try it when you're in the 16th. Telephone 01-42-88-02-21.

Le Tournesol is an attractive bistrot in a part of the 16th arrondissement that does not have many restaurants at all. That's why the restaurant's business card says "votre bistrot du 16eme," an easier claim when there isn't much else. It is located at 2 avenue de Lamballe, at the intersection with avenue President Kennedy, overlooking the Seine – or rather, overlooking the highway that occupies the right bank of the Seine. We discovered it by taking long walks in the 16th, needing to be refueled before going home at the end of the day. The food is wholesome, good traditional fare prepared using fresh ingredients. A little Asian influence is thrown in here and there to add interest. And the prices are fair, not *très sezieme*. While this place could succumb to mediocrity due to lack of nearby competition, it hasn't done so. It offers service 7 days a week, and advertises wifi access. Telephone 01-45-25-95-94.