

food & travel

by Billy Cone
 photography by Brownie Harris

39, Rue de Jean

Charleston's Claim to Authentic French Cuisine

Now Charleston has a genuine French Brasserie to brag about, and 39, Rue de Jean is a serious effort to bring the classic country cooking of France to the South, thus breaking the pattern of Lowcountry Cuisine in every other local establishment. Owner and manager Andy Fallen was born in Paris, so from an early age he has cultivated an intimate knowledge of French culture and cuisine. After 25 years' restaurant experience in America, working in New York City, Killington Ski Resort in Vermont, and being a partner of the city's own Peninsula Grill, Andy is bringing what is now hot and fashionable in the big city to 39, Rue de Jean. No holds were barred in creating the perfect and authentic atmosphere for this restaurant which finds itself in a unique location north of Calhoun Street or what is called Upper King Street.

As a lover of all things French, I was delighted to see the traditional zinc bar counter complete with imbibing guests, the smartly appointed red leather banquettes with hat and coat rails, the vintage mirrored glass, the high ceilings, the freshly varnished wooden chairs, and most importantly, the simple-to-comprehend menu full of wonderful hors d'oeuvres and hearty entrees with a slight twist – delectably fresh sushi. If you're looking for something lighter than the classic French fare there is a marvelous selection of sushi, maki and temaki.

I was seated at a perfect table at the back of the restaurant where we could ask our attractive hostesses ques-

tions and get suggestions. In keeping with the mood of the place, I requested a simple earthy red; however, Andy had something more sophisticated, yet affordable, to satisfy our desires – a Gigondas Côte du Rhone Le Grand

Montmirail. As we sipped red wine, menus were passed around which listed a *plat du jour* specialty for each day of the week. Immediately I spotted my favorites, Tuesday's Boeuf Bourguignon and Saturday's authentic Cassoulet of Duck Confit, white beans and smoked sausage, the epitome of rich and satisfying.

This night we were graced with plump succulent mussels, Pistou of garlic, basil, and extra virgin olive oil while other variations of this dish include Curry, a vegetable cream, Aioli, Brittany (beer, shallots and thyme), and a Marinier (white wine, shallot and parsley). What a joy it was to soak up the pesto juices with real baguette slices! After the awesome appetizer I enjoyed a frisée salad Lyonnaise with smoked bacon lardons, a warm poached egg and hazelnut vinaigrette. My friends offered me some of their exotic eel

rolls and spicy tuna rolls which were better than those at most sushi bars I have frequented. We had to be in Heaven.

Our hostesses ordered for the four of us the braised short ribs with mashed potatoes a la butter and cream. Stupendous! The tender and moist pork chop with bone in had a sweet sauce of calvados and caramelized apple reduction. Somewhere along the way Chef Fred Neville must have done an apprenticeship in a French Brasserie.



CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA
39
RUE DE JEAN
BAR CAFE



Pork Chop Brittany with roast potatoes, cabbage, caramelized apples, and calvados sauce.

French linen provided by Yves Delorme® Paris, Charleston, South Carolina

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CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

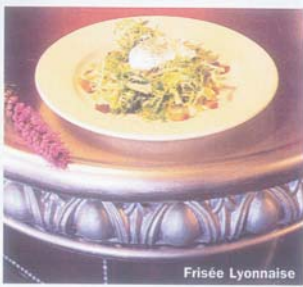
39 RUE DE JEAN

BAR CAFE



The cooking lives up to this possibility and more. Saving room for dessert, we chose to skip the NY Steak Frites and Grilled Grouper with lemon marinated fennel salad, fresh herbs and aioli.

Let the desserts begin! 39, Rue de Jean also has the sweet goods, so definitely save a place for at least a little hot crème brûlée, or decadent terrine of chocolate pate, or maybe the poached Grand Marnier whole pear with sugar coated pistachios. Here dining is about renewal and restoration of the soul, enjoying yourself and your friends while refueling the spirit. From fresh oysters and clams and Japanese sushi to the stick-to-your-bones homemade cooking of Old France and exquisite desserts, there is now a place with a special "they know your name" environment just north of Calhoun that is sure to cure anything that ails you, especially a hunger for good food.



Frisée Lyonnaise

39, Rue de Jean is open daily for lunch and dinner till 2:00AM, with an open kitchen until midnight. 39 John Street, Charleston, SC. For reservations, call 843. 722.8881.

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39 john street • charleston, sc • 843.722.8881
www.39ruedejean.com