



No portion of this article may be reproduced without
express written permission of Style Publishing Group, LLC.
©2007 • All rights reserved.



Style Publishing Group
P.O. Box 1676
Frisco, Texas 75034
Phone: 972.335.1181
Toll Free: 877.781.7067
Fax: 214.722.2313

E-mail: info@friscostyle.com
Web: www.friscostyle.com

Ad Sales: (972) 335-1306



Chicken Paillard (left); Sidecar (right)
photos by Chris Fritchie

Bonnie Ruth's Café Trottoir et Patisserie

By Lee Ratliff

WHILE THE POPULATION CENTER of Frisco continues to move toward the northwest, those booming neighborhoods remain relatively devoid of quality eating establishments. Hungry denizens of those neglected neighborhoods have reluctantly trekked to one of the hundreds of restaurants near S.H.121 and Preston Road. However, the recent opening of Bonnie Ruth's Café Trottoir et Patisserie in the Shops at Starwood promises to bring a great eating experience a little

closer to the hinterlands.

Café Trottoir describes itself as an "authentic Parisian bistro and sidewalk café." The bistro attempts to recall the golden age of Parisian café society during the early years of the last century. This feat of time travel is achieved and is possible in a suburban Texas shopping center less than six months old.

Entering Café Trottoir, you are likely to be greeted by Ernie Ianace, part of the husband and wife team that owns

the restaurant. His wife – café namesake, Bonnie Ruth – is the chef responsible for the heart of the operation, the kitchen. This is not the pair's first foray in the restaurant business. They met while working at Chile's Bar and Grill when both were students at SMU. Since then, they've started several restaurant concepts including the successful Bonnie Ruth's Café and Catering in Dallas's Casa Linda Plaza.

The cozy tables, leather benches, and black and white checkerboard floors all lend to the comfortable atmosphere. There are no fast food-style booths to detract from the Belle Époque ambience. A beautiful little patio features comfortable seating with a nice stone fireplace and patio heaters to keep the early spring chill at bay.

The bar, with its grand antique appearance, dominates the entry. It's dark wood with a vaulting mirrored backbar – the perfect place to spend a few minutes with a cocktail before dinner.

In fact, the promise of an expertly prepared cocktail is exactly what led me to start at the bar during a recent visit. I ordered an old-school French cocktail – a Sidecar (\$8) - partly in homage to the occasion and partly to test the competence of the bartender with a classic, but not an in-vogue drink. At least on this occasion, he passed the test. The drink – a blend of cognac, Cointreau, and lemon juice – was very good, though it lacked the standard sugared rim. I don't know if this was a mistake or if he was trying to out-old-school me by reaching way back to the original drink without the sugared rim. If so, touché.

On our visit, the wind kept us off the otherwise pleasant patio, so we were shown to a nice table inside.

Just as I make it habit to test bartenders, I also test the quality of a restaurant by the quality of bread that is served. Again, Café Trottoir rose to the occasion. The complimentary bread served as a starter was crusty and chewy, with a dense, refined crumb.

We started with an order of Pommes Frites (\$4). Served in a cone of newsprint, these ambitious French fries



Sidcar Cocktail

LEGEND HAS IT that the Sidcar was invented in a Paris bar during World War I. The bartender created it for an American Army captain who was driven to the bar in a motorcycle sidcar.

The quality of the ingredients is especially important for a Sidcar. Any good quality brandy can be substituted for cognac. Triple Sec can be substituted for Cointreau in a pinch, but the taste will suffer. The lemon juice should be fresh.

1 ½ ounces cognac
1 ounce Cointreau
½ ounce fresh lemon juice

Combine all ingredients in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake well and strain into a chilled cocktail glass with a sugared rim. To sugar the rim, rub a lemon wedge around the inside edge of the rim and dip the inverted glass into a dish of sugar. Garnish with a twist of lemon peel if you desire.

Sources: *The Joy of Mixology* by Gary Regan; Wikipedia

frisco STYLE MAGAZINE



Style Publishing Group

P.O. Box 1676

Frisco, Texas 75034

Phone: 972.335.1181

Toll Free: 877.781.7067

Fax: 214.722.2313

E-mail: info@friscostyle.com

Web: www.friscostyle.com

Ad Sales: (972) 335-1306



were accompanied by both ketchup and lemon aioli, a tangy garlic infused variation of homemade mayonnaise. It's just a matter of personal taste, but I was somewhat disappointed that the fries were nearly indistinguishable from those at McDonalds. I know a lot of people like their fries crisp and starchy, uniform, and skin-free, but I'd prefer something a little more obviously homemade in taste and appearance.

The entrée menu lists many intriguing and mouthwatering dishes, including Steak au Poivre (peppercorn crusted filet - \$26), Cassoulet Moderne (grilled sausage on white bean ragout with Bayonne ham topped with duck confit - \$16), and Skate Grenobloise (sautéed skate with fingerling potatoes - \$18).

Despite the sign in the kitchen that was clearly visible from our table ("Sea Bass \$26 -Push this item tonight!"), we chose the Chicken Paillard and Steak Frites.

The Chicken Paillard (\$16) was a thinly pounded breast sautéed in white wine, lemon and capers. The chicken was extraordinarily tender with a buttery, tangy taste. It was accompanied by baby asparagus and a very good puree of potato and celery root.

My companion ordered the Steak Frites (\$18), a nicely seasoned New York Strip with a red wine demi-glaze and parsley butter. It was served with more of the pommes frites.

We ended the meal by choosing two desserts from among the numerous dishes on the dessert tray. Nearly all of the desserts were cakes and we settled on the Blueberry Cake (\$5) and the Carrot Cake (\$5). Both cakes were incredible--possibly the best restaurant desserts I've had in years. Both were moist with a light texture. The Blueberry Cake consisted of layers of white cake filled with a blueberry sauce and topped with a cream cheese icing that is so addictive it may not be legal. The Carrot Cake also used the same cream cheese icing. I almost always finish my dessert with excess icing left over, but on this occasion, I was scraping the plate.

On a return lunch visit we had equally good luck. The boysenberry iced tea (\$2) was very good, not overpowering, as many flavored teas seem to be. I had a combo of a half sandwich with a bowl



Carrot Cake

photo by Chris Fritchie

of soup (\$8). I chose the Prime Rib a la Basque sandwich with a bowl of Onion Soup Gratinee. The sandwich - several slabs of tender prime rib with roasted peppers, onions and mushrooms topped with provolone and served on a French roll - was delicious. The portion was almost a meal in itself, but I also had the soup, a tasty onion broth topped with garlic croutons and Gruyere cheese.

My companion ordered the Chicken Pecan Salade sandwich (\$7.50), which was an excellent chicken salad with crunchy pecans for texture. The sandwich was served on nice whole grain bread with pommes frites on the side.

Based on our previous experience, we ordered dessert with high expectations. We weren't disappointed. The Lemon Strawberry Cake (\$5) was a layered pound cake, filled with strawberry preserves, and topped with their

delicious cream cheese icing. The cake was excellent, but we detected no trace of lemon.

Even better was the Chocolate Cake (\$5). I'm usually disappointed with chocolate cake at restaurants, but not this time. This single layer cake was moist, not dense, not too sweet, and had an intense chocolate flavor. It was iced with chocolate frosting and sprinkled with chopped walnuts.

Bonnie Ruth's Café Trottoir et Patisserie is certainly a premier addition to Frisco's dining scene. The excellence of its lunch and dinner menu is exceeded only by the quality of its dessert tray.

Bonnie Ruth's Café Trottoir et Patisserie is located at 6959 Lebanon Road in the Shops at Starwood.

Lee Ratliff is our expert "foodie" and ice cream entrepreneur.