

Le Bouche à Oreille



The Good tables, the Bad and the ones to avoid
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74 pages - 278 restaurants.

Edito

PICTOGRAMMES

0	Mediocre table
00	Bad table
000	Table to avoid
0000	Scandal!

1/2	Half candelabra
Ψ	Pleasant enough table
ΨΨ	Good table
ΨΨ 1/2	Very good table
ΨΨΨ	Refined cooking
ΨΨΨ 1/2	Very refined cooking
ΨΨΨΨ	Grand chef
ΨΨΨΨΨ	Exceptional table

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FRANCE

Alpes de Haute Provence

GREOUX

Le Troubadour

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Oyez, oyez greed's of all sorts! Amateurs of solid, filling cooking, those who avoid the excessive fussiness of over-ornate cuisine! At Sylvie Boulards' table it's fun, you fill your eyes, taste-buds and stomach! You mustn't be obsessed with the scales if you have the weird idea of having your own napkin ring here! The dishes are not stingy and don't hesitate in serving the kind of food that can be found in family cooking. This is what is sometimes called "generous women's cooking"! The menu changes every two months! The menu at 18 € is placed just above the one at 14 €! This is a good start! "Salade verte et ses tourtons". For those who ignore the fact, the speciality from the Alps called "tourton" is like fat ravioli, big cushions stuffed with well prepared things, and in my case spinach puree. They're nice, the vinaigrette is homemade and the bread is good. 14,5/20. What follows is full of generosity! "Filet de truite et sa crème du jour" (trout filet and cream of the day)! Today: basil cream! It covers my delicately cooked fish! A rare thing! The meat is rather like salmon! To garnish are a vegetable gratin and baked potato! A second 14,5/20! This place pushes altruism as far as putting quality cheese in my menu, mainly locally produced. Well done! A sweet conclusion with "tarte aux marrons" (horse-chestnut tart) which isn't exciting but saved by the ice-cream. 13/20. Choice of coffees, young and smiling welcome and attendance, nice dining room, covered terrace with greenery: I lunched under a beautiful olive tree with Maurice and Martin! Whoat? Two blue-tits who seem to have made friends with Sylvie Boulard! You'll meet them on the terrace! So! A nice take-over for this place in Gréoux-les-bains! At the village entrance on the left when coming from Vinon. Oh yes: the lady boss promises an "organic menu" very soon! Isn't life great at Gréoux?

Chef : Sylvie Boulard

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

**1 rue du Puy
04800 - Greoux
Phone : 04.92.78.11.42**

GREOUX LES BAINS

La Fontaine

0

It is written on the front and what's more, it looks like a real restaurant. I squeeze my nose up to the bay window and put my hands over my eyes to try and see inside, there are pretty, colourful paintings, tablecloths, and paper napkins in glasses, sat next to slightly aged and slightly depressed looking roses in transparent glasses. I push the door. The young girl is very good,

welcoming and smiling, she must be bored: there is no one inside! Blackboards to express the cuisine, with bits scratched doubt. It's funny, because rather than scratching it out with chalk, wouldn't it be easier to rub it out? Anyway. Doubtlessly no sponges. The choice is too messy, so it will be a menu at 15 € with coffee included at lunchtime, for me. For a starter "nems de chèvre frais à la menthe" (fresh goats cheese and mint rolls) I was dribbling at the thought, these things are not too difficult to put together and often nice. I'm effectively brought two rolls, soft because of the microwave, and laid on a bed of salad which is in the same state as the roses. The inside of the rolls is stupefying! One expects a mouthful of something fresh with fine herbs. It will be potatoes and cod, in any case fibrous fish rather like tuna from a tin, do you see? It's a bit mind-boggling. For fortunately a very short time, I thought I hadn't quite understood, doubt was on my side. Not for long: the cook had got in a muddle! I learn from the waitress, that she had been here for a total of... one single day! And the bosses have already given her the keys! Let's move on! If I note the goat's cheese and the mint, it's 0/20. If I note the philo pastry, it's 9/20. I follow with a surprising "morue à la portugaise" (Portuguese cod). I know the dish, here it is different. No potatoes, no onions, no egg but tomato and capers. A nice unexpected sauce. The cod (which it is) is hard, stringy and fortunately not over salted. The oily frozen potato rings which try to make you think that they were hand chopped by a local farmer don't fool anyone. And yet another 9/20. For dessert, the little waitress suggests a "crème brûlée"! I say yes! The best bit of the meal except that... it includes lavender! Grains of lavender inside! Loads! I wasn't warned! 13/20! What a chaotic meal! Starter, dish and dessert did not conform to my demand! And quite frankly not very good as a bonus!

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

**1 place de l'Hôtel de Ville
04800 - Greoux Les Bains
Phone : 04.92.77.08.02**

GREOUX-LES-BAINS

La Caverne

ΨΨΨ

And the story goes on... This clever cook has made several of the most serious tables on the Var coast very happy. He's made his mind up: he prefers the wisdom of a professional life with wife and children! Rather than as a chef like others: hyperactive, surrounded by paper chains that are short lived and shifty and who make you believe in deceptive capabilities whenever the sea is in view. It's just that with Gabrielle, his wife, he has found gratitude ten fold in his little soothing restaurant in the centre of Gréoux. "La Caverne" is a model for leaving the visitor with happy memories, if by any chance he happens to sit down at this table. We are swimming in bliss. In the plate, classic dishes brought up to date and well in the present, cleverly worked ideas, cooking which is perfectly timed, raw materials which are chosen and not imposed for practical reasons. Household speciality, the tide comes in

every morning at 6am. Put your alarm clock on to check. As for me, it is 12:54 on an April Wednesday and I give in to the "mouseline de noix de St-Jacques en bavaïrois, velouté de langoustines" (smooth Bavarian cream with St-Jacques shellfish, creamy langoustine soup). The danger with this dish is that it is found massacred in limited series at most sub-contractors! Frédéric Montano puts your taste-buds back on the rails and entices you to do the same thing! Real St-Jacques, not the fairy tale kind. Real langoustines, not diluted bisque. 15,5/20 without any hesitation. What follows is in the same line as the starter, elegant, well worked and grandly mastered. "Filets de soles enrubannés à la mouseline de saumon, sauce velouté à la fondue de poireaux" (sole filets with salmon, creamy leek sauce). The one detail which is absent from the title of the dish is important: there are Swiss chards in the mouseline sauce. A delicious mixture and 15,5/20. Dessert will be no more than a formality, already tasted in years before, the "volcan glacé parfum malaga flambé au rhum" (rum and raisin ice cream volcano flambé with rum), rather like a baked Alaska on the table and terribly greedy, 15/20. A meticulous cook, who, you will evidently feel, enjoys doing a good job, with every mouthful. You should be used to it: it is not the noisiest chefs that are the best heard... at least for the BâO!

Chef : Frédéric Montano

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15,5/20. Setting = 16,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**15 rue Grande
04800 - Greoux-les-bains
Phone : 04.92.78.19.54**

Hautes-Alpes

GAP

Le Carina

ΨΨ_{1/2}

GB LE CARINAThis is a moral boosting address, at least as much as the other places bring you down. It's just that Jacky, the Carina governor, realised long ago what the satisfaction seeking traveller was looking for: spacious two star rooms that are really worth three, a mountainous feeling, generous dishes that wander between the Alsace (salmon with Alsace wine, coq au vin, foie gras) and the Alps (prêtres du Champsaur, grilled cardoon, tourtons, kid fricassée). The equation is explosive, you don't tire. As you can't tire of the Carina choucroute with its varied and tasty delicatessen, the kind of dish that is a shame to eat on your own, these things gain from being shared. And mountain air makes you hungry! Small eaters or the dieters will regret not having trained before coming here. A 14,5/20. Served without asking but then you can't refuse the "farmhouse Munster" and its optional caraway that concludes the Alsace era. I must admit that if like us you have travelled 250km's to eat Alsace food in Gap, it seems like perverse behaviour! Don't you agree? Mind you, it's clever seeing as Strasbourg is 850km's away! Some additions are easily made! Anyway! Dessert with a "pêche melba" that doesn't make

any waves, 13,5/20. Don't forget the houses white wine, a delicious Edelzwicker, but there is also "Pinot noir" in the cellar, "Reisling, Gewurtztraminer". If you like the vineyard native atmosphere, you'll be happy here, don't hesitate in renting a room in the hotel. Material made napkins and table cloths, busy travelling representants, workmen, the relaxed retired, families on a trip out, truly a table reached by consensus that pleases everyone. And what rooms!

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

Route de Veynes (800m d'altitude à 2 kms de Gap)
05000 - Gap
Phone : 04.92.52.02.73 - Fax : 04.92.53.34.72

Alpes Maritimes

CANNES

Maitre Renard

ψψ

Here is a story about a beast that even Jean de La Fontaine wouldn't have disowned! A house that breaths passion and originality lined with an uncommon sense of conviviality. The cuisine is influenced by foreign parts and far off lands. The place is a cosy, comfy cocoon. Warm colours and well planned deco become a theatre to a cuisine artist of the kind that we rarely see! Philippe Renard plays a discreet role behind the counter. He works away before our goggling eyes in a mini kitchen, without a doubt a leftover habit: he spent a few years on luxurious cruise boats where each square foot is worth its' size in gold! This pure bred man from Nantes learnt his career with the French companions, and travelled around the world before settling down in Cannes, with friend and administrator Jacques Buisson, who allows the chef to worry about nothing other than what he's going to put in the next menu. A unique menu at 34 € he can't afford to go wrong here! I inspect the carte from top to bottom: 7 starters, 7 dishes, 7 desserts. Choice for all. I head straight for "foie gras de canard maison millefeuille de pain d'épices au poivron rouge confit" (homemade foie gras in a gingerbread millefeuille with crystallised red pepper) as a starter, "mi-cuit" with a lovely pink colour, it is well worked. Generally foie gras doesn't need artefacts, but this is subtle. 15/20. I continue with "noix de St-Jacques enrubannées accompagnées de tagliatelles de courgettes" the shellfish are fresh and wrapped in streaky bacon. A sober and tasty sauce with nothing to hide, everything in this dish is precise. A drop of soy sauce... 15,5/20! This is when a couple of jazzy musicians decide to start singing on the restaurants' patio. Who would have guessed? In a part of Cannes that is dedicated to tourism and tourist traps, this is a great pleasure! So! The smart waiter (black trousers, white shirt under a white apron, which is only a detail but it adds to the theatrical side) is charming and polite. He brings me back to reality to suggest dessert but is already forgiven. I choose "crème brûlée aux trios parfums" which is brought to me on a slate and in flames. It's beautiful! Delicate and perfumed. 15/20 for a dessert so often seen,

sub-contracted and ill-treated. Homemade if you please! With bubbling caramel which is still hot from the flames! Well worked cuisine, classic but joyful. Fresh and tasty with a spot of poetry or even light madness. A magical place, but don't get me wrong! There are no tricks going on in the kitchen! Everything is clear and the dishes are serious! You're going to laugh: seeing how successful it is, the dining room is too small! What fun! In Cannes! Who'd have believed it?

Chef : Philippe Renard
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20.

4 rue Saint Antoine
06400 - Cannes
Phone : 04.93.39.99.38

Aude

BAGES

La Table Du Pecheur

ψψψψ

A village lost in the countryside surrounding the big town of Narbonne. A true paradise called Bages. A pond, fishing nets, old houses and an appealing calm that will take hold of you if only you turn off the main road. Here is your post card. And it is this place that hides only too well "La table du pêcheur". The entrance is a bit dark in contrast to the dining room. The decoration is not the type that follows magazine fashion photos. The same spirit fills the dishes too. We settle down on the tiny terrace with its plunging view of the pond. Superb. The attendance is frankly cordial and totally professional! Let's go for the menu at 37 € Mauricette opts for "le concassé de saumon fumé et brousse des pâturages en mille feuilles au basilic, escalopines de saumon frais et baies roses" (smoked salmon and cheese mille feuille with basil, fresh salmon steaks with red berries). A long name that leaves little room for surprise. But justified! Because here is a multitude of various and complimentary morsels! Mauricettes' eyes light up as if she had just won a week's holiday with Brad Pitt on a catamaran! A starter from elsewhere at 16/20. The analysis is the same for my plate, except that my holiday is with Angelina Jolie! A "Velouté de carottes à l'orange, filets de magrets de canard fumés sur toasts, jeunes pousses de salades à l'huile d'olive travaillée" (smooth carrot soup with orange, duck breast fillets on toast, salad with olive oil), it is novel and marvelous at 16/20. The chef is full of ideas with "dos d'espadon poêlé frotté avec sa marinade au curry rouge, une farandole de légumes pour danser avec la mer" (fried sword fish marinated in red curry, vegetables), fine sauce, the fish is perfectly cooked, there are worked broccoli and surprising mussels! 16/20! My "filets de rougets à l'infusion de fleurs de thym juste crème, son riz pilaf et sa petite garniture de saison" (red mullet with thyme, pilaf rice and seasonal garnishing) are super, but nevertheless slightly under Mauricettes' mark for pleasure, both rice and sauce are lacking character. 14,5/20. The desserts are brilliant, off the usual track. A photo would explain better than a load of superposed adjectives: "une variation autour de la Catalane". The is obviously the famous cream, and is

delicious 15,5/20. Mauricette has "le plaisir des îles... partir ailleurs", Vietnamese fruit, pineapple, coconut ice-cream. Scathing and 16/20. Well mastered and inventive cuisine, creative without being demagogical, totally humble. A pleasure to share, a rare address run by passionate Christiane and Serge Canavesi. I raise my hat. And "he who has lived, knows what he's talking about" as someone once said.

Chef : Serge Canavesi
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 16/20. Coffee = 16/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

Rue de l'Ancien Puits
11100 - Bages
Phone : 04.68.41.15.11

Bouches du Rhône

AIX EN PROVENCE

Brasserie L'eiffel

0

Poor old Gustave must be wondering what game they are playing at! Mind you, he wasn't a chef. Because here is a place that has no intention of becoming a food revolutionist in this Industrial zone. That's all we would need. We could have believed it though whilst looking at the shop-front and its bright white streamer announcing "new proprietor", which leaves you thinking that it could be better than before. Although we can't compare, we've never been here before. So! Why here? What else? Improvised business happens to be the lot for we guinea pigs, who like "all human men" (as Mauricette would say) sometimes have to go to Industrial zones. So, the setting is ready and risks are about to be taken. "Entrée Eiffel", ham cubes, cheese cubes, green salad, two and a half slices of tomato, and a cold poached egg, flavourless, the cold blocks all flavour out. A distressingly ordinary starter which only just deserves 10/20. The dish of the day which is suggested in a show off style by the young waitress is a "poêlée sèteoise"! "A sort of Paëlla with crayfish, mussels and chorizo". I didn't know they made chorizo in Sète! 4 mussels, one in each corner of the plate, 3 slices of dry crayfish, the chorizo is dry too, and some compact over cooked rice that is the same colour as the stuff Mauricette puts on her face to frighten kids at Halloween. 7/20 seems about fair. When asked "there's some left, did you enjoy it?" my negative response is a surprise to no-one. It's good to ask questions, it's even better to give answers. There is painted culture on sale on the walls. "North African" orientated pictures. Logically, having just crossed a dessert of flavourlessness I end with a sad, flat, and insipid "tiramisu" worth 10/20. My biggest surprise is the number of locals present in the place. On the contrary to me, nearly all of them boycott the daily menu at 13 €. Thus, one has to be initiated, and richer by a few euros. Of course, you can't do good food cheaply! It does happen though! There are loads in the BâO!

Chef : Who knows..
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 10/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toilettes

= 11/20.

**Eiffel Park Bt. B 415, rue Nicolas Ledoux
Les Milles
13854 - Aix En Provence
Phone : 04.42.97.62.26**

AIX-EN-PROVENCE

Arquier Restaurant-hotel

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

The Arquier house: it's just like saying the happy house. The home of those who enjoy refined cooking as much as they do environments with no modern concessions. The Lady with the green hat and I like these places, which know the difference between progress and fleeting fashions. Mauricette has found something higher than her famous hat: it was here that in 1842 an engineer by the name of Frantz Mayor De Montricher built the biggest stone aqueduct in the world. So there is no playing around at Roquefavour today. A titanic fight in some... the gods are angry... the sky suddenly clouds over... thunderbolts come through dark clouds... the storm is upon us... the trees are shaken... but rapidly Mauricette abandons the fight. I have to say that she had put her nose into a "tartare d'écrevisses et pommes acidulée, vinaigrette à l'huile de noix" (crayfish tartare with sour apples, nut oil vinaigrette). 15,5/20 is the best way to change her mind about the hysterical monument! More common recipes would have found it harder to convince. After all, the "crème de potiron et fricassée de girolles, vinaigre de balsamique réduit" (pumpkin cream and mushroom fricassée, reduced balance tonic vinegar) can be classed in the top three of my favourites in this style. The cream is round, a slight sourness to the mushrooms... delicious and given only 16/20! She places a 15,5/20 on her "dos de sandre rôti, coulis crèmeux au calisson d'Aix, pain perdu aux olives" (roasted fish, creamy calisson d'Aix sauce, olive bread and butter pudding) whilst I enjoy the season with my "perdreau roti, barigoule d'artichauts et jus au figatelli" (roasted partridge, artichoke and figatelli gravy) which is a little surprising, 15/20. Mauricette had a "St Marcellin à l'huile d'olive aromatisée" (St Marcellin cheese and flavoured olive oil) and as from me: "coupelle de fromage blanc à la crème" (bowl of fromage blanc with cream). Mauricette's obsession for calisson is confirmed with a "moelleux au calisson et ses macarons, crème de vanille" (moist calisson cake with macaroons, vanilla cream) and I choose an out of the ordinary "tatin au pommes revisitée, sablé aux amandes et crème légère au caramel" (revisited upside down Apple tart, shortbread with almonds and light caramel cream). Two 15,5/20. The dining room team is led by Christiane Courtines and altogether they help you have a good time. The patio on the edge of the river Arc sings sweetly to good weather, thanks to the plane trees. A grand place for "art de vivre" mixed with the non-dissimulated passion for work well done.

**Chef : Christophe Carlotti
Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 18/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toiletttes = 15,5/20.**

**Roquefavour Aix-en-Provence
13290 - Les Milles
Phone : 04.42.24.20.45 - Fax : 04.42.24.29.52**

Empreintes Du Temps

Ψ

I don't know if these were marks of time gone by, but there are loads of finger marks all over the glass top on my table! So much so that once settled in, the lady dealing with both welcome and attendance hurriedly comes back with a bottle of window cleaner. And hop! Two "pchitt-pchitt" in my nose, beard and moustache and a cloth sweep later, they are all gone again! It's nice, but it would have been an glass put on it earlier, if not only to preserve my nose. So! The dining room is nicely decorated with superb black and white photos. The tables have proper cloths which is why they then have glass put on top. A stone bench on one side seems a little harsh for my old bones, so I choose a chair. There seem to be formulas although I'm not offered any. Only the carte. So I start off with "risotto surprise du chef", today with king prawns. The dish is generous, a nice portion... but long rice! Not the special risotto sticky stuff. It's fashionable to do risotto, so everyone is doing it. It goes down though without too much displeasure. 13/20. Then the vocally announced dessert: "duo fraise framboises sur un sablé coco" (duo strawberry and raspberry on a coconut biscuit). The biscuit is slightly warm. Which means that the whipped cream on top doesn't like it and goes runny. The bits of strawberry and raspberry that are laid on top of the cream follow along and don't save the day. 11/20. No credit cards "because of the telephone line being pirated" I am told. I'd never heard that one. My meal with coffee and badoit water costs 29,90 €. And is paid in cash. This operation in fact costs me 30 € because the 10 cents change is never brought back. After pirates on the telephone line there is now the obligatory tip. What a strange world we're living in!

**Chef : Who knows..
Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 11/20. Setting = 13/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toiletttes = 13/20.**

**Forum des cardeurs
13100 - Aix-en-provence
Phone : 04.42.23.08.64**

Le Millefeuille

ΨΨΨ

It all begins like a fairy tale, but a fairy good one! Two 15 year old apprentices meet at Charial in Beaumanière, become friends whilst working together for 3 years. They separate upon a promise that one day they will set up their own place together. This tale could seem like the trailer to a new soap opera when they meet up again 15 years later and give birth to the "Millefeuille" in the Aix-en-Provence town centre. In this story the two friends are evidently important. A decorator friend leans over the cradle and turns the place into what it is today: a convivial place with pleasure to be shared. Nicolas Monribot and Sylvain Sendra's

obsession, because these are the friends, is to please their customers. Full stop. And they do all that can be done. Firstly: Sylvain's warm welcome which puts you at ease immediately. Secondly: Alain Gaufre's (a young waiter who could teach older men a few lessons) attentive and efficient attendance. Thirdly: thanks to Nicolas's cooking. Because I talk, and talk, but you're really interested in the food aren't you? The chef does seasonal cooking here. No pre-defined and stiff menus! They go to the market and the result comes up on the blackboard. In the menu at 25 € Well seated on the bench, Mauricette picks out a "millefeuille servi chaud, aubergine, tomate et mozzarella" noted at 15/20, a "risotto aubergines et cabillaud, coulis de poivrons" (aubergine and cod risotto with pepper sauce), 14,5/20 and a "tiramisu aux fruits rouges" which she admits is one of the best she has had since her childhood, which is telling you! 15/20. Facing her, I have a tasty "crumble aux tomates confites et parmesan" 15/20, and a lovely "bavette de boeuf à l'échalote, chips maison" (sirloin with shallots, homemade crisps) whose simplicity does not exclude pleasure (14,5/20) and a "millefeuille minute à la vanille Bourbon". In this house, the millefeuille can't go wrong: it's their trademark. It is great: 15/20! A trained patissier, the chef acted out this role at Taillevent. Not bad eh? I'm proud to have found this address in the middle of Aix, which is lacking nice surprises. You can thank me later!

**Chef : Nicolas Monribot
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toiletttes = 16/20.**

**8 rue rifle-rafle
13100 - Aix-en-provence
Phone : 04.42.96.55.17**

AUBAGNE

Le Petit Trianon

000

Nothing worse than trying to follow your predecessor. When it's like that, it's best to do something else, change your course, turn round 180° or break your neck. Especially when the previous owners were refined, very refined. All right: south west specialities have been brought in. It's a good idea. In the dining room, the manager may be doing his best, he's welcoming, it's not enough. 26 € for such a menu, I would have been better off inviting two friends to the cinema to go and see a flop, rather than eating. The flop may well have been in my entrée, "trilogie de caviar d'aubergine, asperges, avocat" (trio of aubergine caviar, asparagus and avocado). A slap in the face. The avocado is green, hard, inedible and not seasoned. The asparagus are over cooked, not seasoned either. The caviar gives you no wish to become rich. Too strong, too much character, it takes your mouth away. Only pastis drunk pure could get rid of the taste. I force myself in to giving a 5/20 because I have to give it some mark. The dish that follows is pretty "confit de canard aux brisures de marrons, pommes à la vanille" (duck conserve, slivers of chestnut and vanilla potatoes). The "half gastronomic" presentation is a copy of the predecessor Raphaël Jordy.

Vegetables, some over, some under cooked, on homemade mash, good. On top is the greasy conserve. Very greasy. Like the kind that the skin has been taken off with the edge of a knife and a wry face, that suits me, it's exactly what I do. Underneath the meat is too dry and salty. And the vanilla potato isn't right. Second mistake. 8/20. After all that I don't dare imagine how the "fondant au chocolat à la poire" (chocolate and pear) will be or maybe it will play in favour. Let me concentrate: no, it's really correct. 14,5/20. Of course the new manager has kept the previous ones medals: BâO and "guide du routard" stickers are still in view. And why ever not. What does bother me is that people came in guided by an old number of the BâO. The restaurant did not only disappoint them but at the same time so did we! Ouch! It's becoming hard for the gourmet to find somewhere good in Aubagne.

Chef : Who knows..

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Representants menu at 16 € and formula at 13 €. Menus at 26 € and 32 €. Menu à la carte.

4 rue Torte

13400 - Aubagne

Phone : 04.42.84.02.99

La Berengere



This is the restaurant that without a doubt possesses in the "brasserie du midi" style and to our knowledge one of the best welcomes and attendances, all in sheer friendliness. They are 4 or 5, or maybe 6 gliding between tables full of smiles, as if they had only been open for a week. On this point, here is something rare. I lift my hat to the management, who have caught on that this is what the customer is sensitive to. If only they could teach others... The problem here is that the cooking is not quite good enough. Of course, at 12 € the menu at lunchtime, you don't expect anything fanciful either in originality or finesse. That is why I opted for a starter from the full menu: "assiette italienne" with fried aubergine, dried tomato and mushrooms in oil, a sweet and tender artichoke and raw ham but also slices of tomato and egg. They have made an effort on the presentation, the 12 € are worth it. 14,5/20. I had to try the dish of the day, the "brochette de mérou sauce safranée" (grouper kebab with saffron sauce). A mistake. The fish is bone dry with warm soggy potato cubes and green beans that happen to be the best part of the dish. 8 € and not good, so too expensive! No question about that! It's always too expensive when it's not good! 8/20! The coffee is excellent. This place was taken over three years ago, they have painted it up to make it lighter, the patio is nice, table cloths and proper napkins and even an atomizer to keep you cool during your meal! So! A model of marketing in the food world, with lucid accountancy which both place this address far in front of a lot of others in the area. "In the kingdom of the blind, the sightless are kings".

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15,5/20.

RN8

Quartier des Fyols

13400 - Aubagne

Phone : 04.42.82.03.09

Les Aromes



It's a mystery. What would we find behind the adorable walls of the once "deux plateaux"? We are not magicians! Until we have put our nose in the dishes, the slightest remark would be an incompetent usurpation! To think that this pretty place could have fallen in to the hands of a shoe seller or simply the ordinary snack-bar-pizza-palace-tummy-torturer. But that's life... Let's cry together my dear brethren... Except that... Alleluia! The Besset couple have taken over! At least: come back! What do I mean? At the end of the '90's, this couple ran "L'Entacte" in Marseille. It was one of the best tables in town! After having expatriated themselves to the "Lot" (Domaine de Granval), they have finally come home. Was it with Raymond Thuillier in Beaumanière or with Francis Cardaillac in Albi that Yannick Besset learnt his culinary art? In any case, once you've tasted his "'épaule d'agneau des Alpes de Haute Provence aux épices douces" (shoulder of lamb with gentle spices), you don't really care to be honest. You can but regale. The meat has been in the oven for some time, the piece is thick, regular and melts in your mouth. The spicy preparation could nearly mask the unique quality of this exceptional lamb. 15/20. The chef doesn't splash out on fancy names, oh no! Here is a "fondant au chocolat noir amer" (sticky bitter, dark chocolate cake)! The plate plays with a delicious butter-cream that is geometrically disposed in cubes. As a bonus, a greedy glass (hot chocolate and cream) is on one side, lines of chocolate go across the plate. After the sober efficiency of my main course, this is a stylish dessert. 15/20. An ideal restaurant: the products are of excellent quality (local farmers) behind which this craftsman-chef who is obsessed with "homemade", hides his know-how, he is discreet and madly in love with his profession. It's not his style to parade around the dining room, be warned. It doesn't matter because Mme assures a smiling, gentle attendance! Pretty, well spaced out tables, all covered in white. I am really chuffed to tell you about this place, it shows, doesn't it?

Chef : Yannick Besset

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

8 rue Moussard

13400 - Aubagne

Phone : 04.42.03.72.93

Babylone



This used to be a friendly place called "l'olive cassée" (split olive), but it came across a final snag. Well: a stone. You now go in expecting the worst and so: you're not disappointed. Human nature is truly bizarre... anyway! A trip to Mesopotamia or should I say... Iraq! It doesn't get you dreaming in the same way even if it is the same country! A question of time! News has got around! And our eyes have been looking

through the deformed glass of the television screen! What do they eat the...the... then... over there? It seems that their cooking resembles the Lebanese kind. Chickpea purée, aubergine purée, cucumber in cream, perfumed minced meat, chick kebab... Tempted by a resumed-proposition, I choose an "Assyrian dish" which has lots of greedy bits, others less. You have to let yourself be led on, especially as the lady boss goes to great lengths with her pedagogical skills. A sort of jumble dish where the chicken has soaked up the colour of the beetroot and where the green salad's vinaigrette allows the rice to have a swim. From 12/22 to 14,5/20 depending on which mouthful. Not stupid, the management charges 100 francs, now 15,50 € for this pedagogical dish. I notice that the boss behind the counter who is making sandwiches is sulking. Such a contrast with the lady in the dining room, who is all smiles. Double tablecloths on the tables and yellow and red paper napkins stuck into Pyrex glasses for this snack bar with tables rather than restaurant with take-away dishes. The local youngsters are queuing up at the counter and seem satisfied with sandwiches. And the house even takes credit cards, so who's complaining?

Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 13/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

19 avenue Loulou Delfieu

13400 - Aubagne

Phone : 04.42.70.94.57

Les Enfants Gâtés



We were expecting better! Even if our job is to expect the worst! In-between Marseille and Aubagne. There is nothing exciting about the place. But we can say some good things about the inside (including a courtyard) which does its best to please. A covered, ventilated, water-sprinkled terrace, house carefully decorated, modern off centre-colourful. The attendance does its job, with or without a smile, depending on whom. You can see that the place is used to being busy at lunchtime, the staff is ready and all ears. Mauricette opts for "tagliatelles aux cèpes" (pasta with cep mushrooms). Three generous slices of duck breast are laid on the top. The colour of the sauce is enticing but will go no further towards felicity. It is a little bland with no soul. She hands out 12/20 which just goes to show her disappointment. My "magret au poivre vert" (duck breast with green pepper) is composed of five fried slices, ratatouille and potato. It is the sauce that is served apart that will help it go down, 11/20. In both cases, the dishes have trouble taking off, pleasure doesn't rise. 13 € for the pasta and 14,5 € for my partial duck breast, a price for which we could expect better than average. 4 € for our "cafés gourmands" (greedy coffees). The coffee is excellent, a tiny clever crème brûlée that is covered with a mountain of useless cream. 14/20. To pay, the customer has to go to the counter. Ah yes! The jug of red wine is excellent! At 7 € for a half jug, it is the best bit of the meal! With the coffee! Whilst I think of it: is this place a bar?

Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

2435 CD2
Camp Major
13400 - Aubagne
Phone : 04.42.73.00.19

Restaurant Gandhi

ΨΨΨ

I must say that using the name Gandhi for commercial purposes bothers me a bit. The same goes for Picasso for a car. Especially as the place doesn't need to go so far to get itself a... name! It is in fact a good thing. You need a guide to get to this Indian-Pakistani cuisine place! Hidden behind the Kashmir Mountains! Incredible! I expect that you have guessed that we are in Aubagne at the end of a street facing the Souléia hotel, in a sort of shopping centre that doesn't look much. It will cheer you up no end: it's great! The deco leaves no doubt about the establishment being AOC (controlled origin), and if you do have any, doubts, the cuisine will tell you better! With Mauricette, we made a change from our usual favourite and its cart load of tandoori to concentrate on a panel of dishes which compose the "thali à la viande". Thali means "tray" because we are brought a big round one each with eight dishes on top, more or less spicy, more or less strong but all with their own character. A chicken drumstick (murg) tandoori style, chicken again in one or two preparations (with curry), curried lamb (gosht), cooked fish (machali) but then I forget the title, spiced lentils with butter, spinach cooked with fromage frais, and more, you're going to have to go there, that is if you want to find out. Our marks for these dishes vary from 14,5/20 to 15,5/20. We remain hostile to all sweets. The nan bread is an appetite trap and a dessert in itself. We all dream of doing the same thing at home, it's impossible, she's tried: even dressed in a green sari to match her hat and her 1950's handbag, she can't do it! It's the oven, the cooking, the know how, who knows. So! Hidden away, far from the barbarian centre of town's ordinary places, as tasty as we like it, and a cherry stone throw away from your armchair. The boss owns other addresses. Which means that the dishes are mastered.

Chef : Abdel Marouf
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 16/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

Les Terres Rouges
Avenue Elzeard Rougier
13400 - Aubagne
Phone : 04.42.04.76.13

Autour D'un Feu

00

There's no need for a crystal ball to know that there's a fireplace in the dining room. The attractive restaurant shop front makes an effort in its appearance. The man who announces himself as being the dining room boss is busying himself around, a word to the right, a word to the left. He suggests the daily complete menu at 10,50 € The prices in this little town are amazing! I must say that when I took a look at the carte, I nearly fall over backwards! A menu at 24,50 € and another

at 29,50 €! Goodness! They don't do half measures! Seeing that I can see the menu at 10,50 € all around me, I courageously opt for the menu at 24,50 € with as a starter "salade paysanne". A hyper salad. Don't mistake me! It isn't made in Safeways or Morrisons! I just mean that the plate is enormous! At least 30 cm's across! And the garnishing is spread out over the whole surface! To make it look like there's more! The amateur side of the presentation passes off! But the diced bacon is soggy! Not fried! Like the croutons, which are simple bits of bread broken off with someone's fingers! On the other hand if you like tomato rings, there are enough to take home! It is all swimming in watery vinaigrette, some kind of unknown soup. 9/20. The dish is "escalope forestière". Veal, yes, but sliced as thinly as ham, 50% of gristle and covered with fries. The only garnishing with a few button mushrooms (fresh) sliced in the sauce. Bland sauce, un-worked. On the table, the salt mill is nearly empty, I now know why, there seems to be a history of missing salt. 10/20. The attempt to gain marks with dessert is a failure even though the one on my neighbours table looks good enough. If it is made with chocolate (maybe) it is jelly like and sticks to the spoon. The custard adds mediocrity. 8/20. 24,50 € it's a cheek to charge such prices for this show. The boss-waiter confirms the remark by spinning round the room spraying cleaner on to the tables under the customers' noses and thus polluting everyone. I bet he doesn't even realise that customers don't like that sort of thing.

Chef : Who knows..!
Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 14,5/20.

5 rue du Colonel Roux
13400 - Aubagne
Phone : 04.42.73.15.02

CARRO

Lou Mistraou

ΨΨ_{1/2}

To the curious and amateurs, I affirm loudly that Sir Raimondi is a venerable sauce maker! These talented sauce makers are annoying! They could make you swallow (nearly) anything with their damn preparations, could make you think that the moon was made of green cheese, and even better than that. Except that Stéphane Raimondi has made a different choice, in the houses historical line: to please all sorts of purses! To the future amateurs I advise you to do a little tour of the Carro port before the meal, no yachts, but fishermen's boats, and lots of them! After and eventually, a head-on attack with a "coupole de St Jacques, scampi, lotte et petits légumes à la crème de favouilles" (St Jacques's shellfish, scampi, anglerfish and small vegetables in cream sauce). Beware of not cooking too long. It's delicious thanks to... the adjusted sauce! 14,5/20. To follow a "pavé de mérrou au corail d'oursins" (grouper steak and sea urchin coral) in which the real interest resides within the chef's clever preparation. The garnishing brightens the picture, broccoli flan and fried, worked aubergine. Another 14,5/20. Choice of dessert and option "crème brûlée à la rose" chosen for its originality. The flower scent is not violent at all, I was a little scared. 14,5/20. The wine is included

in the small menus (Rognes cellar) and the menu has made big efforts since last year. My little finger says that the homemade "soupe de poissons" (fish soup) is a grand moment, and no need for a dishwasher for the plate. Of course on certain days, "Lou Mistraou" is a busy place and the usual grumblers will find something to say about the attendance which was smiley and all ears. Why don't they go to the empty restaurants! In two words like Albert: I had a nice time! I could even have taken my fishing rod for afterwards!

Chef : Stéphane Raimondi
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

1 avenue René Fouque
13500 - Carro
Phone : 04.42.42.84.12

CARRY LE ROUET

La Brise

ΨΨΨΨ

Here we are again in our greedy temple, with a view dominating the port in Carry le Rouet. The kind of place that made up with the amount of advantages attached to such an emplacement could have easily turned into a bad joke if its brilliant owners hadn't been wonderful professionals. Mind you, it is the dishes that we note, not professionals. Let's say then that it is professionals who do good food, deliciously good. A starter that we think classic with "foie gras poêlé de Mr Duperier, pain d'épices maison et coing" (Mr Duperier's fried foie gras, homemade gingerbread and quince). There are all sorts of foie gras on the market. Here is one of the best, if not of the best. It is evidently not a product to be fooled around with in order to bring out its highest quality. This is a success: 16/20. Even with Mauricette, the trouble-some girl from the Corrèze with the green hat, we agreed! "Foie" once! We equally agree on the mark for two completely different dishes: "filet de turbot de Carry cuit vapeur, nage de légumes citronnée, écrasée de pommes de terre à l'huile de truffe" (steamed turbot fillet, vegetables in lemon, potatoes crushed with truffle oil) and, I catch my breath "mignon d'agneau en croustillant et brunoise de légumes et champignons de saison, jus court de viande" (lamb in a crisp case with browned vegetables and seasonal mushrooms, short gravy). Two 16/20, and without trembling! Jean-François Andrieu's hands can't either! His dishes are superb, frank, neat. The products do not pose as if in a fashion parade, they act out a theatre scene. But I am the one with the best role! Here's why! I'm eating! With the repulsive queen of the "Ye-Strong-Lass" ball from the 19th-century, we have eaten the best "galette des Rois" (brioche) ever! Succulent! Obviously trimmed with the crystallised bits that complete the picture. The 15,5/20 seems adapted to the situation. The exceptional chef is not the kind to talk for nothing, and to see him in the dining room is exceptional. Don't be cross with him. Playing the idiot in front of television cameras and saying good words to radio microphones, is not his thing. Which is maybe where the grotesque underrating classification in the big national

guides comes from. It's a shame for him but as it is, Mauricette is keeping him all to herself, for the moment...

Chef : Jean-François Andrieu

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Quai Vayssière

13620 - Carry Le Rouet

Phone : 04.42.45.30.55

CHARLEVAL

Le Cherche Midi



The village is absolutely charming, exemplary discretion as off the main roads. This old address has been taken over. The new proprietors haven't pushed it and have slipped into their predecessors slippers without a noise, have kept the nice old customers without starting a civil war and hop! The trick is done, easy peasy. Except that if the cooking is (more or less) correct, today I had a welcome and an attendance that were the worst so far this year. The waitress pointed me towards a table near the toilets. It can only be the table reserved for the lonely sales representatives, the damned with no friends. As I am at the back, I observe the whole length of the room. The waitress evidently knows her academic alphabetic order by heart, no faults. But she is rigidly, sadly stuck-up. Not a single smile, to anyone. She gives you the feeling that she's fed up with her job. A methodical robot, nothing is forgotten. Except her soul, the need to do well and please. The customer has the same sensation as eating cold mash. A miracle though: she does smile once. At her boss. She knows how to do it then? Yes, but she copies her boss. Who doesn't smile at anyone else either. You easily understand the philosophy of the staff. Menu of the day at 17,50 € at lunchtime with salmon lasagna. It's a bit low down on the original cooking side, but high up on the price side. A starter with "pressé de saumon en aioli" (salmon and aioli sauce), a simplistic terrine and an over salty sauce, the bread is good, 13,5/20. Good: "sauté d'agneau à la provençale, semoule aux épices" (lamb provençale style, semolina grain with spice). The lamb is good quality, not fatty at all, and a well prepared sauce. Only the grain goes the wrong way, the mixture isn't very nice. 14,5/20 even so. The choice of dessert is as mere 2 € Correct cooking, an infinitely sad attendance, completely detached, in complete contradiction with the restaurant job. You would expect a lot better from an establishment referenced by the "Miche", if the sticker on the middle of the front door window is anything to go by.

Chef : Alexandre Condon

Welcome = 7/20. Attendance = 6/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

13350 - Charleval

Phone : 04.42.28.52.50

CHATEAUNEUF-LES MARTIGUES

Bel Canto



It was a close shave for this moment to stand out. A new restaurant, created by whom we would call "self educated". Monsieur in the dining room does not have the automatism of the old blokes of the profession that make you believe in a minimum of human warmth in their approach to customers. It is always a bit of a bother when the customer has to make the first move, that he has to scratch to find out if the owner is sulking just today, or if this is his normal state. As a question of human warmth, the architect supposed that an open kitchen would look good in this picture. Which means, that he didn't think that's the people sat down would hear Mme behind the stoves grumbling to her kitchen help. The question is not to know if the comments are legitimate, but it is a bit bothering for my ears. The "you p... me off" and "what's wrong with you today"? come by the handful. The Lady smiles in my direction crisp and short smiles rather like Mauricette's smiles after a bad cook asked "did you enjoy it?". Well! Nice atmosphere. My "escalope de veau au Marsala" (veal steak with Marsala wine) is honest, not the thin cigarette paper, frozen usual. No, butchers steak. Not generous, which for 15 € would not have been a luxury. Especially as the pasta is nothing to write home about and the tomato sauce makes me smile in despite. This is not Italian cooking, but cooking inspired by Italy! Great! Parmesan cheese cut as it should be, and Gorgonzola! As the bread is good, this is a party! 14 out of 20! Three euros! The dish! Cheaper than on the menu! Which the coffee costs two euros! In a pizzeria! As yes! There are pizzas! Henri Blanc Sugar and titbits (gavotte) by the "Cafés Richard": teamwork! The man doesn't even think to "wave goodbye" to me. I think, that he doesn't care. The last of his worries as one would say. Just like his customers.

Chef : En colère.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

32 avenue du 4 septembre

13220 - Chateaufort-les-martigues

Phone : 04.42.34.17.44

EYGALIERES

La Bastide D'eygalieres



I advise you against being hungry around here, at the beginning of September. As soon as most of the tourists have gone back to their everyday sights in the Isle of White (or not, I just wanted it to rhyme), a lot of restaurants lower their guard, dabble around, "don't really know what to do next". "Shall I open or shall I not?". Ok I'll

explain. There are the ones that close. At least that's clear. There are the ones that are "open" but not at lunchtime, too windy, there's no-one around, and some-one even said "come back this evening" without batting an eyelid (I swear), I've got nothing better to do: a neighbour to here la Bastide Blanche at Eygalieres. And then there is the one who has put up a big "open" sign down the road, at the bottom. The one that saves your life. You rub your hands together, you turn round, follow a few winding kilometres, mouth watering, past olive trees, rosemary and bunnies. Once the door open, there is no-one to welcome me in this bastide that is also a hotel, it's very pretty. I wait half at attention, half curious in a monastic silence: the menu of the day at 23 € is pinned up in front of me, I make the most of swilling another load of saliva round my mouth. No-one comes so after about 3 minutes I open a door, it's a bit long. I assure you that a 3 minute wait in silence is very long. On the patio, the boss and his family are having lunch. Aren't they the lucky ones, I'm waiting for my turn. The man kindly sends me to a very windy patio where I must sit down. He hands me over to a charming waitress who doesn't think of offering me to go inside either. It is the done thing though when a storm is about to break. So flying napkin option and please m'dame! The menu at 23 €! She: "on no, that's only in the evening". As I have been well brought up, and seeing as it is late, I stay. And have a salad. I'm allowed a salad. Finally a plate of bits that are rather tasty called "assiette provençale" with toasts of tapenade, aubergine flan, tomato salad with other things, cold vegetable soup. It's good, well done in its style. 14,5/20. The coffee costs 2,5 € and is very good. At that price, it goes to show that if the place does snack kind of foods, the prices don't match. Mind you, my salad at 10,50 € has a lot to say for itself. Anyway: I'm a little irritated, don't misunderstand me dear reader. I'm only a wandering guinea pig that has a limited frustration capacity, especially when he's hungry.

Welcome = 6/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 16/20.

Chemin de Pestelade

13810 - Eygalieres

Phone : 04.90.95.90.06 - Fax : 04.90.95.99.77

EYRAGUES

Le Pre Gourmand



One virtue that is appreciated in the food world is discretion. But here, Patrick Léonce is pushing things. He hid in l'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue in his "Vivier" until 2004, he then spent two years with Christine preparing "Le Pré Gourmand" which was born in Eyragues in 2007. Only a blind sparrows' hop from Saint-Rémy. If that isn't doing things the hard way... Anyway! A healthy chef who wheels out recipes like others would tell stories! Entrée! No I'm not ordering you around; I'm talking about my menu! A signature, a style! Mouth-watering mixtures of sea and land products! "Salade d'écrevisses aux pois gourmands, pomme d'amour au coqon de lait confit et rafrâchi, crème glacé à l'olive" (crayfish salad with runner beans, tomato with crystallised piglet, cold olive cream). A festival

of colours, subtle and greedy titbits. 16/20. Second starter! (Who's counting!) "Grosses crevettes à la plancha, ris d'agneau rissoles, lait moussoux d'amande, ravioli fritt brousse au herbes" (prawns à la plancha style, fried lamb sweetbread, creamy almond milk, fried brousse cheese and fine herb ravioli). Daring eh? A journey between crunchy, smooth, sweet, sour, crisp, soft, do I go on? 16/20. My "poitrine de pigeon en robe de légumes rôtis, la cuisse farcie de datte en croûte de cheveux d'ange, jus au cacao et zestes d'oranges" (pigeon breast in roasted vegetables, leg stuffed with dates under crisp vermicelli, gravy with cocoa and orange zests) is beautiful! No wonderbra needed here! No need to hold back to peer in! Well, a little bit! The flavours are all aware, ready to surprise with each mouthful. 16/20 The "mignardises" that go with the coffee are out of this world and along with the dessert: "framboises glacées d'un jus de fruits rouges, sable à l'huile d'olive et croquant de chocolat ivoire, crème glacée au caillé de chèvre et citron vert" (iced raspberries with red fruit sauce, olive oil biscuit with ivory chocolate, goats' milk ice cream with lime) make you want to start all over again. And again. 15,5/20. Impeccable, especially when you know how hard it is for real chefs to do this darn job, when "the system" prefers serial production which damages "pure" craftsmanship work such as Patrick Léonce's. A necessary address that cannot be overlooked.

Chef : Patrick Léonce
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 18/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 18/20.

Avenue Marx Dormoy
(ancienne route de Châteaurenard)
13630 - Eyragues
Phone : 04.90.94.52.63

Un Bouchon En Provence



And they're nice! Good. At least it matches the friendly spirit that in principal can be expected in Lyon cuisine. I mean in principle because the "bouchon" category in this silk weavers city is becoming pathetic with people overdoing the folklore bit. It's very much the same in Provence: folklore salesmen and tourist traps! Why not get on and make good dishes and knock off the extras! Like here! Menu at 17 € and an "assiette des soyeux". Surprise! There is harmony here! All presented in a row and three preparations: lentil salad in a small glass, fried potatoes with a whole smoked herring filet, 'silky' creamed cheese and herbs if you please of course. A start off at 15/20. A generous "bavette d'aloiau au Saint-Marcellin" (steak with cheese)! It's good even in the middle old fiddle! I stuffed myself up to here! Up to the brim! Another 15/20! I don't remember the last time I had the pleasure of revelling in a "tarte aux pralines lyonnaises"! It's worth its weight in peanuts! Or almonds rather! 15/20! The coffee is good, and even if it is short, the Saône-Rhône valley wine menu is clever. Marie and Sylvain Nicod ran a place in Saint-Rémy for a couple of years before recently stepping out of the busy world into Eyragues. The only snag: the dining

room is noisy, but then that too fits in with the "bouchon" spirit. Booking is nearly obvious... just as in a restaurant!

Chef : Sylvain Nicod
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting
=16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.
Toilettes = 15,5/20.

6 avenue du Général de Gaulle
13630 - Eyragues
Phone : 04.90.90.00.97

FONTVIEILLE

Le Moulin De La Grasiho



We are made to wait for some time on the ground floor. This is the problem with places that have an upstairs; they can't be everywhere at once. We know that, so we wait, full of tolerance, ready to smile... But the lady who arrives from the first floor doesn't feel like smiling. She tells us to go up, that it is up there that it all happens, come on. All wrapped in a sort of friendly military fashion, as distressful as possible. The warrant officer... sorry... the lad tells me that she isn't the boss, just a friend there to give a hand. Bright yellow paper table cloths, Royal blue napkins. The place could be charming if it didn't just stick to treating customers like chain work, these people probably expect more from a restaurant than being shoved into a corner. Seeing the way things are going, wisdom tells me to go for one of the menus at 16,80 €. It's not expensive, although a lot when things go wrong. Starter: "assiette de hors-d'œuvre provençaux", it is offside. To keep in mind this sample of so called "provençale cuisine" is particularly abusive. A mountain of salad with a tired tomato (despite the cheese used as make-up) on top. Under the salad, on the edge of the plate, a piece of jagged edged chicken which has just been taken out of its Lidl (or elsewhere) packet. Also a crumbly, laborious "crespeou", and some tinned stuff with slivers of artichoke heart drowned in oil. A little black olive tapenade and a tomato cut in four to complete the picture. 9/20. My "brochette de gigot d'agneau aux herbes de provence" (lamb kebab with herbs) is served with a provençale tomato from the oven and cauliflower cheese. The kebab with its 4 bits of over cooked meat is laid on a bed of ratatouille. Tomato, onion, courgette... and Heeeerrrrbbs! Loads! 10/20 for the effort! This is progress though when compared to the starter. I'm a little embarrassed about dessert as it is homemade which isn't such a common thing. A "millefeuille au chocolat". Alright: it's as hard as cardboard and swimming in warm whipped cream which doesn't help: 9/20. The waitress seems to get rid of her customers as quickly as possible, and manages well. My meal lasted 30 minutes. I didn't even get the time to open my newspaper. She didn't smile once. No banking cards or visiting cards. Oh yes? The proprietress arrived! A small joyful lady full of get up and go, rather like Mauricette after a Nescafé ad with George Clooney! Well! It makes a difference! Only it's too late! When does the chef arrive?

Welcome = 6/20. Attendance = 8/20. Setting

=15/20. Bread = 14.5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

61 cours Hyacinthe Bellon
13990 - Fontvieille
Phone : 04.90.54.62.08

GARDANNE

Creperie La Cigale



Oyez, oyez, Lords and Ladies! Today is a big day! I knew it as soon as I came in: the smell of the real pancake! Gosh it smells good! A house dedicated to Brittany! A jewel! No-one to sabotage pleasure with chain work that shamelessly regurgitates half cooked, chewy, rubber batter at the rhythm of sipping an acid bowel and moral stripping cider! No! I'm talking about craftsmanship and know-how that look straight in to yours and not in your credit cards eye. Céline Colantonio qualified from the "Maître-crêpier de Maure de Bretagne" school (in the Brocéliande forest) didn't choose the easy way to learn her art: setting up in Gardanne. This means that she takes you by the hand and heart at lunchtime with her formula at 11,50 € that I shall describe in detail. In the evening, it is the full menu with it's specialities that I will cite at the end. The "crèmeuse"! She beats her batter good the chef! Here is a pancake that doesn't try to throw flour in your face! Buck wheat, the real stuff! Egg, emmental cheese, caramelized onions, fresh cream. The kind that makes your mouth water and that after you ask for more! Too good! 15/20! Have to leave a bit of room for what follows! Pudding for instance! The "beurre-sucre", it's the king of kings in pancake desserts! Half salt butter! Very supple pancake! Very good! 14,5/20! Bowl of brut cider included! "Tell me which cider you sell, I'll tell you what pancake bar you are!" Kerisac, Cornwall farm, craftsman made Fouesnant! And some Poiré Breton! Beers too! Why not enjoy this in a nice setting! You are far from imagining what you are in for, behind: an adorable partly covered flower garden. Colour and intimacy, astonishingly surprising. The thing is, you may find one snag: once hooked, hard to get away and live without! A delicious Brittany embassy! And that smell...

Chef : Céline Colantonio
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting
=16/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

16 rue Borély
13120 - Gardanne
Phone : 04.42.51.77.81

La Grignote



A nest of conviviality hidden in Gardanne. A rather large hall brightened up by modern decoration. At the back, a bar on the same axe as the market with a terrace and straw parasols where smokers can meet. On the left is a room facing the kitchens: which is where Mauricette and I sit. Bistro tables lined up army fashion, yellow paper table mats at attention, blue neatly folded paper napkins. On the outdoor blackboard, menu at 13,50 € including ¼ of

wine. Two dishes including "paleron" (beef shoulder) are absent. Replaced by pasta, stuffed "tortellini" or something similar, tomato sauce and slap bang. That the lady with the green hat, who does not like to be frustrated, judges worth 12/20. They haven't even bothered to correct the blackboard. Or maybe it is to entice and trap, but I don't think so. She even goes as far as to say about the beef: "they can't afford shoulder?" So. As for me, the name of the dish rang a merry tune. Who has never heard "Ne me quitte pas" by Jacques Brel, where black and red go so well together? "Boudin noir au vin rouge" (blood sausage with red wine). Served with three types of garnishing, bravo. There are two thick slices of sausage. But it isn't good, there is even a bit of bone in one. And it is very salty. The sauce? The sausage? Who knows! 11/20. Our starters! Ah! I nearly forgot our starters! "Charcuterie" for the lady, a slice of basic meat pie and one of fresh ham. And a nice knob of salty butter cut with a dirty knife. 13/20. My plate of "crudités" (green salad, tomato, green beans...) gently does its' job, 13/20. The "tarte tatin" (upside down apple pie) which is promised "homemade", seems to be just so but is lacking whipped cream unlike the surrounding tables. It's better that way... 13/20. My "feuilleté poire-chocolat" (pear and chocolate with flaky pastry) is hopeless. You can get away with the pastry being soggy. Tinned pears are just about alright. But the chocolate topping is appalling. When properly made, this recipe can be a monument of finesse, but here the incapacity to put it together is miles away from giving me the slightest micro-shiver of pleasure. It's enough to make me regret the industrial chocolate mousse. 7/20. The coffee is exceptional by my criteria. The waitress is bubbly, is as familiar as the job can allow, between a bar and imprecise dishes. The boss is all smiles, welcomes the customers. The one good point about the place.

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 11/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 16/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

22 rue Mignet
13120 - Gardanne
Phone : 04.42.58.30.25

GEMENOS

Le Premium



It's funny. Loads of people. There are six serving, looking after the tables, stepping on each others feet. I've never seen anything as messy. The only one truly implied; the boss gives orders to the youngsters, which makes them feel like apprentices. The great chain of non-solidarity. As for smiles, no-one (except the boss...) makes the slightest effort and we have to make do with the anti-pleasure linked to the profession. The only time I nearly got one: the 4th of the 4 waiters who each came twice to see about my order. "Ah, if has already been seen to..." He walked the blackboard to my seat and back. Crisp smile, but smile even so. I take all that is given seeing the circumstances. So, the place is busy, and the attendance is completely disorganised "as it comes". Shame, because there is a chef behind the wheel! The lunchtime idea is simple: big dishes at 12 € and 17 €. Generous

dishes that flirt with "dish-full meal" style. For example, I had "gratinée de St-Jacques et gambas" (grilled St-Jacques shellfish and prawns). One of the waiters informs me that this is one of the places specialities, and not bad after all. I'm talking about the waiter. But the dish too. Dish served with super salad, certainly not a give away at the grocers, but worth it. Two bread sticks, parmesan cheese, light balsamic vinaigrette, very good. The gratinée is a little "marshmallowy" due to the over cooked shellfish, but it's not bad. 14/20 for a dish that costs 15 € even so. 5 € for an "assiette de fromage" with mixed salad, butter, bleu de Bresse, end of log of goat's cheese and emmental. The Henri Blanc coffee is surprisingly good, and ends this very noisy meal. So much noise in a restaurant is appalling. So much so that you can't read or do anything, nor hear the neighbouring tables, or even appreciate what you are eating. To keep your nerves calm, you have to wall yourself up behind your hair and chew as if down the mine, the eyes vague and dream of a Mozart concerto whilst snug on your settee. And to pay, you have to join the queue, like at the factory. A real shame because for once a brasserie is hiding a real chef...

Welcome = 9/20. Attendance = 6/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 15/20.

13 rue du Maréchal des Logis Planzol
13420 - Gemenos
Phone : 04.42.32.98.37

Le Fer A Cheval



It's been a long time since we set our hooves, er.. feet in "Le Fer à Cheval". And we have fond memories of the place. And when you're fond of something, deception is even harder when pleasure isn't there. It's difficult to explain. Not bad (far from it), but there is no soul, no colour. It starts with a "tartelette fine, crème à l'anchoïade et figue fraîche au romarin". A ring of flaky pastry, not very well cooked and covered with a thin layer of anchovy cream. On top is a fig cut into four pieces and a sprig of rosemary. Just put on top, not cooked. The anchovy/fig mixture may be modern but it doesn't appeal to us. Ah yes! I forgot to say something! I don't want to start all over again, so I shall say it now! We were so un-inspired by the propositions that the sulky green hat and myself chose the same ones. Good, only just 13/20. To follow: "intercalé de volaille en croûte aux trois saveurs au jus de viande". Nice to read. We imagined sliced poultry in a shiny pastry case with the announced flavours and surrounded by strong gravy. In this case, we've got it all wrong. It is in fact three pieces or reconstructed meat, mousse or galantine, each spread, yet again, with a different paste: rosemary, black olive and fresh herbs. The gravy is strong but smothers the taste of the meat completely. The square of potato gratin and the herb puree are practically cold. Not top! 13/20 again, but only because it's you. The "tiramisu aux fruits rouges" (red fruit tiramisu) is the only outstanding thing. 14,5/20. The only snag: as in "le renard et la cigogne" (the fox and stork) written by La Fontaine, it is served in a "long necked vase with slender opening". And just like the fox from the fable, a disgruntled Mauricette, who only had a small spoon, found

it very hard to get to the bottom. Rest assured, I lent her mine which was the right size. What a shame! The terrace is nice in the summer. The spacious dining room is still charming. The big fireplace crackles, part of the wine menu warms your heart. The red embers make meat slices sizzle. It would probably be an idea to try the grills! This place is not missing much to get back in the saddle!

Welcome = 13/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 13/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

19 rue Maréchal des Logis Planzol
13420 - Gemenos
Phone : 04.42.32.20.97 - Fax : 04.42.32.23.27

GRANS

Auberge Des Eyssauts



I like coming here. Don't look for anything rational in the impulsion. Except that at midday with exhaust fumes and people blowing their horns in all directions, survival instinct overtakes. So naturally I think about this place. A phone call and it's booked. And hop! I plunge into greenery! But without a hat, Mauricette isn't here! Just look at the acres of space and breathe deeply! Without blinking, this place heads on: whether a wedding party of 200 people or a cosy meal for two, everyone is happy! Ah! The cookery profession sticks to Gérard Grangeon's skin. Corine likes to organise her dining room as her home (which it is!). She knows how to slip into customers slippers very naturally, anticipating their needs. Too busy looking at menus, I had never noticed the quality price report of the full menu! My "cuisses de grenouilles à la provençale" (frogs legs à la provençale) cost 11 €. Seeing the generous plate which characterises the chefs' portions, there is no need for you to busy yourself with trying to catch them. Let alone cook them. What's more, they're brought to you, no need to do the washing-up and you are served on double cotton tablecloths with smiles as a bonus. We are talking about a restaurant! Muscled thighs, it is sometimes nice to eat with your fingers: 14,5/20. To follow is one of the chef's grandmother's recipes: "coquilles Saint-Jacques Marie". Flaky pastry with a bed of spinach and the famous shellfish accompanied by a slightly garlicky brandy sauce. I brandish 14,5/20. The chef makes his own ice creams and sorbets, which I have already told you. 15/20 for my "banane et tatin de pommes" (banana and upside down Apple pie). Super, very professional and very good. And at least, it is made with real fruit, try it on your children and if you don't have children, make some, or bring somebody else's. And after that, let them run around in the magnificent green area. Because yes, the Grangeons are also gardeners. With them, it's second "nature".

Chef : Jean-Pierre Grangeon
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Route de St Chamas
13450 - Grans

Phone : 04.90.55.93.24 - Fax : 04.90.55.84.25

Le Hameau

ΨΨ_{1/2}

When welcomed in to a restaurant with a frank hand shake and big smile it makes you think. Do we know each other? Have I already been here? Well no! It's just the way of they are. All clients whether new or old are considered as passing friends. Not like walking wallets. "Le Hameau" is a family business. Conceived, set up and run by Christian and Evelyne Scalia. It all began when they drew up plans of the place and now they carry dishes to your table. And even after that because Christian has a habit of offering after dinner drinks called "digestif du Hameau". He wouldn't give the recipe away under torture, but I can say that it has a rum base! Whoops! Sorry dear reader! I got run away there; I'm already at the end! Let's rewind to the beginning of the meal. Choice from the menu at 27 €! Mauricette quickly singles out something to match her demands. And to start with "mise en bouche du Hameau": a small glass of fresh gaspacho. Then, "feuillantine de fruits de mer au velouté de crevettes" (flaky pastry with sea food and creamy shrimp sauce). The pastry is nice. What's inside too. 15/20. To follow "calamari farci sauce armoricaine" (stuffed squid), 14,5/20. Have you noticed how my friend with the green hat seems to enjoy fish? "You put on less weight, well not everyone...!" she often says! So! To end is "assiette de fromages", they are well chosen, 14,5/20. Far from such considerations, I have "gratinée de ravioles sauce aux cèpes" (small ravioli gratin with cep mushrooms) which gains 14,5/2. "Filet mignon en croûte et son jus d'ail au romarin" (Pork with garlic and rosemary) at 15/20. And "tarte tatin crème glacée" (upside down apple pie with ice-cream) at 15/2. The chef does well and his team seems in osmosis. Note that the plates are superbly decorated. We later hear that it is the couple's daughter who dresses them! And does it well! Thus, the deco on the plates matches the one of the dining room: perfect! In a modern style, we can see no lack of taste. Even when the great Pavarotti is invited as background music he manages to do so discreetly. That's telling you. The Scalia's really want everyone to feel at home. And it works.

Chef : Michael Escoulet

Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 13/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

36 bis, les arènes

13450 - Grans

Phone : 04.90.42.38.26 et Port.06.16.55.67.98

GREASQUE

Lou Landais

ΨΨ_{1/2}

"Lou Landais" in Gréasque! The southwest decentralized to the Bouches-du-Rhône! Enough to awaken curiosity and moving hope! Good or bad surprise? Hi Hi! Bingo! It starts well! Beautiful terrace, remarkable and vast dining room. An all smiles welcome by Fabien Girard.

The man has worked in and around the Luberon. Double bingo! The chef! Christian Fondevielle comes from Dax! After a hexagonal journey and in a last drop, our jovial forty year old has finally put down his duck breasts, forgive me, his suitcases in Gréasque to show us what lays beneath landaise and Basque cooking! The kind that is always tasty and generously served! Not for hummingbird appetites! This cook is an adept of cooking "à la plancha", the one that saves flavours by its elevated heat. You won't have to wait long for a result. Mauricette who is already saving up for an autumn facelift for the desperate, that she saw on the TV, made do with the menu of the day at 14 € and how right she was. As starter: "foie gras de canard mariné" (marinated duck foie gras) (nut oil) at 14/20 followed by "poulet braisé au piment d'Espelette" (chicken braised with Espelette pimento) at 15/20. And to finish "tarte au citron" (lemon pie) 13/20. For this price, it is worth the journey, wherever you camped. As all good guinea pigs wishing to visit everything, I attempted the "confit de canard fait maison, pommes landaises" (homemade duck conserve, potatoes) served in a sweet little copper pan. Well cooked potatoes, simmered nicely, slivers of Bayonne ham, shredded onions and short gravy at the bottom. 15/20 without hesitating! And as dessert a homemade "tourtière landaise boule fraîcheur" (landaise pie with ice-cream), with apple and prune ice-cream that I recommend to you!.. Provided that you read this text with a southwest accent and roll the "r's"! 14,5/20! A straightforward and generous kitchen, as only the people from there know how to do with products that the chef orders directly! Duck and farmhouse chickens from the moors, and the pimento... guess... from Espelette, of course! Have I already said that? Ah well? In short! An address to discover without waiting for it to thaw, especially as the kind is rarely so well represented. "Welcome to the landais!" Mauricette says. And here, it's not just a fairytale.

Chef : Christian Fondevielle

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

8 bd Allende

ZI des Pradeaux

13850 - Gréasque

Phone : 04.42.69.91.91

LA BARBEN

La Ferme Du Chateau

Ψ_{1/2}

According to a few echoes that we have intercepted, the change of proprietor that has operated in this establishment facing the Barben zoo and two steps away from the fabulous castle would be a strike of luck! We were expecting better. No not the castle nor the zoo which probably are the best in their own kind. No. I'm talking about the newcomers. Not that the cooking is bad (the marks would be different) but the quality price relation from my menu is frankly "out of subject". I thought I was doing the right thing though in opting for the intermediate menu at 26 € which was between the 36 € and the 16 € on a weekday lunchtime.

was that disappointed that I was jealous of neighbouring tables who once sat down and without the slightest hesitation jumped for the one at 16 € The garnishing is the same for both menus, and if it's a question of products, there is not a big split either. For me, a round of stingy "terrines de pigeon" (pigeon terrine), very thin. The culinary-hunter register doesn't really bloom in this homeopathic style. But in the centre of the terrine, some foie gras perks it up, a little. Salad... 13/20. What follows is deceiving, a "côte de veau aux champignons" (veal chop with mushrooms). The meat is small and thin like a pork chop. The sauce is correct except for the five micro-sized button mushrooms. Button mushrooms and game at the same table, has always made me laugh. Otherwise, the same garnishing as my neighbours, Provence tomatoes and sauté potatoes with their skin. 12/20. I expected as usual the worst to happen with the "tarte au citron meringuée" (lemon meringue pie). The worst didn't happen because let us say that it was, fitting. 13/20. The waiters were very good, a little stressed up when a group of 50 people arrived for lunch and upset the rhythm, but very good. A deception not strictly caused by the quality of the dishes, but on the completely amazing prices for family cooking. 26 € being 170 of our (old) francs, just remember... I sometimes like to talk about the past.

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

13330 - La Barben

Phone : 04.90.55.24.05

LA CIOTAT

O Paradis

ΨΨ_{1/2}

People are coming from further and further away to regale at the Mauro couple's table. I should say the Mauro couple's "table d'hôtes". Revealed by we the untiring pioneers from the B&O in 2006, the address has conquered the disappointed coastal travellers in less time than it takes to say it, the ones who flee from mussels and chips and the smell of sun cream. They have found a greedy refuge two steps away from the beach, in a villa with swimming-pool, and quiet. But Mauricette doesn't do guides to calm places but the guide to "good tables, bad ones and the ones to avoid". Following the season, it's inside the house, or patio and cicadas. Don't expect a plethora of choice of dish, here it is not the customer who chooses but the cook who suggests. Céline Mauro serves us an "aumônière de chèvre et de jambon savoyard" (goat's cheese and Savoie ham in pastry). What may seem very common and even trite shines by the product's quality. The ham really has character and the cheese (melted) tastes of goat's cheese. It's in simplicity that products reveal themselves best. Add to the bill that the plate is really pretty, you've got a full blooded 14,5/20. The same kind of presentation and sense of detail with my "steak de requin sauce Champagne et crevette, poêlée de légumes" (shark steak with Champagne and shrimp sauce, fried vegetables). Precise cooking, the fish is carried by a subtle sauce. The proprietress is a grand sauce maker! Nothing over done in the dosage, only finesse. The rice is firm and the ratatouille is generous!

Too much so! 14,5/20! A real baker's exercise with our "paradisio maison à la banane, coulis de fruits exotiques" (homemade paradisio with banana, exotic fruit sauce). A tasty cake which also goes for the fruit sauce (difficult to say eh?). The sauce is dominated by mango, great. 14/20. The aperitif and coffee are included in the (or more) daily suggestions. If you prefer to sit "trite", that's up to you. The "Ô Paradis" philosophy is "just like at home" or is it, are you served at home? Is it as good? Don't answer, you could get told off... Oh yes! Booking compulsory!

Chef : Céline Mauro

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.

**41 avenue de Lorraine
13600 - La Ciotat
Phone : 04.42.83.16.26**

La Terrasse

ΨΨ

Previously the "Rose-Thé" which has since separated from the neighbouring hotel which has kept the name, this place was knobbed by us three or four years ago. Severely and rightly judged at the time, but completely obsolete today. I had a nice time in this brasserie where the staff seems well implied. It's funny, it's the same waiter who served me the first time. A place that keeps its personnel generally confirms that both sides are playing the game. They are busy, running around, but seem quite at ease in serving the dishes! And especially the dish of the day that I had noticed on the neighbouring table. An enormous "jambonneau aux lentilles" (ham steak with lentils)! The lentils are tinned but well prepared. The heart of the ham is not hot enough, shame. I give them 14,5/20 for the effort of serving mussels and chips and the gigantic size of the portions. And for 8,50 € it's a giveaway. But the management catches up with the "café gourmand" (greedy coffee) at 7 € The coffee is very good, with caramelised almonds and a bowl of homemade whipped cream! I swear! I thought I was dreaming! Well done boss! On the other hand, the industrial made cakes... 13/20. Menu at 23 € and menu with meat-fish-pasta. Some shellfish on offer. And especially, it seems that the place has found a chef. Which seems imperative in order to open a restaurant. Well, if what we think...

Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**4 boulevard Beaurivage
13600 - La Ciotat
Phone : 04.42.71.44.45**

Les Gourman'dinent

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

What a funny name for a restaurant! In a town where the simple word restaurant is synonym to mussels and chips (I know that this is a caricature, but take a look) I had a meal that I wasn't expecting: excellent, original without going over the top, fine without being fussy, my

compliment bag is full! And on the port too! What better! And if the dishes are pretty the essential isn't lacking! Taste is there too! The weekday lunchtime menu at 19 € is ravished by the regulars. To try it is to want it. You aren't given much choice once you've dipped your little finger in... It's with a charming décor its' acidulated colours and view across the port that I begin with "parfait moelleux d'écrevisses et petits légumes du sud" and a vinaigrette with egg and basil. Oh yes? Crayfish? Parfait? Work and products that are rarely found in cooks' fridges who are trained to dish up ordinary dishes. A modern presentation, fresh, smooth and mastered. 15,5/20. What follows is a dish for the greeks that can be considered gourmets: "filets de pigeonneau rôti, son aile et sa cuisse laquée au miel, jus à l'arabica" (roasted pigeon filets, wing and leg Peking style, Arabica gravy) served with a creamy corn puree with Parmesan cheese. It is serious and what gravy! 15,5/20. I was expecting more from my "soupe au chocolat 64%, glace à la cacahète, caramel mou au beurre salé" (chocolate soup, peanut ice-cream, salted butter soft caramel). It was nevertheless nice, but I would be damned for salted butter soft caramel; there wasn't enough to give out more than 15/20! Even so! The customers seem enchanted with the kitchens and the attendance which is feminine and full of life. The wine menu is already clever. Running a restaurant can only be team work! An excellent chef who comes from Belgium via Nyons (26); Anne Wisniewski is the mistress of the place. She allows Christophe Wernet the responsibility of creating and putting the dishes together. What a good idea! They match! Cuisine with four hands! Just to help: this used to be "la sardine de Marseille" and before that, "la Fresque". A good show, typically semi-gastronomic with no excess! And on the first floor facing the port! Perfect!

Chef : Anne Wisniewski et Christophe Wernet
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15,5/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**18 rue des combattants
13600 - La Ciotat
Phone : 04.42.08.00.60**

LA ROQUE D'ANTHERON

Le Grain De Sel

ΨΨΨ

La Roque d'Anthéron is very pretty. Famous for its summer festival which brings together the best ivory keyboard players, this village can from now on count on a very solid piano. All year round. A perfect meal, no false notes, and we're even pleased to get the bill at the end of the meal as the quality price report flirts with friendliness. Do we know each other? In fact, no we don't. Surprising. Only just in their 30s, Alexandra and Fabrice Ruiz are far from being pigeons when it comes to running a restaurant. Even more, they are real professionals. Both trained at Bonneveine in Marseille. She in the dining room, Baumanière and l'Etrier in the Camargue, cuts up the fish and carves the meat, smiles and listens to the customer. He, has passed through chez Frérard at Sofitel on the Vieux Port, has had good times at Chez Tania in La Ciotat (with the

brilliant Pascal Bertholet) then cook-associate of the Milles golf Club House. They form a serene couple, who look the customers in the eye, but not without a spot of well earned pride. From the local supplier to top-quality: the bread maker Christophe Buirette, vegetables from Françoise Dionisi... An obsession for high-quality raw materials. The chef himself concocts salmon, duck breast and even... smoked foie gras! The menu changes often. Which means, too bad, you should have come earlier to enjoy the "papeton de légumes dorés, mousse de chèvre frais" (golden vegetables, fresh goats cheese mousse). I saw my plate coming from a distance. I must've looked very silly with my glasses on the end of my nose and my mouth open. Is it for me? Colourful and... delicious! A generous glass with sweet vegetables, cheese with character produced locally (yet again). And 15/20! I continue with "canard confit au romarin" (crystallised duck with rosemary). A casserole dish with a lid, which fills the air with a wonderful sent as soon as it is opened. A colourful mise en scène as a signature. 15/20. One last trick with a "tatin au romarin et caramel au beurre salé" (upside down rosemary and caramel tart with salted butter)! Elegance, as always. Colourful, again. Delicious, of course. 15/20. The bill: 18 € A Toque full of ideas, often good ones, inspired by refreshed old recipes which become prettily theatrical. An absolutely thrilling table which can only get better. As the saying goes "Qui va piano va sano e va lontano" (who goes gently goes healthily and for a long time)...

Chef : Fabrice Ruiz

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15,5/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**Avenue de l'Europe Unie (salle des fêtes)
13640 - La Roque D'anthéron
Phone : 04.42.50.77.27**

LANCON-DE PROVENCE

Les Bories

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Very few would have bet their last kopeck that the Gauchon couple would succeed! A year and many lunchtimes later, it is really busy! And cheers up many people on Sundays! Don't ask me for their recipe, just go there, see, take photos, and especially: eat! Alone or with a crowd, knowing that this sort of table is meant to be shared! A table for friends, a table for laughter or for sharing memories, for an ideal family meal, far from being stuck up or snobbish, I mean traditional careful cooking such as is so rarely seen in a world where packet or de-hydrated food are friendly with sachets in lazy kitchens that only open their doors at 11:45 am. Jack Gauchon is a real cook, not an improvised chef! One of Serge Chambreau's students in Fouras (17), this man born in La Rochelle offers amazing, greedy cookery at prices that go back to Napoléon III. Or nearly. At lunchtime, 11,50 € You should see them tucking in. A la carte for me! What do I choose? Who knows! Hare stew! Boar! Doe with honey and cranberry! Pigeon! Pigs legs! Tripe! Coq au vin! Crystallised duck! Bourgogne snails Bordeaux style! Frogs legs and

more! Read further down! The gourmets' heaven! I can see some from behind my pen who are uncontrollably convulsing! They're saying that it can't be true! Cooks like this do still exist? Well yes! Here's proof! A starter with "cou de canard farci et confit à la graisse d'oie" (stuffed duck neck and meat crystallised with goose fat). A dream! Since when have I not had this? And the portion is generous too! 15/20! So, having planned something light (that didn't happen...) with "gambas royales" (King prawns)! They truly are Kings! To crown it all, the garnishing is clever, 14,5/20! Just like a mum who wishes her family to be happy, Josette watches over you in the dining room. And as you can see, tables like this leave you with hope for human nature.

Chef : Jack Gauchon

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**9 boulevard Victor Hugo (route de Coudoux)
13680 - Lancon-de-provence
Phone : 04.90.42.35.16**

LE ROVE

Le Rovenain

ΨΨ_{1/2}

If you could read a book by its cover or the contents of a CD, our curiosity would remain at low tide, like our desires for that matter. Under the appearance of a more or less ordinary bar/betting shop, however very necessary in the life of a village, "le Rovenain" is hiding a clever little table held by Christiane Tortejada right at the back. Well hidden... not that much! People flock in from the four corners of the county! Why? Don't search! The answer is easy! Because the chef fills the four corners of your plate! At a light cost, very light! The price of a menu here is cheaper than that of an ordinary starter in a fashionable "brasserie"! At 11 € for the complete meal including 1/4 of wine and coffee, this address is an economical mystery or a challenge for the sacred-saint laws of accountancy. A culinary theme every day, today it's "la mer". With a "cassolette de moules aux épinards" (little dish of mussels and spinach) plump, just the way I like it, grilled and spicy: 14,5/20. My choice of main course is a "rascasse, seiche et gambas sauce à la rouille" (scorpion fish, cuttlefish and king prawns with a rouille sauce). When I say "scorpion fish", it's a real one, not filets of. When I say "cuttlefish" they are nice thick thigh type! One king prawn is a little over done but it was forgiven a long time ago! 14,5/20, including generosity. Do your best to squeeze your "assiette de fromage" (cheese plate) into a corner of your tummy. Having previously fenced off a little bubble for dessert. Mine is a "panacotta au nougat noir" (cream cheese and dark nougat) which doesn't do badly and is worth a good mark! A lovely sweet, really delicious at 14,5/20. A small table that doesn't "table" on the grandiloquent, neither in the attendance, nor the setting, nor the cooking. You've got it. But whether rain or shine, hail or snow, that Wall Street goes down or the Nike suffix go up, Dédé and Christiane Tortejada's house is always open. This kind of address does you good!

Chef : Christiane Tortejada

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting

= 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

20 rue Jacques Duclos

13740 - Le Rove

Phone : 04.91.09.94.40

Auberge Du Merou

ΨΨΨ

According to people high placed from the tops of their green hats, we haven't found better on earth to take us out of our element and to feel merry for the length of the meal. It has to be said that the emplacement helps. In case you are lacking culture, the Niolan Creek is the opposite to St Tropez: discreet, modest, with tiny huts that rub up against each other, no Ferraris in sight seeing as the alleys are too narrow, the port shelters only a few fishermen's boats and nobody knows if Mohammed Al Fayed ever set foot in the place. Well. A panoramic view of the "Bonne Mère": we are opposite. After an appetiser and with such a view, you could be served a dish of a diary covered in shaving foam and would be pleased! I exaggerate but only just! But nothing like that because here come my "noix de St-Jacques fried juste saisies à l'huile d'olive, pancetta craquante" (St-Jacques shellfish lightly fried in olive oil, crisp pancetta cheese). A pretty dish, well put together even if the St-Jacques don't bite. 15/20. What follows is still to do with the sea "filets de daurade Royale poêlée à l'unilatéral, fondue de poireaux aux crevettes" (gilthead fillets fried on one side, leek and shrimp fondue). This remarkable chef signs his dishes in the hardness of the un-worked vegetables, they are practically untouched. It's funny and the contrast with the finesse of the sauces is amusing. 15/20. A delicious "assiette de brousse" and a "poire Belle-Hélène et croustille d'amandes" (pears with crisp almonds) end this festival. 15/20. At the attendance a plural masculine-feminine, friendly-classic. Ah yes: if you are coming for the first time, taste the "toasts de l'Ancre"! If you like "bouillabaisse", please order 24 hours in advance. You haven't got the telephone? Come and book one evening, and sleep in one of the pretty rooms that are at disposition for customers under the restaurant. You can try the food tomorrow. Good idea eh?

Chef : François Lebec

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Calanque de Niolon

13740 - Le Rove

Phone : 04.91.46.98.69

MALLEMORT

Les Olivades

0

This house's recent past is still present in the memories of the locals. But the present gets a kick in the teeth. Mauricette is traumatised by the cheek of the house in charging such a menu at 28 € there is no hint of pleasure, from beginning to end of the meal. In this sphere of costly punishment, it's a rare one. The lady with the

green hat and multi-faceted red nose swallows a "terraine de gibier au genièvre et suprêmes de cailles confits" (game terrine with juniper berries and crystallised quail supreme) with a rare platitude. The prose gave me hope, what follows weighted it down. Salt and pepper couldn't help much. 11/20. What about my "chartreuse de noix de St-Jacques, jus de coquillage" (St-Jacques shell fish in chartreuse, shellfish sauce)? A leaf of green cabbage encloses a sort of white and spongy paste. To believe that the St-Jacques are actually a part of this warm thing is crazy. Only the sauce is good. 9/20. I don't give an average to my "duo de daurade et rouget au jus de bouille" (sea bream and red mullet duo and sauce), it is unacceptable. The red mullet is strong, the whitefish is in better shape. The sauce is not good at all. 8/20. Still in the "hunting spirit", the "pavé de biche taillé dans le cuisot sauce sauvage" (doe steak carved from the thigh, wild sauce) is as flat as the starter, no relief, no character. 12/20. I have to note that the dishes are very well presented, pretty. This is evidently not enough to make us happy, the B&O is not a photo catalogue. In the menu priced at 28 € an "assortiment de fromages et son buisson de verdure" (assortment of cheeses and bush of greenery). There are four (bravo) including one which has been made with Roquefort: it rips your mouth out! Yuck! Desert Gilbert! Quick! Bring this to an end! "Mariage de chocolat au coulis de mangue" (union of chocolate and mango sauce) is miles away from what we were expecting; I shall skip the details about this common biscuit, alright but completely off scale with the title 11/20. As for me, the big-time gambler and not bad "crèmeux à la noix de coco au coeur d'ananas sauce caramel" (pineapple heart in a coconut cream, caramel sauce). Too many violins in the prose for what it is worth, but a 13/20 even so. The cooking resembles pre-packed dressed in Sunday clothes, we are in a classic judgement. The attendance is nevertheless impeccable. But this is an enormous deception at the same time as a big hole in my pocket.

Chef : Who knows..!

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20.

RN7

13370 - Mallemort

Phone : 04.90.57.41.31

La Bastide De Pont-royal

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

Context: replaces "Les Arcades"! From La Rochelle, the chef passed through some famous regional establishments such as l'Aiguebrun in Bonnieux or the Boccaccio in Nice. This rugby player sized man cooks really well. Real talent that has dropped in to Mallemort without warning. A bar is up front for those who are in a hurry. But it's at the back in a dining room to match the culinary propositions that I spent a delicious moment. Especially as Mauricette was missing because of her green hats' yearly check up. A pleasure that can't be refused. The menu at 18 € from the lunchtime menu at 24 € seems to be a bargain. I daren't wait for next year's menu-carte! What's more is they might have run

away again by then! Who? The "gambas en tempura, rougail de tomate et mangue fraîche"! The dish imposes its rhythm and shows the way: classical basic base, a touch of the exotics. Fresh and bright, clever and 16/20. Bang. My "filet de boeuf en croûte d'épices, fricassée de légumes craquants" is really generous. Chefs think of our scales or our beach towels, far too often. Usually they justify homeopathic doses using finesse as an argument. Whereas it is in fact a question of economy, measured and weighed portions. This dish is prodigious then, but also inventive and efficient: 15,5/20. The desserts of the moment are all as attractive as each other: chiboub de figues and rhubarb tuile noix de coco, tatin d'ananas cannelle aux amandes caramel au beurre salé, moelleux à la châtaigne sauce chocolat chaud... After checking with myself, I choose "tarte sablée à la poire et chocolat amer". And a pear caramel which is not just for show. 15,5/20. Although not very common, the wine menu is still teething. A special mention for Patricia Medina who is the mistress of the house. Without meaning to but full of get up and go, this house is going to rearrange the local gastronomy map. In any case, the address will certainly bring the local reputation up a peg or two... Royal eh?

Chef : Thierry Michaud
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

RN7 Hameau de Pont Royal
13370 - Mallemort
Phone : 04.90.58.20.56

MARSEILLE

La Tarraillette



Jean-Marc Ferreri has principals, including this one: he doesn't abdicate in front of mediocrity. This could look like an ordinary publicity slogan, it's simply a statement. At the same time only two steps away from the busy town centre, he has little choice. Farm bred porc from the Auvergne, lamb and veal from the Bourbonnais, duck from M. Duperier, chitterling sausage AAAAA from M. Lemelle, a battalion of red label, a range of products issued by reasoned agriculture. And then Olivier Langlois, straightforward cook, who comes from "L'Escale" in Gourdes. Once Jean-François Piège's (Piazza-Athénée) collaborator, this man is not a chatter-box. But he lets his dishes talk for him. Mark you, Mauricette doesn't ask for much more. Nothing more than regaling in her "assiette de légumes grillés et confits, oeuf de caille à la plancha" (plate of grilled and crystallised vegetables, quail egg plancha style). Said like that, it sounds sort of thrown on to the plate whereas no, rather the contrary. It is greedily nibbled, it's good. 15/20. For me it's a "salade de brandade de morue maison" (homemade salt cod pounded with garlic, oil and cream salad). Three pieces of toast spread with the paste, salt cod paste, not sandwich spread. It's just that we eat some weird things in our job sir... 14,5/20. We continue with "côte de porc fermier d'Auvergne au bleu" (farm bred porc rib with blue cheese) which reveals a good sauce maker and 14,5/20. The lady with the

green hat and size 10 stilettos fell in love with her "hamburger de lapereau aux figues rôties et son foie gras poêlé" (rabbit burger with roasted figs and its fried foie gras). This dish my dears, if it is on the menu when you come, close your eyes but open your mouth. 15,5/20. Yes, skill is behind the stoves. In the dining room Jean-Michel Garnier isn't bad either. He tidies up the choice of wines. Thanks to him: there are **over 200! At lunchtime, the economic-friendly-greedy formula has found custom.** As for us, we have found a very good quality restaurant since the last century. A good restaurant with good dishes, and good wines in beautiful glasses. A restaurant, in sum.

Chef : Olivier Langlois
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

59 Bd Eugène Pierre
13005 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.48.91.48

Cyprien



At Hélène and Jean-Philippe Lequien's table, you have the pleasure of eating real. The recipes are not false revolutions, no optical illusions or taste-bud illusions for that matter: "things must have the taste of what they are" as our famous chef would say. It's simply that the esthetical is at the service of the product. Which at the same time puts a whole lot of other chefs in to the "old fashioned" category, they who believed that they were original because "in", when they were only copying what could be found in other restaurants. Which means that the originals are the ones that have never wandered. Along with Mauricette who has taken her swimming cap off, but has put on her green hat, we dived in to the greedy world of de-complexed French cuisine. Our starters lead the way. The always delicious: "bouillon de poisson à l'émulsion d'huile d'olives avec dorade poêlée" (fish stock with olive oil emulsion and fried sea bream). The stock is based on red mullet, it shows the philosophy of the place. Perfect, 15,5/20. I didn't even get to taste her "pressé de foie gras de canard au jarret de veau" (pressed foie gras with veal knuckle), Mauricette's! She put her two dumpy, ringed up to the ears hands over her plate, crossed her eye-brows: "don't touch!". 16/20 she said. In any case I did the same thing with my "joue de boeuf cuite au torchon et escalope de foie gras de canard" (beef cheek cooked in the cloth with foie gras steak). 16/20 too. The braising juice when reduced is good. Bocus had a similar recipe that was famous, the "timbale de poissons et St-Jacques en croûte nages aux trompettes" (goblet of fish and St-Jacques shellfish under a crust with mushrooms). A dish built with flaky pastry, get your kids to try it at least once, very few cooks go as far as making it themselves! The fish is perfectly cooked, the sauce is right, Mauricette got out a 16,5/20, I had nothing to say. "Les gourmandises de Cyprien": enormous plates where every square inch is garnished with different sweets. I haven't time to explain, you're going to have to come here. 15,5/20. If after having eaten so much your taste-buds have lost their sense of direction, come to see Jean-Philippe Lequien, who will put you back on your tracks. And at a reasonable price. An ace

who is as regular as a clock, ticking in the Marseille food galaxy.

Chef : Jean-Philippe Lequien
Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 16,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

56 avenue de Toulon
13006 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.25.50.00

La Marine Des Goudes



"Pops" is back! Excellent cook previously at "Chez Brun", a house that all gourmets from Marseille keep in their minds! Patrick Martin has taken over "la Marine des Goudes". Well: the frying pans. Shouldered by his friend Jo Morana, incarnate polyvalence. For a cook, taking place on the charming Goudes port with his nose in the masts and his feet only inches away from the water, is like having an early Christmas. This place is magnificent, un-pretentious, laid out amongst others far from everything, in-between haphazard rocks. It would seem that you would have to be mad to live anywhere else. But then you don't always have the choice. We will make do with a nice meal put together by a wily sauce maker. Meat on one side, fish on the other. Is that all? Nothing that will start up a revolution in the food world! No, but... read on! Suspense! A starter with "terrine provençale" in a big glass, tomato base, olives and loads of ingredients from the cicada world. Whipped cream, bread sticks, pretty and good: 14,5/20. If the recipe was read out in the same fashion in a cookery school, they would smile! The name of the association is absurd, but works marvellously. Patrick Martin is a madman in the kitchen! He puts together recipes "terre et mer" (land and sea) which work superbly well! That puts an end to suspense! "Poêlée de St-Jacques au ris de veau et aux cèpes, confit de légumes au thym" (fried St-Jacques shellfish with sweetbread and cep mushrooms, crystallized vegetables with thyme). I dig in, regale, enough to make me row away with a smile! 15,5/20! A classic dessert with a "tiramisu aux mûres" (blackberry tiramisu). 15/20. Cookery full of spirit, not really a give away, but honest. The local fishermen play the game, which enables you to have a "bouillabaisse" if that is your hearts desire! Seriousness in Goudes, Mauricette would say "very good" with her strange sense of humour. "La Marine" continues the adventure. Super during the week.

Chef : Patrick Martin
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15,5/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

16 rue Désiré Pellaprat
13008 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.25.28.76 - Fax : 04.91.72.46.45

La Rade



It looks like this place hasn't been touched by

recession! You should see all of the happy people filing into Alain Da Silva's restaurant on weekday lunchtimes! It warms your heart without burning your pocket! Just think! 12 €at lunchtime including wine with as possible starters today: roasted red mullet with anchovy cream, cod Accra's, mussels sauce poulette or grilled scallops and prawns! Amazing isn't it? I opt for a surprisingly generous "salade de foies de volaille au magret fumé" (poultry liver salad with smoked duck breast), with lively salad leaves, no packet stuff. 14/20. After that? Choice! Again! Grilled daurade with olive oil, pasta with three types of meat Greek style, choice of grilled beef, small vegetables stuffed Provence style, lentils and cooked pork meats, shark steak with delights from the sea and so on! I decide to have a "mijoté de seiches à la Marseillaise" (cuttlefish stew from Marseille)! But not any old spot of Marseille, that wouldn't do! A nice Sunday dish! Fun for a Tuesday! The cuttlefish is only a prop for a delicious cooked preparation with onions, carrots, tomato and lots of other various bits and bobs! Really good! 14,5/20! The sweets are often homemade, even the tarts. There are two on offer today. Lovely fruit and smooth cream for mine and 14,5/20 to end with. "La Rade" isn't gastronomic but "bistro"! You mustn't be over demanding! A bar, a big covered terrace, a calm dining room with view over the port. "La Rade of l'Estaque" continues the adventure. Alain Da Silva is still in the "starting-block" at 3am to do market shopping... and also in "joint-block" at the end of the last sitting! But it's all for a good reason: for his customers!

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

72 plage de L'Estaque
13016 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.46.03.10

Bobolivo

ΨΨΨ

The lunchtime menu is always an excellent affair! But that was silly of me! The "Bobolivo" is an excellent affair! To use so much tenacity in keeping good quality up for a restaurant which is only a hop away as a handicapped bug flies from the Vieux-Port is nearly a professional obsession! This is Max Capelle's illness. If only it were contagious! A young boss, seconded by the chef and his fine, well run in recipes. And adorable Nadège who runs the dining room. With Mauricette, the one who eats and drinks out of seasonal reason, we decide to keep the regulars company for just one meal. Ha ha! Whilst other hungry people grumble over limp salads with sad tomato rings on the port! They should have looked further. A menu at 16 €for me! A starter of which I've forgotten the name! In any case, it is full of bits from Provence such as aubergine that are well prepared. 15/20! Followed by "loup sauce aux cépes" (sea bass with cep sauce). The backbone is taken out and it is prepared in front of me like a choirboy in a first Holy Communion ceremony. Great cuisine and tons of pleasure for a menu at 100 francs! Well done chef! Mauricette opts for "croustillant de chèvre à l'italienne" (crisp goats' cheese Italian style) which doesn't surprise the blasé lady with the

green hat: 14,5/20. She enjoys her "Boboliveau" right to the end, (sauté veal with Parmesan cheese) which is evidently a speciality here. I can still picture her leaning over her plate breathing it in, her coke bottle glasses all steamed up. 15/20. Our desserts confirm it all with an impeccable "tiramisu" at 15/20 and my "fondant au chocolat" (sticky chocolate cake) at 14,5/20. A funny shop front (if you're curious, it was a pasta factory) with lots of people inside who are there to work seriously for customers. Refined traditional and quality cooking: I'm sorry to say that this is an endangered species! So make the most of it whilst you can!

Chef : Khaled Riahi

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

29 rue Caisserie
13002 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.90.20.68

Le Kashmir

ΨΨΨ

The fruit of multiple influences, the Indian-Pakistani gastronomy masters the subtle art of mixing spices. Cinnamon, red pimento, curcuma, cloves, coriander, fennel, cumin, poppy seed, cardamom, saffron, nutmeg... And how many dishes? Who knows! It's true that we already knew that this cuisine (when done well) is classed as one of the world's best. So let's return again to the Hanif brother's place. Mauricette swung round and snapped at me as if it was my fault "never seen that in town and country magazine"! Surprisingly spacious. From the outside, we are far from imagining this volume or depth. And then the young man doing the attendance is very good. With the lady with the green hat, we stepped out of the usual Maharajah menu tracks. This time, option "Mixte Maharajah", an assortment of tandoori meats for two as yes, if Mauricette could eat for four, we are two. Marinated and spicy: chicken drumsticks, fish fritter, chicken breast, lamb kebab, king prawns. A big bravo for the drumsticks that were particularly tender, delicious. 15/20. We tranquilly come to our worked dishes, very worked too. The lady with the green hat and exotic sensitivity decided to side up to the "kashmiri gosht", the lamb curry with raisins, almonds and fresh cream. When she said that she had set her heart on "giving up on years of dieting" I gathered that she was going to lick the plate clean. 15/20. The same goes for my "baingon gosht", the lamb curry with spicy aubergine that are just as worth it. Sadly very pushed time wise we didn't have dessert. The Nan bread acted as dessert all through the meal, the onion and coriander one was phenomenal. There are several Pakistanis in town. Not all as good as the next but with this one we hold one of the most serious representations of this region that we will qualify as exotic as lacking more precise vocabulary.

Chef : Sikandar Raja

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

18 rue de la Paix
13001 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.54.99.72

La Table De L'olivier

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

Rather than playing pretty Polly in front of the cookery world paparazzi, Gilles Carmignani prefers pleasing his clients. With an obsession for meticulous work, he bends himself backwards to please these darn customers. That's what he's like, the way nature made him, it's not his fault. Although he has worked in English macaroni, the Basque country and in big houses such as "l'Epuisette" in Marseille, it hasn't calmed our man down. Quite the opposite. With rigorous force and after two years the "table d'Olivier has become the place not to be missed in this town. The attendance is at your order and listens, a warm and well thought out setting to keep your senses serene, with dishes that you would think were inspired by colours from a toque wearing Chagall. And it's good, very good. A starter which is soberly named "salade de cailles aux morilles, blinis de maïs" (Quail salad with moral mushrooms, corn pancakes). Don't go imagining a sort of tortilla with three leaves of salad thrown on top. A big gala sized plate with three pancakes, each with chopped mixed vegetables on top and topped with Quail fillet... and a mushroom! A sauce to bring it all together, salad mix to decorate, and 15,5/20 in the end. The next dish carries the same spirit: "joue de loup grillé à la plancha, poêlée d'artichauts et basilic" (bass cheek grilled plancha style, fried artichokes and Basil). Beauty is at the service of taste, and participates without doing wrong. Another 15,5/20. I adore zabaglione! We all have our weaknesses! Here is a "gratin de fraises et d'ananas" (grilled strawberries and pineapple) as sweet as Turkish delight, the fruit is finely chopped, super. 15/20. Be happy dear brethren! In "la Joliette", a hot place for soggy sandwiches between 12am and 2pm and fried deception for the rest of the day, we have found maximum equation for you! 70 people at lunchtime! From several starving groups who stare at the quality price report, to gourmet couples who are searching for a little privacy and a culinary shiver! All applaud together... even with their taste buds! For a restaurant owner such as this one, it is worth all the stars in the world! Best go in the evening at the end of the week! It's calmer!

Chef : Gilles Carmignani

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 18/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

56 rue Mazenod (près de la place de la Joliette)
13002 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.91.17.04 - Fax : 04.91.90.03.36

Les Mets Du Sud

ΨΨΨ

This is the semi-gastronomic place in the area. If you know of any others, let me know! Unless you want to keep it to yourself. I would do that sometimes! But I can't! It's my job to pass on "the good tables, the bad and the ones to avoid"! And to hide the Stéfani's table wouldn't be doing them a favour! In a mediocre, competitive

environment where cooking references are out of focus, who could imagine such a thing? So make the most of having this restaurant! Fresh products as if they were raining down, a nice cosy, well run dining room, cloths and lights of the sort that we would like to see more often, an attendance run by a never weary Michel Stéfani (who is well helped) and cooking that you remember after you have left! If by chance you have put your teeth back in first! The menu changes every two months. The carte changes every four months. Not silly. What is an effort for the kitchens is also the best way of keeping up with seasonal products. But the "soupe de favouilles" (small crab soup), is one that can be found all year round here! An in-eradicable recipe that I adore each time I come!... Liar, it's the first time. But not the last! 15/20! What follows is also from the sea: "lotte au lait de laurier émulsionné" (monkfish with whipped laurel milk). Laurel isn't used that much in Provence. It isn't easily married, like Mauricette. No-one ever wants it. The fish is only a prop (a luxurious prop) for a clever, refined sauce. A second 15/20. We understand now why other guides are taking interest in us. I don't know what got into them for them to leave "le Colombier" in Carnoux! What I do know is if they were in Tourcoing or Rennes, we wouldn't have them handy to treat us! So? Thank-you to the Stéfani family!

Chef : Florence Stéfani

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

8 place de l'Amiral Muselier (Prado Plage)

13008 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.77.88.25 - Fax : 04.91.71.82.46

Une Table O Soleil

ΨΨ_{1/2}

They know how to put your pessimism in to quarantine! The dishes are truly joyful... and there is a real culinary know-how! After having dipped for a while (of which we had wind), this place got the wind back in its sails in early 2008. The starving local or even from afar bureaucrats have got it right. Budgets aren't extensible, so they arrive in full bus loads to cheer themselves up, just long enough to have a lunchtime formula at 11 €, at Stéfanie and Patrick's. There is an advantage of being near the terminus. 11 € this shows the strength of the local price war that is going on. But it allows an imaginative chef to make the most of his oven and stand out from the crowd. If you're looking for imaginative and creative, you've knocked on the right door; Stéfanie Vallot is full of it. She cooks with modern inspiration, as joyfully as if she wanted to encourage you to go out more often! As wary as a dark corner in the night, Mauricette dared have this formula at 11 € An ordinary sounding starter: "avocat-crevettes" (avocado pear and shrimps)! Except that there are loads of titbits surrounding the glass! 14,5/20! Her dish is super. A nice portion of cod for a "cabillaud au crumble de noix" (cod with nut crumble) which is also full of colour thanks to the garnishing. It's very good, the cooking is mastered. 15/20. As for me, small appetites must abstain: "nems aux fruits de mer et sa bisque de crevettes" (sea food spring rolls and shrimp bisque). Three generous

rolls, stuffed with hand chopped sea food. To be grabbed, tasted, bitten... and enjoyed. 15/20. Still with my fingers "gambas royales à l'ail et au persil" (king prawns with garlic and parsley). Nice, short sauces, I dig in, rub, nibble, yummy, 14,5/20. For 7 € dessert and coffee with a "café gourmand". Home-made desserts from floor to ceiling and from crème brûlée to chocolate mousse! 15/20! It is in the sweet section that you can measure this chef's know-how, notably from "Frerard" in Sofitel on the Vieux-Port. Sweets are often a chefs Calvary... and the customers! The coffee is good, the patio is "4 seasons", and Patrick opens the shellfish with passion. So, a very nice house that we recommend without any hesitation.

Chef : Stéfanie Vallot

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

49 avenue Georges Pompidou

13008 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.32.03.20

Le Palais Du Maharajah

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

If you don't recognise the Pakistani way of cooking, you can catch up on this side of Marseille. What's more, it offers the advantage of avoiding the centre of town, some are allergic to it. This cooking has the advantage of including the not so weird idea of regaling us. When I say us, I'm talking about Mauricette; you can hardly miss her, even when running away on tiptoes. "Le Palais du Maharajah"! Ah! It's true! The establishment's deco leaves no room for doubt! It is full fleshed Pakistani! If you are half blind, the smell of burning incense will lead you by the hand! I read "menu Maharajah"! I quote! "This menu is the image of our gastronomy. As a starter you have an assortment of tandoori meats garnished with nan bread. The dishes are garnished with two curries and basmati rice. Our desserts are homemade and will cool your pallet after the meal." There you are! Now that I have talked like a book, I can dig in! Chicken, fish, tandoori style lamb! The finely spiced marinade does most of the job, with the wood oven. In which the chef burns his hands to cook his products. In the end everyone goes to extremes to please you. 15,5/20! There are two separate curries: "murg massala", chicken cooked with tomatoes and spices, fresh cream. And "sada gosht", which is stronger: lamb curry with caraway, garlic and ginger. We hand out 15/20 and 15,5/20 especially as the basmati rice and tandoori style cheese nan bread are simple but nevertheless an excellent garnishing. The lunchtime formulas cost less than 15 € an economical approach to quality which contrasts with common local competition. It's true that "Indian-Pakistani" places are growing like weeds at the moment. This is one of the most serious ones.

Chef : Mohammed Chaudri et Azram Hussein

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 16/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

151 route des Trois Lucs

La Valentine

13011 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.89.24.32

L'hacienda

ΨΨ_{1/2}

This cook wishes to please, really wants to do her best. A wish to do well, for a cook (or in this case a cookess) is to battle to send out dishes that are as attractive as possible and to endow them with a seductive quality price report. As far as possible in the ultra-competitive context such as the one on the Vieux-Port. Which doesn't avoid me being served with a "salade Italienne", although it isn't common. An entire bread crumbed mozzarella, raw ham, tasty bits spread out in all of the corners and here is a 14/20 that is well deserved! Originality is on rendez-vous with my "brochette de carpe, polenta au Parmesan et romarin" (carp kebab, polenta with Parmesan cheese and Rosemary). The polenta is delicious (cream or butter, I don't remember) but the non-conformism is situated in the bits of carp meat, this fresh water fish which it is rarely found on the coast for one very good reason! And even less behind cook's stoves! 14,5/20 as the cooking times are right, well done, there is nothing worse than fish that has been sabotaged. Often met, often disappointed. I'm talking about the "tarte tatin" (upside down Apple tart). The "ready to serve" (in fact better and better for this product) squats all kinds of kitchen tables. Here it is homemade, which is not an automatic guarantee of pleasure! It is really good, and the cooks second even came to ask me if it was all right, recognizing that it was slightly overcooked and the caramel a little hard. Evident signs of good will and at the end of the line: a 14,5/20. Gastronomic pretensions are not used at this family table. Which never the less brings out pretty dishes, well worked, and not packets of the "ready to gobble" warmed in a pan. An idea which is far from being crazy if you want to have a decent meal without worrying and have a nice time on the old port facing the "Bonne-Mère"!

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

226 quai du Port

13002 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.91.83.59

Le Spaghetti

00

Welcomed by someone in flip-flops as if arriving at Uncle Amédées barbeque on an August evening. Waitress wearing flip-flops and one of the two at the counter as well. The one without flip-flops tells me to go "to the back". Because I don't smoke. All right then. The toilets are dirty. No paper to dry hands. And the floor in front of the loo is sticky. It could be funny wearing flip-flops; it must be like having suckers stuck to your feet when you try to turn around. Menu at 12 € didn't have that. But I am tempted by the "filet de boeuf sauce poivre" (steak with pepper sauce). And one of the entrées too "saumon à l'orientale" (oriental style salmon). Bits of slices of smoked salmon covered in a very strongly

tasting garlic and cream cheese sauce, but missing salt. No salt in the Orient? A certain effort for the decoration and originality save the dish 12/20. The matchstick fries delivered with my steak are by far the best issue in this episode. Not greasy, and the oil is recent. The rest, I mean the green beans as hard as wood and a defrosted steak that bleeds to death when I had asked for "medium" are to be classed as a scandal. Serving meat of this quality for 17 € is ashaming. Even for cheaper, mark you. It's not a question of price. But a problem of professional conscience. What's more is that the meat is hard, without a doubt in sympathy to the green beans. I did wonder if it was sirloin, but no it's just an impostor, who betrays you, who puts you off meat, the restaurant and the guinea pig outfit. The sauce can only do its best. Thanks to that and the fries 6/20, that's telling you. The waitress looked very surprised when I refused to have pudding. But I did have coffee! Not bad! You have to be careful. Anything looks good after a dish like that. Even flip-flops.

Chef : Allez savoir

Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14/20. Toilettes = 10/20.

Menu at 12 € lunch time weekdays. Menu à la carte. Smokers and non-smokers dining rooms. (At the back.) TV screen.

31 rue Sainte Cécile

13005 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.25.51.86

Poivre Et Sel

0

They won't get it, the (numerous) regulars. The proprietors are hearty! Lots of rubbing you up the right way, kisses all round. Except that I arrive at 13h03. One of the bosses, who is chatting on the terrace, sticks his chin in my direction and thus indicates I go inside. It calms you down. Once sat in the direction chinned to me, I will have no more contact until 13h36. Complete silence. They go past without offering me anything, worse, without noticing me. Mind you with the guinea pig job I do, it's good to be transparent, invisible. At 13h36 I'm awoken by a sharp "are we seeing to you?". The boss/waiter that moves a lot, jokes a lot, talks loudly, who kisses and offers coffee to the regulars, brings me the menu. I'm hungry, and have been for a while. In this context it will be lunchtime menu at 12 €, with choice. 13h42: I order "tartine du sud-ouest" and a "lapin chasseur". The man with the pen gets stuck and says: "you don't want the starter of the day? It's super!" - Uh... well no...- But yes, it's good, you won't be disappointed! - Oh well alright then... "So "brick de chèvre" (goat cheese brick). Brought to me in 15 seconds. May as well say that finishing the starters of the day was back stage orders. The plate has been waiting behind the curtain for some time, the brick is cold, the goats' cheese hard, the bit of ham dry, and my natural good humour put to test. Not a word was said as my half full plate was taken away. When you're taken for a fool, it's all the way. 8/20. Lots of carrots in my "lapin chasseur". Cooked separately, it is pale and covered in sauce. A slimy sauce with no bits. The bits I was waiting for were carrots, bacon, and mushrooms. No tomatoes either, nor white wine, nor lemon juice. Nothing. Out of a packet maybe. 9/20. For

dessert, a "crème de poires aux framboises" (pear cream with raspberries) with real raspberries! I swear! A sort of pear tasting cream (not brûlée), rather like industrial sweeties. 12/20 for the thought. The setting is really good, Italian stucco on the walls, comfortable design chairs and also, the inevitable plasma screens. The recipe of success? Friendly bosses, not expensive and it's pretty, the customers feel that they have found a good spot. Jump up! Fold your parasol, we're off!

Chef : Who knows..!

Welcome = 4/20. Attendance = 8/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20.

Lunchtime menus at 12 € and 25 €. Groups.

Terrace.

71 rue Borde

13008 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.25.97.09

La Luciole

ΨΨ

Must we stop at a detail? I think so, seeing as some details build up a global which lead to a conclusion. No towels in the toilets, paper towels smaller than kleenex and funnier still, a carafe of San-Pellegrino. Believe me. I flatly own up (although there are bubbles) that it had never happened to me before during my entire guinea pig job. Then the smiling proprietress admits "I've not got any half-bottles left, so I emptied half of a big one in to the jug"! Restaurants hand out quickly served Bordeaux in Pyrex glasses whilst "La Luciole" puts San-Pellegrino in to jugs! So! If the place goes all the way (apparently) in the evening, it is a shame that the lunchtime proposition only offers a small example of what the chef can do. Some salads, pasta... and also the dish of the day, a "blanquette de veau" (veal blanquette) which isn't too bad taste-wise, but could have done with a little more simmering. It satisfies the "simply cooked" amateur. 13/20. I'm promised a homemade "fondant au chocolat" (sticky chocolate cake), it's rare and original so we'll not sulk and give it a 14,5/20 even if the topping is weird... and bad! The proprietress-waitress is very smiley (have I already said that?), which gives us an average with the young man who does his job as if he'd been sent down the mine. Mind you, I've known some miners who happily went down. As I don't know the name of the lady who did the cooking at lunchtime, I have put down the name of the man who does it in the evening.

Chef : Benjamin Vesin

Welcome = 13/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 12/20.

4 place Notre-Dame du Mont

13006 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.48.70.62

La Paricha

1/2

A real disappointment. Here is the example of potential cooking that has shot itself in the foot by using mediocre quality produce. Take my "agneau des îles mariné au jus d'orange, miel, cumin, figues, lait de coco" (lamb marinated in

orange juice, honey, caraway, figs, coconut milk) for example. In a place that feels like a bistro straight from Santa-Rosa, you only want one thing: the taste-buds need to be charmed. Completely the opposite! The garnishing which includes a carrot flan where the caraway gets carried away, is struggling. The lamb is represented in the most practical fashion: a kebab of bits of shoulder, nervy and fatty which have to be chewed and re-chewed. 15 € for this thing, about 0,5 € for each of my old teeth, it's really only between them that I am left anything. Note the bits of dry fig, not fresh ones. 12/20. They catch up a little with a "coulant au chocolat" at 5 € and promised home-made, the sweet waitress/proprietors eyes are twinkling. The well known industrial stuff (only too well known), vaguely chocolaty and very sugary, jelly like. In any case, a feeling of suspicion seeps in when a "fondant au chocolat" is brought to you within 7 minutes, even if the waiter is called Schumacher. It was plonked down under my nose in 30 seconds after the ding from the micro-wave. 7/20. A micro-wave in the kitchen, not an extractor fan! It's rather fishy! I can't express well enough, the smoky, greasy smell that gets into your hair bun! Yuck! Otherwise the wine menu is good and international. "La Paricha" or how to miss out on the details that can make a chef or a restaurant for that matter... serious ones anyway.

Welcome = 13/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20.

40 rue Caisserie

13002 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.91.99.39

Le Chant Des Marmites

ΨΨ_{1/2}

These two friends continue to give sweet humanity and cuisine lessons. Nathalie Querroué and Jérôme Hagège still have the straight look of people that "give" and work hard. You have to be mad to show off such prices! At lunchtime, a complete menu for 12 €! But a blackboard does come to the curious' rescue! And when they're busy, you are warned that you may have wait. So we wait whilst nibbling the home prepared olives and watch the others enjoying beef with onions, grilled chitterling sausage, chilli con carne, salmon steak with sorrel, minced beef with white wine and parsley... Mauricette opts for "duo de pieces noires sauce Roquefort". With her silly new Sunday accent she says "eh, that's a good bit o' meat innit!" So true Sue! Black pieces? Round slices! Top of thigh! No fat at all! 14,5/20. The starter in the menu at 12 € is as funny as original. A "tartine de rillettes grillée aux noisettes" (potted meat grilled with nuts)! A crisp starter, 14,5/20. Followed by a round titbit: "saucisson Lyonnais à la moutarde ancienne" with cooked carrots and steamed potatoes. I fill myself up to here! 14,5/20. The desserts are: a good "tiramisu"! Original! Seeing what we often have to swallow in this guinea pig job! And a "mousse au chocolat" which is also homemade! With a real taste of chocolate! I swear! Two 14,5/20s. Jérôme Hagège doesn't look at all like the kind of chef whose head gets bigger at the same speed as his preparations become completely incomprehensible to the mere mortals. The light dining room has been well

thought out and the adorable little parsons' shrubbery with its back to the busy noisy area all go to help this place being a success. But we come here nevertheless to enjoy seasonal dishes and food that smells good! Bonus: order yourself some of the houses remarkable sushi (48 hours before). You'll love them!

Chef : Jérôme Hagège

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

28 boulevard Pagès
13009 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.26.34.62

Le Vieux Moulin

ΨΨ_{1/2}

The town adores these little places that are smuggled in. Gently and noiselessly, the proprietors of this address have achieved at pleasing even the most exigent of their customers. The lunchtime hurried who nevertheless want quality, the restaurant adepts for whom this moment is like mass. It's Mauricettes' case! She likes to take her time and murders chronometers, a sort of female Buster Keaton! Impassive and at a senators pace she relishes her "côte de boeuf". This place has built itself a reputation as a meat specialist! Amateurs read further down! It weighs 400g! Good quality, cooked as demanded, tasty garnishing, chicory with ham and potato gratin served individually. It leaves room for the knife! 15/20 for the meat loving green hat! For me it will be a formula at 13 € With a "noix d'entrecôte" garnished with simple fries. Let me insist that this was real rib-steak, not an "entrecôte Marseillaise". L'entrecôte Marseillaise is base rib-steak. Here the piece is superb. 14,5/20. And as everything ends in music, we have two desserts, both "homemade" and here we can say that a real chef is behind the wheel. Tarts, creams, biscuits... "Tarte à la poire" for Mauricette, and "tarte aux fraises" for me. The pastry is crisp, the cream tasty. Two 14,5/20s! The coffee plays its part, the wine is good. Blond wood along the walls and on the ceiling are witnesses of the past. The furniture matches the antique shop style. Proper tablecloths and napkins, implied attendance, and healthy spirit inspired by the management. Laurence and Jean-Marc Bourrellys' house is on a successful axe. Completely by chance, the dining room was full this lunchtime. I'm not going to tell you that a windmill that works is a good sign!

Chef : Olivier Roche

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

12 rue de Provence
13004 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.49.37.55

La Table Du Fort

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

When our plates arrive, Mauricette and I look each other in the eye as if we thought we had

won the lottery. They are superb and generous. All they need now is to be good: and they are. Refined cooking which doesn't go overboard with useless sophistication, simply well presented. The lady with the green hat and with "foie gras" experience as long as an FBI list gives her first 15,5/20 for the "foie gras cuit en terrine, confiture de figue aux noix" (foie gras cooked in a terrine, fig jam with nuts). Me too, foie gras. And why not? Don't go thinking that the chef can only do foie gras. It is just a programming coincidence. But not a coincidence that this is well put together: "poêlée de foie gras aux pommes sur miettes de crumble, jus de Banyuls" (fried foie gras with potatoes on a crumb crumble, gravy with Banyuls). I get a 16/20 out of my pocket, I don't feel like explaining. Mauricette continues with a "magret de canard aux groseilles, purée maison" (duck breast with red currants, homemade potato puree). A whole breast, supple, which confirms that a clever sauce maker is in command. Lots of restaurants hand out three paper fine slices of pre-cooked stuff, there is no small profit... nor any pleasure! This one is delicious! She gets out her 15,5/20. Subtle "gigot de lotte aux aubergines, petit salé et tandoori" (anglerfish with aubergines, lard and tandoori). Anglerfish is for sure amazingly compatible. The cooking times are admirable, the flavours all go in the same direction, 15,5/20. For once, I listen to my doctor and don't have a dessert, although I wanted one. Mauricette (my doctor) has a "chausson rôti aux bananes, chocolat chaud, glace vanille" (roasted banana turnover, hot chocolate, vanilla ice-cream) and very kindly serves me a few reluctant forkfuls, 15/20. Whilst I think of it, the wine menu is full of good stuff (for how long?). The Lajoinie-Bouexel duo is from "Le Florian", a discreet restaurant in Marseille well known to loyal B&O readers. 25 and 26 between them. It seems that value is not necessarily gained with age. Two steps from the Vieux-Port, the joining road on the "Place aux Huiles" and which ends up facing the ferry-boat. Our Marseille favourite this quarter.

Chef : Yann Bouexel

Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

8 rue du Fort-Notre-Dame
13007 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.33.97.65

Chez Marco

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Marco was right in putting up a pretty eye-catching sign for the motorists. As it is difficult to know if a restaurant is living here. It is also the head office of the SMUC tennis-club. I have often noticed that certain kinds of sporty people have a notion of exhibitionism. The tennis-men here can be watched from the patio by people sat down for lunch. A chip, a forward strike, a bit of bread, a backhand stroke. People shout less loudly if they are eating when they play. So, I choose the dining room anyhow. Marco chats with the noisy regulars at the counter who once at table, will throw ice cubes into their red wine. I take a look at the blackboard that one of the sparkling waitresses brings to me. Only main courses, no starters.

Good. I've seen fat chips delivered with lamb. So I will have a "pavé de boeuf sauce morille" (piece of beef with mushroom sauce). Maybe bad tempered steak, quartered by the cook, doubtlessly to avoid the meat bending whilst being cooked. Half of a potato, broccoli (puree like), and tomatoes stuffed with brousse cheese. The sauce is the only real problem: a thin sauce with stock cube diluted in water and a mushroom in it. Not two: one, mushroom. Add that the plate is cold and that of course the temperature of the food quickly goes down. 16 € and 12/20. The waitress uses her charm and quick looks to get rid of some "fondant au chocolat" (sticky chocolate cake) which is industrial made. Micro-waved, and drowned under custard, whipped cream and chocolate topping. Deplorable. 14 € and 8/20. I ask twice for a tooth pick. And only once an espresso coffee! But it arrives overflowing and bitter. It is only now that I notice that there are small blackboards on certain tables with choices of starters. Confirmation that the organisation in the dining room is slightly disorganised, but as we are in a sports club, let's say that it will do. If a kind "good-bye" was said to the customer when he put his hands on the door-handle, would do even better.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 8/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

65 avenue Clot-Bey
13008 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.79.20.67

Le Comptoir Marseillais

0

The effort for the presentation of the dishes that I was served is undeniable. The "risotto retour du marché" (return from the market risotto) is really sweet, but the rice doesn't seem adapted for the operation. The return from the market concerns the carrots, cauliflower, the flat beans but also the mushrooms, they are worked even so. A generous, creamy dish. For 15 €, all you would need is to have to look for the rice in the bottom of the dish. But, we are even so given Grana Padana instead of the promised parmesan cheese. There is no small profit. 12/20. Unless you want to give your own opinion (and we encourage you) avoid the "crème de citron meringuée" (lemon meringue cream). 7 € for a deplorable dessert is a true professional fault. The lemon leaves a lot of room for sugar and an enormous amount of acidity. I swallow two spoonfuls and for a long time the back of my throat remembers it. A bit of meringue or should I say crushed cardboard on top and under the cream, hard crumble. A nightmare at 7/20 and as many euros, 7 €. The coffee is very good, the coffee roaster ought to supply the desserts. The style of the house? Facing the beach, first-floor. It's classy, the first-floor. It allows the people that go there to think that they are above the others. The dining room is very bright thanks to enormous bay windows from floor to ceiling, a spacious patio. A spectacular wine cellar, in both senses. Glass, and serious in its contents. The attendance is technically in form. But is a little too blasé with jeans that are ripped and too long, cotton V-neck jumpers, and knowingly unshaved. Except for the lady. Finally: for what

it is, it's too expensive by far Oscar.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

5 promenade de la Plage
13008 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.32.92.54

Le Mas Des Grives

ΨΨ_{1/2}

When it's good, it's good. Anyway you look at it, it has to be said, and that's it. So I shall say this in greatest simplicity: I had a perfect little lunchtime meal, well taken care for in the corners and tasty down the sides! The menu at 13 € is not economical in various sweet meats. Starter+ main course+ cheese+ dessert+ ¼ of wine+ coffee. At that price, it is often for certain Inn-holders, a dreamt of chance to get rid of leftovers. Far from being a calculating cynic, Jean-Marc Virenque prefers regaling the barge to make him come back. It's a silly trick, but it works. Without hesitating I go for a "tarte aux poireaux" (leek tart) which is full of flavour and melts in your mouth. Starting with the first mouthful, I can flare that this is going to be good, the tart. 14,5/20. For the "magret à la cheminée" (fireplace cooked duck breast), we note that the local chef nearly timidly works the meat is his big fire place. When the cooking is over, he goes back to the kitchen to slice it. The plate arrives garnished with worked green beans and sautéed potatoes, real ones, a dream. 14,5/20. My eyes don't believe my fork! A tray of cheeses! And not just any! No dairy lee cream cheese! No! Ewe's milk cheese, goat's, Sainte-Maure de Touraine, Bleu de Bresse... congratulations! What an effort! A chance to appreciate the breads offered by Mr Sévikian's "La fournée de Beaumont". The dessert is homemade, a nice "tarte au chocolat" (chocolate tart), just slightly spoiled by useless coconut powder. 14/20. Who is the chef? A hyper modest 40-year-old who for more than 10 years spent a great time at "Fonfon au Vallon des Auffes" whilst Alphonse Mounier, its founder, was there. We may just as well say that if you wish to have a "bouillabaisse", the telephone number for the "Mas des Grives" is the 04.91.05.07.10, I will repeat that later, so don't worry if you haven't got a pen right now. A big fire place in a spacious dining room which is apt to receive group meals, rooms for those who wish to stay, a vast car park, and patio in season.

We are in Marseille and if you don't yet know this address that the Virenque couple have just taken over, it is only fair. And mind the bends! Isolation has a cost!

Chef : Jean-Marc Virenque
Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

88 chemin des Grives
Château-Gombert
13013 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.05.07.10

Ke Est

00

The "la Souleïade" successors have changed everything. It is very pretty with its modern style. Less restaurant, but more "lounge" as one could say. No menus on show outside, a bad sign. But the waiter knows his job as he welcomes you with a smile. It's a good start, make the most of it, it won't last. A menu at 14 € and a blackboard with propositions "that we change every fortnight because the products are fresh". An argument that can only make tinned food merchants laugh. No starter, I directly have a "magret de canard, pâtes au gorgonzola" (duck breast, pasta with Gorgonzola cheese). Pre-cut meat that tastes of iron, lacking salt and pepper. The tagliatelle over cooked. They stick together when you try to pick them up. Not enough salt, not enough pepper. But the sauce is good. A piece of satellite flaky pastry is the best bit. The dish costs 16 € and is only worth 11/20. I tried to be original with my "nem de poire" (pear nem). I ought to have chosen a different dessert, but apart from chocolate tart, there was nothing else: no strawberry crumble, no nothing. A greasy nem that looks like Turkish delight fritter and smells acrid is brought to me. The taste is acrid too. A fry up made of oil and sugar, and I am told, Raspberry vinegar. After duck breast tasting of iron, the dessert tastes like the bottom of a frying pan. 6 € and 7/20. The glassware is covered in limestone and finger marks. The cutlery is badly washed, only very few conscientious restaurant owners use white vinegar. Customers get up to fetch salt and pepper from a neighbouring table. It is not the waiter's fault: he has been on the phone for about half of the sitting, so his hands are busy. It is not his fault. I even saw him bringing bread to a table with a telephone jammed between his ear and shoulder and he was talking loudly. Incredible. The restaurant: it's as easy as a telephone call!

Chef : Who knows..
Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 8/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 11/20.

8 traverse des Néréides
13008 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.73.33.78

Le Castel Jacques

00

Along with Mauricette, we went to the "place Castellane" in Marseille. We got nabbed by an enormous streamer which was above the patio of the shop. It invited us to forget the previous proprietors when entering. A great atmosphere had arrived with the newcomers... when you are painted so pretty a picture by such an announcement, the first thing that the customer wants to do is to check it out... and take a look at the staff's faces. Everyone was sulking. A formula at 12 € which is really a complete menu. The Lady with the green hat went for a "salade de chèvre chaud" (hot goat's cheese salad) and was served two de-frosted bread-crumbed bits of cheese laid on a bed of fresh salad with bits of tomato. She made do! I thought she was severe and then she went and handed out a 13/20! Well! On my side, the "salade marine" was appalling. Only the morning's fresh salad leaves were worth it. As for the rest: a slice of salmon that had been out

for too long and was dry, some over-strong tinned anchovies that varied from off-white to dark brown as I went along. It was very much under average because here comes a 6/20. The main courses were better! A "truite meunière" (trout with butter and parsley) which wasn't too bad and was served with a prepared ratatouille, so 12/20. And a "bavette à l'échalote" (sirloin steak with shallots) which made an effort despite the potatoes that were trying to be a "gratin dauphinois" and not succeeding. Packet prepared potatoes. The carrots were good. 10/20. There were no miracles with the desserts: "île flottante" (floating island) which was perfectly in the norm of prefabricated and gained 12/20, and a scandalous "pavé au caramel" which could be added to the top 10 of the worst desserts I have had to swallow in my life as a wandering guinea pig. An industrial agrochemical version. A parallelepiped cake with the taste and smell of bad Kinder, a pleonasm. Slightly masked by chocolate topping from a bottle, and not good. 4/20. For once the "Henri Blanc" coffee stood out, or maybe it was just that after such a meal anything could be acceptable, who knows!

Chef : Who knows..!
Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 13/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.

16 place Castellane
13006 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.48.21.33

Les Jardins D'ahlam

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Hamid Qazdar knows the Muselier Square, which is facing the sea, well. He has been running a restaurant here for 20 years. Some will remember: a long time ago could be seen "Dar Jerba" on the frontispiece! Since, it has re-centred itself on good work, cooking which has become family like, less inclined to volume sirens "at all costs" and the constraints sometimes imposed by the profession. As you like proof (so do we), it is to be known that the dining room is run by the unmovable and loyal Sadek and the boss. Whereas the kitchen is run by the wife, charming Linda seconded by... Hamid's brother! If that's not family! Family does not mean "good", we dive into the formula at 16 € on weekday lunchtimes which allows for a dish from the full menu and dessert. A good idea. A "formula-full menu" in sum. Option "couscous méchoui-merguez" which is original, cinnamon, ginger, classic vegetables with added pumpkin. Semolina rolled by hand, buttered. Whilst I'm at it, listen! Did you know that the meaning of the word "couscous" (from the Berber word "K seksu") means "well rolled"? So! The 14/20 is amply deserved seeing as the lamb, knuckle joint is big and the merguez sausages are quality, there are two of them. A very nice surprise with the homemade made deserts! Don't ask me their names! I didn't take notes! But these delicious sweets are guaranteed to be fresh and I advise that you appreciate them with the homemade mint tea. 15/20! Beware of the shop-front! It certainly doesn't show what's inside! It's pretty, cosy with coloured corners full of comfortable chairs. Walls with marquetry, subtle lights. Material tablecloths and napkins, pretty Oriental crockery. And yes. I had a tantrum, a desperate want for couscous, a need

for scents and flavours from afar to help me put up with my walking guinea pig life. I hit the bull's-eye with the charming Qazqar couple who take you by the hand to their Algerian (she) and Moroccan (he) roots. And I get the feeling that you will feel the same thing, but before that you're going to have to go there. Ah yes: it is quieter during the week.

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 17/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**8 place Amiral Muselier
13008 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.77.96.77**

La Comedia

0

The proprietor has changed. The new ones have kept the name, but insist on making it very clear that there was a lot of work to be done when they set their slippers inside this restaurant. Except that the predecessor knew how to cook, offered starters, dishes and desserts. In sum, a restaurant. Now at lunchtime, it is "starter buffet" or "lasagna" or "steak with mushrooms". That's it, don't search under the table. So as to search for a minimum amount of "cuisine" to tell you about, but wanting to avoid all inconsiderate risks, I opted for "pavé de boeuf aux champignons". Otherwise it would have been lasagna. The meat is tender, alright. No fat, as clean as the forehead of a freshly baptised child. But no taste either, obviously. A sauce with cream thrown in at the last minute... big green beans... potatoes with aubergine... Not really bad, but when I tell you the price of this dish, even if it was generous, you'll get the point: 15 €. Who is being taken for a ride? The customer of course, that's who! Only a stupid customer like me could throw away 15 € for such a dish, which amongst its faults, is practically the only one on offer! 11/20! Things get even worse with dessert. A "fondant au chocolat" (sticky chocolate cake). "You're going to regale" the boss-cum-waiter says! Yet another man who has never eaten in his own restaurant! A round subcontract chocolate cake, piping hot from imprecise microwave work and drowning in custard. And just to be pretty on the top, almonds. The 8/20 is expensive. I didn't realise how close to the truth I was: 6,50 €! 43 francs! A disgrace! Saint Street falls back into the wrongs which made its reputation: treating customers like idiots. What's more, neither Mme nor Monsieur said "goodbye we hope to see you soon", it looks like they got the message!

**Chef : Who knows...!
Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.**

**21 rue Sainte
13001 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.54.99.78**

Les Buvards

ΨΨ

This kind of small address makes life nice, makes every day happier. Especially if you like wine, and not the usual stuff that squats the

menus of lazy restaurants. A corridor-address. The back of the shop like an antiques place with few tables but happy people, the same goes for the front of the shop as while. At the counter a young man is leaning over a Moulinex mini-oven, putting together little dishes "bistrot fashion" and glasses of wine. The spirit is doing impeccably and so I choose a "boudin noir de Thierry Daniel au confit d'oignons, purée" (blood sausage with crystallised onions, mashed potato) which has a big knob of butter on top, from the short blackboard. The splendid glass of "Crozes" wine by Dard and Ribo adds to my growing pleasure. 14,5/20 for the dish. It's a shame that the excellent coffee is lukewarm. The bread is very good. Here is a small place which privileges the essential rather than the shape in comparison to the usual criteria of classic restaurants. I even discovered a high-quality publication that dated back to 20 years ago! Which talks about wine and vineyards: "le rouge et le blanc"*. Anyway! A place for wine and if it tickles your fancy, you can also eat. With a smile and no nonsense. It's funny how places like this grab you and don't let go! *www.lerougeetleblanc.com

Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**34 Grand'Rue
13002 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.90.69.98**

Le Charité Café

Ψ_{1/2}

Apparently "charity begins with oneself", and here it is true. Lunch in the walls of a Museum, in the heart of the Panier quarter, does it tempt you? So! The place is admirable, maybe you know "La Vieille Charité" and its sumptuous decor worth a high budget film: a 17th century hospice with a chapel in the middle of an enormous courtyard surrounded by impressive arcades on three levels. Very effective. All hidden behind the Marseille Cathedral. But nooo! Not Notre-Dame de la Garde, the other one! Superb! Once inside in the right-hand corner, the Charité Café announces the colour: daily dish at 10 € and formula dish + dessert + coffee 13 €. For once Mauricette wanted to eat on the terrace, but because of the Mistral wind and a non weighted hat we will have to eat inside. She opts for the dish of the day, I do the same. It is a... a... too hungry, I've even eaten the name! A poultry escalope with mozzarella and raw ham, all covered in tomato sauce, a happy marriage, subtle, thick, complete 14/20 without any doubt. Especially as it is garnished with grilled mixed vegetables and a green salad with olive oil. "Please sir, I want some more"! The desserts are slightly common, with the inevitable "moelleux au chocolat" (sticky chocolate cake) which is swimming in custard and sliced almonds, and reheated. Tut-tut and 12/20. I've often seen big kitchens with small plates! Here it is the reverse! The kitchen could be held in a monastery cell rather than an airport hall! Coffee, the bill, and bang: surprise! My meal has been counted as the formula at 13 € Honest for the customer, but then this is the right place. Apart from a wine stain on a piece of furniture and the wonky straw in my orange juice, this was a nice moment, but no more. Even with

Mauricette and wind that would ruffle bald man's hair. And what a setting!

Welcome = 13/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 15/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

**Musée de la Vieille Charité
2 rue de la Charité
13002 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.81.08.41**

Rive Neuve

Ψ

An ode to being trendy, comfortable deco and flat screens on which to watch a film about an evening here, full of champagne and maybe happy, with a permanent rogues' gallery of friends flashed with their glass of bubbles in hand. But also there is an alternating documentary on big cats in Africa. As soon as I sit, a lioness rips a gazelle apart. It didn't make the waitress smile: do you do tartare? Anyway! The snobby customers, who act stuffy, are amazed by everything but always with a blasé look, word or gesture. There is even sushi on offer in this house, and to be perfectly clear with you, this is why I'm here. The juvenile waitress informs me that today there are no sushi. Bang. It's annoying when the shop-front doesn't have a notice up warning you. The customer comes in, happily sits down, is told and therefore trapped. So the same happy customer goes for the one product which is a trap for the chef: St-Jacques shellfish! "Brochette de St-Jacques et risotto" (St-Jacques kebab and risotto) at 22 € My dear readers, it was great, which is a good thing seeing the price. On all angles precise, good well-worked products. A well deserved 15/20. On the contrary the "sabayon de fruits frais" (fresh fruit zabaglione) is offside. A complete mistake. A puddle covered with a puree on top of bits of un-enticing fruit. 8 € and 11/20. Two dishes and a big split. It would be best to remember the chef's savoury potential. At the end of the day, the waitress actually smiles. At coffee time. Is this because for no reason at all it costs 3 €? A heart sinker to finish you off.: loud speakers dribble out famous music: a song from the 70's by Joan Baez, "Sacco and Vanzetti" both condemned to death in the 20's. But this famous melody by Ennio Morricone has been pirated in to "lounge music". To hear such an engaged song transformed in to something as sweet as nougat or Turkish delight in a place as sickeningly sweet as this will be by far the hardest thing to take.

Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**4 quai de Rive-Neuve
13001 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.54.24.49**

Le Bouchon

Ψ_{1/2}

This little place smells brand new for one very good reason: it has just been taken over. The new people already held shop in Marseille where they were favoured by the BâO at the time. It is with

pleasure that we come across them again amidst proper napkins, pretty glasses, and a "bouchon atmosphere" (Lyon is well known for its cuisine nicknamed "bouchon") because: they do Lyon specialties! They're swimming in them! And when I say "swimming"... It's greasy! Too greasy! You may tell me that this cooking, which is well known to me, isn't necessarily known for its lightness. But, the croutons in my "salade lyonnaise" are soaked in oil. Like sponges. What's more, they haven't been deglazed in vinegar, there is no curly endive, which is a minimum when respecting specifications for this historical recipe. Fundamentalists will even go as far as insisting there be dandelions... There is no reason why crowds should stand up to complain when a "bouillabaisse" recipe is transgressed and let slip criticism when other dishes, like the "salade lyonnaise", step out of line. Especially as the tomato slices and sweet corn in vinegar are not necessary. 13/20. And 9 €. Something else from Lyon with a "tablier de sapeur, sauce tartare". The sauce is excellent. The "tablier de sapeur", tripe, beef caul for the non-initiated, covers the top of the plate. It's too generous, not finished. Purists recommend a piece measuring 10 to 12cm. The waitress-boss promised me sauté potatoes, I was dribbling in expectation. In the end I get a greasy fennel-carrot mixture and a sort of also greasy carbohydrate flan. Today is not the day for me to slip in to trousers the size of Brad Pitts. 14,5 € and 13/20. But I've got it: I have been recognised. This is why the garnishing was trying to be out of the ordinary, the tablier de sapeur had the caricatural effect of spreading my elbows out. Rather the opposite to what was required. The glass of red "coteau du lyonnais" was served iced. Maybe it's better for the flavour, that way you can't taste it. Do not mistake me. This is a nice little restaurant, but is too laid back in its pseudo authenticity to be forgiven a hopeless culinary show. But the lady in the dining room is very good.

Chef : Emmanuel Audebert

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

**26 rue Edmond Rostand
13006 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.67.50.54**

Un Tout Petit Monde

1/2

A tiny world, a tiny trip and we'll leave. When I last tested this place ages ago (let's say about 6 or 7 years) I hadn't really appreciated the bit of rabbit that looked like a chicken wing. Today as a bonus to mediocre cookery, the attendance leaves a lot to be desired. I have just realised what having a "long arm" means, at least in this tiny world! Standing facing the entrance, the waiter welcomes you by pointing to the place that he royally decides will be yours, turning on the spot like a weather vane, basically; do it yourself mate. Not to mention the 1920's model Mauricette. Anyway! If you are pressed for time, you have about an hour within which to have your meal; avoid taking the risk of a guaranteed wait. Seeing how this place is organised, it's going to be very long. The best thing to do is opt for the buffet at 11 €. Otherwise, dish of the day, sorry: "taste of the

day". I must be precise. Or like myself a "mix-grill" with an over thin and over cooked carpaccio type slice of beef, a sausage and a merguez sausage which are under cooked, greasy MacDonald type potatoes and an over seasoned tartar sauce. 10/20 for it all and 30 minutes wait; I did think this might happen... Mauricette goes for the "ballade du buffet" and will be reminded several hours later of a sort of aubergine caviar, only the name had anything to do with caviar and a generous buffet put together mainly by dry, stodgy starters, 11/20. The snowed under attendance will be as long as a day without bread, rather like me in fact, because I had to ask for some twice. It ended up by arriving warm, freshly out of the micro-wave. So-so, not the best "tiny world", except for the original setting and the fact that it is two steps away from the Canebière under the dome of the old Astoria hotel which is quite something. A good way to get away from the noisy centre of town even if you are right in it. Thus the success of this place.

Welcome = 6/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 11/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 13,5/20.

**10 boulevard Garibaldi
13001 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.54.08.98**

La Poule Noire

ΨΨ

What is this weird idea of putting cumin in everything? Especially as the chef doesn't need to play tricks to become seductive! Lunchtime formula at 13 €, full menu at 19 € in the evening. And what results is full of charm! As a starter the "terriner de foie de volaille" (poultry liver terrine) is doubtlessly homemade, clever, but weighted down by you know what. Attracted by the dish, you lean over to grasp the scent and bang! Your nose gets ripped off! Cumin... is perfect for the light handed cook, a gentle touch is necessary. Otherwise all hell is let loose and all of the chef's know-how is reduced to dust... or should I say cumin powder. 14/20. The same goes for the "thon sauce vierge". A nice dish, better can hardly be achieved with tuna, the cooking is impeccable. The garnishing is well applied but there again, you lean over, and breath in a full nose of cumin powder which has been sprinkled round the plate, as a signature, we've got the message, it's tiring. 14/20. Tiring and stupid as the quality price report is far from ridiculous and the chef has developed some nice ideas. Madame is perfect in the dining room, gentle and doesn't over-do things, exemplary. Funny: she whistled behind my back at one stage. I lowered my head with humility. I admit that I thought for a moment that it was because I still have some muscles left in particular some dorsal muscles which have become under trained since my stomach does all of the work, you can imagine the state of decrepitude I'm in. The dream bubble quickly burst when I realised that she was calling her dog. Oh yes: coffee is included in the formula. Not bad eh?

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

61 rue Sainte

**13001 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.55.68.86**

L'ardoise

Ψ

The gentleman is too keen when welcoming you, probably excited by the success of his small establishment. He only just acknowledges you, sends you swiftly wherever he pleases except that I didn't want to go wherever. As I am alone, I mustn't monopolize a table whilst he tries to stick me on a stool like in a bar. A radical no. At my age, the spine is in the same state as the rest, and it's a question of principle. I choose a normal table, much to the man's disappointment. Who still manages to have the last word by elegantly slipping in "right this will do for the moment but if it gets busy, we'll see". It didn't get "busy". The prices are slightly superior to the ones in the area, which is really a good sign, but the dishes have to keep up. They're far from it with the "steak d'espadon poêlé à l'huile vierge, riz (swordfish steak with virgin oil, rice). Over-cooked steak, disappointing, it doesn't make you want to try it again and thus contributes to protecting the species. You have to see the bright side. A pretty eye goggling dish, that's all. 12 € and 10/20. It's the "panacotta caramel" (panacotta cheese with caramel) that saves the day, classical, round at 14,5/20 and 4,5 €. The coffee costs 1,5 € and is good. The chef is alone in his hallway type kitchen, doesn't even get the time to open his newspaper. And then you have to get up to pay the bill; otherwise the attendance would be wasting it's time. This is what is called optimism to the customer's detriment.

Welcome = 4/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

**47 cours Julien
13006 - Marseille
Phone : 04.91.53.47.06**

Les Mets Du Sud

ΨΨΨ

This is the semi-gastronomic place in the area. If you know of any others, let me know! Unless you want to keep it to yourself. I would do that sometimes! But I can't! It's my job to pass on "the good tables, the bad and the ones to avoid"! And to hide the Stéfani's table wouldn't be doing them a favour! In a mediocre, competitive environment where cooking references are out of focus, who could imagine such a thing? So make the most of having this restaurant! Fresh products as if they were raining down, a nice cosy, well run dining room, cloths and lights of the sort that we would like to see more often, an attendance run by a never weary Michel Stéfani (who is well helped) and cooking that you remember after you have left! If by chance you have put your teeth back in first! The menu changes every two months. The carte changes every four months. Not silly. What is an effort for the kitchens is also the best way of keeping up with seasonal products. But the "soupe de favouilles" (small crab soup), is one that can be found all year round here! An in-eradicable

recipe that I adore each time I come!.. Liar, it's the first time. But not the last! 15/20! What follows is also from the sea: "lotte au lait de laurier émulsionné" (monkfish with whipped laurel milk). Laurel isn't used that much in Provence. It isn't easily married, like Mauricette. No-one ever wants it. The fish is only a prop (a luxurious prop) for a clever, refined sauce. A second 15/20. We understand now why other guides are taking interest in us. I don't know what got into them for them to leave "le Colombier" in Carnoux! What I do know is if they were in Tourcoing or Rennes, we wouldn't have them handy to treat us! So? Thank-you to the Stéfanini family!

Chef : Florence Stéfanini

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**8 place de l'Amiral Muselier (Prado Plage)
13008 - Marseille**

Phone : 04.91.77.88.25 - Fax : 04.91.71.82.46

Paradis Eau

ΨΨ

These newcomers are not bad at all! My elderly teeth were a-trembling when I read "spaghetti bolognaise" as dish of the day. In a formula at 10 € and a menu at 13,50 € A short investigation with the help of the cordial neighbours (the next door hotel "l'eau des collines") talked me into going in. The young man at the entrance who is also attending seems a little nervy and dry to me, but fits into the job respectful of all of the rules due to this career. Except maybe that he didn't offer me the menus at 16 € and 22 € although why I don't know. It's annoying even so. I found out that they existed when I got back to my car, at the end. Just the formulas and the woks. Woks are the places speciality. In a friendly manner, the waiter puts my starter together: "tomate-mozza" with good mozzarella, firm tomatoes, oil perfumed with basil and it's outstandingly generous! I didn't finish it! I couldn't! 14/20! I have "wok au bison sauce aigre-douce" (bison with sweet and sour sauce) to follow with noodles, lots of noodles. I didn't know that noodle woks existed! The preparation is clever, well cooked (garlic, ginger, onions, carrots...) not at all diet food which is the wok idea! But even so! 14/20! The homemade dessert, cross my heart, isn't. But it is acceptable! A sub-contract but well laid out "tarte aux pommes"! 14/20! The coffee is good, the bread fresh and the regulars are numerous: an evident sign of work well done. Where "simplicity" is sometimes unfairly treated as "botched", here is finally a rare place.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

45 route de la Treille

13011 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.44.12.51

La Rose De Marmara

ΨΨΨ

As Alain Chapel wrote: "Cuisine, is more than

just recipes". Nicole Brun-Ghazharossian could have made this phrase hers. We guinea pigs are slightly ignorant about the subtleties of Armenian cookery. Often copied, rarely equalled. So to eat here in this pretty tavern in the centre of Marseille is rather like an initiation. Joyful learning from each corner of the dish and a will to please with every forkful. So my little green bunnies, along with Mauricette who has always been a Charles Aznavour fan, we dive in at the deep end! Ah! I wish I was still there! It was great! It puts your references back into place! Rubs out any false thoughts! Subtle, fine cuisine. We greedily start off with a plate including 6 delicious bits from aubergine with raisins, aubergine stuffed with tomato and garlic, dried tomatoes with garlic and dill, courgettes with mint, white beans with garlic onions and parsley and at the end in the middle of the plate is homemade taramasalata, the real stuff, not the whipped salty industrial stuff. 15/20, especially as the sesame bread is homemade (in the evening). Next? The famous "keuftés fromage et bamyas menthe, citron et vin blanc" (cheese keuftés and mint bamyas, lemon and white wine). Subtle cooking and 15/20. Next? "Keuftés à la viande oignons menthe et boulgour pilaf" (meat onion and mint keuftés with boulgour pilaf). At this point in the meal, subtle is no off chance. The cook really knows her job. It is often difficult to talk about "female" cooking in the professional world without being biased. So! 15/20! Next? Do you like Brahms? Have you heard of "khorovatz"? What a shame Jane! Chicken kebab marinated in lemon and sumac! Sumac is often used with sesame and thyme. 15/20. Next? "Beignets de courgettes à la menthe" (courgette fritter with mint)! I don't remember the Armenian name! But I have given it a mark! 14,5/20! Next? Dessert! Ewes' milk yoghurt with rose jam, flaky pastry with almonds and orange blossom (Burma), semolina cake with cinnamon (halva) and rose flavored Turkish delight. From 15/20 to 14,5/20. Of course: Armenian coffee! I shall stop there. And conclude by saying that as far as I know, "La Rose de Marmara" is not the best Armenian restaurant in Marseille. But simply the only one.

Chef : Nicole Brun-Ghazharossian

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

30 rue Breteuil

13006 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.53.31.42

Bistrot Alexandre

ΨΨ_{1/2}

It is simply too busy to appreciate the cooking. A pretty "brasserie" where a hurried tempo is imposed by dining room staff that are none the less well implied. They are conditioned to work with busy customers. Hurry, life is too short! Here is one of the rare addresses in the midi that can satisfy office workers who generally tend to be happy anywhere just as long as it is far enough away from the office dictator. The customers are nearly 80% feminine. So? Out of luck, it's Friday. Obligatory "brunch"! I mean that nothing is brought to the table as in a restaurant; you've got to help yourself. I must say that this started out badly. Having to queue like

in a self service... complete formula for 19 € Not cheap. The "buffet d'entrées" is served by the lady boss from behind the counter, with lots of smiling authority. For me: carrots with coriander, egg mimosa, mint courgette, potato gratin with caraway and a sort of dry olive cake, but then it usually is. All of the rest is good, fresh, worked, dosed and planned. From 14/20 to 14,5/20. My dish is less glorious and there is no alternative to "lasagnes". What's more, I have to get up... Beware of Fridays' lasagne, if you see what I mean. They are correct, not greasy, with bits of tomato, but not seasoned enough, nor spiced. 14/20. Cheese if you please Louise, then dessert. I go to the buffet and choose a well prepared, homemade "crème caramel" at 14,5/20 and as a bonus, it goes well with the coffee and the dry chocolate biscuits that turn out to be delicious. No hyper-glucose stuff, but the real taste of chocolate. 14,5/20. Good coffee and excellent red wine (bravo: it seems it was a good Côtes-du-Rhône) both included in the formula at 19 € A very professional show, well practiced and performed but not cynical at all: it's good! It's a shame about the office type of sticky sweet environment for this place that deserves to have a go at trying the town centre in the evening. You're just going to be condemned to eating well at lunchtime in the noisy 14th district of Marseille.

Chef : Famélie Misérez

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.

31 boulevard Charles Moretti

13014 - Marseille

Phone : 4.91.53.71.15

Le Mas De Saint Marcel

0

It's a bit off putting. This place is neither inviting nor attractive. The shop-front makes a little effort just in case you feel like pushing the door. Smiling personnel, who are pleased to see you, a pretty deco which has turned a warehouse into a ballroom type restaurant and has evidently needed a lot of thought and effort. Well done for that. We could do without the old fashioned '80s music, but some must enjoy it as we can't all like the same things. But when it comes to cuisine, there are bottom of the line limits to not go under, and don't go telling me that we can't all... The lunchtime propositions have been studied so that they take up the least time and spread (literally) from 13,50 € to 16 € if I remember rightly. A simple starter which can be delicious if put together properly: "oeuf mimosa" (egg mimosa). Three egg halves smothered with industrial mayonnaise. Not "mimosa" or parsley or anything else. Ordinary boiled eggs. A mistaken title or worse, the chef should try re-learning his culinary alphabet book. And what's more, the green salade has been covered with industrial vinaigrette. 10/20. The dish of the day should follow: "daube au trois viandes" (stew made with three types of meat). I say should because I'm still searching for the veal and the porc is bone dry. A soup dish, five or six pieces of meat laid on spaghetti which itself is swimming in cooking oil. Oil, the real stuff, yellow. A carrot slice and three stoned olives later and it's worth 8/20. I give up on dessert. Seeing the context, there is statistically little

hope that it could bring me back out of the depths. I have an ordinary coffee instead. Total: 13,50 € I nearly forgot that in the effort made, the house systematically gives all of their customers little toasts as an "amuse bouche". A good point when added onto the smiling personnel and the managements will to please. This story confirms that we are lacking only one thing to make us happy: a chef. But it's a bit much.

Chef : Who knows...!

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 13/20.

2 boulevard de Saint-Marcel

13011 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.89.69.52 et 06.29.57.93.26

Le Gout Des Choses

ΨΨΨΨ

Although they both say that they have no roots, the Rathery couple certainly knows where they stand. After such a trip (out of order: Florida, Antibes, Normandy, Toulouse and a whole load of islands) they could have settled into a simply academic gastronomic style, invest in curtains and become snobs. Except that after a while, medals... Their interest is above all the customer, customer who will find at this address in the Cours Julien all the advantages of good dishes and none of the inconveniences, if you see what I mean. Classic bases remains his creed. But nevertheless our friendly fifty year old searches round the labyrinth of ideas and travel memories without ever losing track. This leaves us with remarkable dishes that are well anchored into traditional values but that conceal influences from all over the world. Such as this perfect autumn starter called "pastille de canard et escalope de foie gras grillée". Gentle spices, soft and crisp. The foie gras is impeccably thick. And the touch of red radish roots give it a feel of the woods. 16/20 for a brilliant triptych. To follow are two "brochettes de rognon de veau au Serrano" (veal kidney kebabs with Serrano wine) garnished with mashed potato and basil and carrot puree with cumin which seem to have been prepared by very light hands. I insist because so many chefs get carried away with carrots and cumin! A subtle mixture of flavours. The gravy puts everything into place, it's delicious, a clear bistrot dish that has been pushed to the utmost of its possibilities. 16/20. I pinch myself; am I going to wake up? Not yet: I'll just have a dessert to round things off. Professionally I don't have the choice. It's just that if there is talent, I have to make sure that there isn't a crack in the paintwork. The "gâteau de macaron au café" is amazing, and absolutely perfect, 16/20. The dining room isn't extraordinary but you feel at home. Well seconded, Sylvie Rathery runs the dining room with a smile. A big un-ostentatious table but with an enormous capacity to please I can assure you.

Chef : Olivier Rathery

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

4 place Notre-Dame du Mont

13006 - Marseille

Phone : 04.91.48.70.62

MARTIGUES

Le Garage

ΨΨ

A new table in Martigues, can't say no to that. A good one, even less. Though some important things have been messed up, the fact that a restaurateur and a good cook are ambitious pleases the guinea pig! Resolutely modern setting, real napkins, glasses that make you want to sip wine, wide eyed clients that applaud. But not any old client. The lunchtime menu is priced at 25,90 € with no choice. Mine is at 34 €. Means that my taste buds are expecting a treat. Good pictures to start with "comprimé de légumes confits à la brousse et mascarpone en fraîcheur d'herbes" (vegetable conserve with brousse and mascarpone cheese, fresh herbs). The presentation is flattering, it's good, fresh. 15/20. What follows is of the same style "filet de canette en croûte de piquillos sur des cannelloni de giroles" (duckling fillet with pepper crust on chanterelle cannelloni). The cannelloni are the best. The fillet is generous and has more character than a duck breast. Just as well. The skin could have been crisp! A little whipped cream as a useful decoration confirms the cooks register with a pretty plate, 15/20. The dessert sinks to failure. "Soupe de pêches blanches de Mouries au poivre de Séchouan et un sorbet mangue" (White peach soup with pepper and mango sorbet). A liquid compote over soaked, the smell of over ripe fruit, what else! The mango sorbet tries to drag it up: but doesn't quite get there! 11/20! The real dessert arrives with coffee, three delicious sweets, meringue in pepper, lemon tart and brownie anthology. At 2,60 € a coffee, it's nearly a give away, just shows how good it was. Amongst the approximate regrets, the bread. Individual, too dry, the crust breaks off with every touch, like frozen bread. No toothpicks. And during the meal, the cook and the waiter have a discreet misunderstanding in the dining room. Not a professional attitude, the cook contains himself: we can see all, as the kitchens are open. Well done for keeping cool. So many signs that there is still work to be done, and good bread to be made. But we hope that the manager will stick it out! It would be a shame to drop it so near to the goal!

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 8/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Lunchtime "business class" menu at 25,90 € and "couleur doré" at 34 €. Formula "du rouge au noir" at 28 €. Full menu.

20 avenue Frédéric Mistral

13500 - Martigues

Phone : 04.42.44.09.51

Le Chicos

Ψ

It's really silly! For once that we had stepped out of the, should I say... conventional cookery track and that the new comers are very nice, the dish doesn't keep its promises. The register that is put up is that of Texan and Mexican specialities. It is true that this type of cuisine is mostly seen in a festive atmosphere, and after a dozen

Desperados or three glasses of Tequila, once the sense of critic and the rest of you are tipsy, you're pleased with everything. So! It's half past twelve, and the place is empty. Apart from me who's starting a "botanas sans piments" (botanas without pimentos). A sampling dish that mixes homemade (guacamole, mex roll) and the frozen, micro-waved (mozzarella stick, onion ring, ampanada, potato stick, broccoli fritter and cheddar). On a bed of tired salad. 10,50 € and 12/20. To follow: "quesada grande". A supple wheat tortilla, put through the grill and garnished with beef and cheddar. Not very interesting, but voluntarily filling. Tomatoey beef and not much cheese, the contrary to what was announced. The tired salad is a sort of signature, and what's more, just as tired tomatoes sprinkled with an industrial vinaigrette. 9 € and 11/20. You can hear the micro-waves "ding" far too often to feel confident. I wouldn't mind if the young and gentle proprietress changed cutlery between dishes, rather than grossly wiping them on the remaining salad before putting them straight back down without a second thought. I'm telling you: in the dark and after having had a little too much to drink. This place has its aficionados.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 15/20. Coffee = 12/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

32 quai Général Leclerc

13500 - Martigues

Phone : 06.11.54.54.58

Hotel-restaurant Les Pins

ΨΨ

The saying goes: "if in doubt, abstain". I doubt, but will not abstain: I go back. Head for "la Couronne", not on the outskirts of Paris, don't exaggerate, but towards Martigues on the blue coast. I return to "Les Pins" which was brought down by us some years ago. A critic which was criticised mainly on our web site, but quite a bit by post too. But a critic criticised for his critics and who camps by his certitudes, that's critical... for him. I had quite positive echoes about the house, the regulars, family atmosphere, its kind non-ambition to figure amongst the three best tables in town. An impressive sitting: 80 people this lunchtime? Small lunchtime price: menu at 12,50 € Today no starters, in the menu! A mini menu? Oh no! One reason; the dish is announced to be generous! "Couscous". An effectively generous portion is brought to me! It's nice to see that the grain doesn't hide the garnishing but quite the opposite! Something so rare that it deserves to be mentioned! Chicken, merguez sausages, lamb, it's all there, and it's all good, harissa sauce on one side and all! 14/20. Mauricette preferred pizza. She often says that "pizza palaces often only know how to do pizzas". In any case her "mousquetaire" (sort of four cheese variety) is good. Nice red sauce and thick cheese as if to please, thin dough, here's 14,5/20. "Tarte tatin" (upside down apple tart) for me, and "tarte au citron meringuée" (lemon meringue pie) for the lady with the green hat... who was searching for a snag. She didn't find one, unless you count the fact that the homemade apple tart had been violently re-heated! Well done! The apples said so between mouthfuls of thick cream: 13/20! Homemade lemon meringue

pie of course! Well, well, well! I raise my hat! 14,5/20! The place is spacious: one rather noisy side for the labourers, the other one a little calmer for the "3rd" or maybe even "5th" age seeing as Mauricette was there. On the contrary to the last visit here, the boss has an eye on everything and even checks your hands when you come out of the gents, in case there was a problem with the dryer. A remarkable professional reflex for this day and age, where most people don't care, where indifference is a rule. Especially in restaurants. Guess why the place is full?

Welcome = 13/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 14/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**Avenue de la Gare de la Couronne
LA COURONNE
13500 - Martigues
Phone : 04.42.80.70.76**

A Contrario

ARevoir

On the island. It replaces "Chez Marraïne", an institution that had been dragging its feet for some time. A small and welcome facelift with the arrival of the young proprietor. Perfect: covered terrace, protected from traffic, or pretty dining room with linen cloths, Jean-Christophe Llorca is perfect at the attendance. The starter chosen from my menu at 22 € is a "gaspacho de poivrons, comme un tartare" (cold pepper soup, like tartar), and means that you can sprinkle whatever you choose on top from the surrounding plate. No need! It's good, even if it is not usual to put cream and milk into the preparation. 14/20. What follows is a catastrophe: "côtelettes d'agneau en croûte de tapenade noire" (lamb chops with black olive crust). A pretty dish, with shrivelled button mushrooms, raw pepper cubes and especially, three miserable over-cooked and hard chops, masked with a rather liquid, black olive preparation with... anchovies! A 100% mistake at 7/20. The dessert is very good: "tiramisu aux figues" (fig tiramisu) the fruit is light and perfumed, and it isn't pushed into a corner by sugar. A well deserved 15/20. Lots of details confirm that the necessary last minute rules haven't yet been sorted out so that the place is completely ready for action. Nothing crippling in our mind, but the management is going to have to get the situation into control: customers rarely give a second chance.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**4 rue des cordonniers
13500 - Martigues
Phone : 04.42.35.19.78**

MAUSSANE LES ALPILLES

La Fleur De Thym

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Good surprises usually arrive when you are expecting the worst to happen. Which isn't

always the case, as once said Paul Valéry. Having heard that this adorable place had changed hands and name, I entered with few illusions: the Alpilles and this particular village which rarely withholds nice surprises. And then, a Mediterranean lady with a dark look welcomed me, in a friendly and distant way. Soon after, her husband the chef came to greet me. An individual welcome that can't be found in tourist factories, unless you are well known in the show-biz world. It's just that at the BâO, we appreciate kindness when it isn't used according to the customer. How many times have I seen a chef rush to a well-known VIP's table and butter him up, whereas he doesn't even acknowledge that there are other customers there! Anyway! The menu at 17 € will be perfect. An applied starter with a "sablé chèvre et tomate séchées" (goat's cheese biscuit with dried tomatoes) which is colourful, good, 14/20. A "bistrot" dish with the right timing: "filet mignon sauce vigneronne" (filet mignon with a wine sauce) which has all it takes, onions, red wine... it is delicate without over doing it, no excess. It's good and deserves 14,5/20 especially as the garnishing is simple and right. A "tarte fine aux pommes" (fine apple tart) concludes the meal "finely", 14,5/20. I know little about the chef except that he leant his trade with Christian Barriot and then worked at "Constant" in Paris in the 70's. Previously "la Vallée" and before that "La Petite France", this old bakers that dates back to 1807 isn't and won't become noisy. Oh? A restaurant that isn't noisy? But then... What do I say? To go there even so? Definitely! Otherwise why would I be here? Especially seeing as this couple is really a-do-ra-ble.

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**15 avenue de la Vallée des Baux
13520 - Maussane Les Alpilles
Phone : 04.90.54.54.00**

MEYRARGUES

Le Relais De L'espougnac

Ψ_{1/2}

I've been past so many times: it was always shut. And then one day, there was light. Gentle manoeuvring of the indicator (the road is dangerous), hand brake. A positive start as the young proprietress welcomes me with a smile at 13h45. At this time of day most people would have offered me a sandwich, without butter, the fridge is also doing 35 hours a week and the staff has gone. The dining room is nice and fresh, the walls of this old 17th century postal relay are very thick. It's a shame that the tables are all lined up as if "I only want to see one head". The smallest menu costs 13,50 € and includes ¼ of wine. 5 starters, 5 main courses and choice of dessert. Not bad at all but I'm waiting to try the "salade de foie de volaille". Fowl liver often has a taste of reheated micro-waved, it's floury. These two look good, supple and lay on a bed of salad with bits of roughly cut tomato. 14,5/20. What follows is less honourable. An "escalope de saumon à la crème d'asperge" that was promised with chips... Finally I am given a steamed potato and a parmesan aubergine which is tasty! So, a

nice surprise. The fish is all wrong. Full of bones, over cooked and sticks to the teeth, I would swear that it is a made-up steak. The make-up is the over salty sauce hiding the salmon. My 11/20 is generous. The 14/20 for my "fromage blanc à la crème de marron" (fromage blanc with horse-chestnut cream) is fair. It's simple but it works, for once the fromage blanc doesn't taste like cardboard. With its discreet patio and family welcome, there is not much missing in order to please me. Just a little ambition and precision in the salmon cooking. Menus at 13,50 € weekday lunchtimes, 18,50 € and 22,90 € Full menu. Children 7,90 € Open every lunchtime, and Friday and Saturday evenings. Patio.

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**Route de Pertuis
Chemin de l'Espougnac
13650 - Meyrargues
Phone : 04.42.54.04.72**

MIMET

Le Grand Puech

ΨΨΨ

I bet you're saying to yourself "it's been a long time since the fellows from the BâO last told us about the Hostellerie du Puech in Mimet"! Well said, dear readers! It's just that things have been changing, and in Mimet, there are lots of them! Especially on windy days! We aren't in the highest village of the Bouches du Rhône for nothing! Anyway! We had to make the most of an ascending current to give us a lift up here: Richard Lepage, trained "maître d'Hôtel" is the new owner. He is even more deserving seeing as he began on sea-level. To be precise at the "Bistro Gambas" on the "Vieux Port". In his wake he towed along a young chef whose hands aren't stuck in the same oven glove: Sébastien Marquet! It has been said that he went through "Arcenaulx", "La Ferme" and even "l'Epuissette". A nice journey. Their intention is pure: to please their customers! Nice for you eh? So to start with and so as not to disrupt our habits, they have kept the pasta recipes (and good ones!) on the menu. Good! Plus a few new additional dishes that range from innovation to lightness. They have even gone as far as slipping in to the lunchtime menu at 18 € chosen by a Mauricette whose appetite increases with altitude, as she says. Her instinct doesn't fail her with a "millefeuille de panisses et brousse au gingembre" (starch millefeuille with brousse cheese and ginger), it looks good and is worth 14,5/20! Then a "sauté minute de porc aux épices, spaghettis à la poêle" (minute fried spicy pork, fried spaghetti) which is just as good at 14/20. A "café gourmand" composed of coffee (really?), panacotta, and a ball of apricot ice-cream.: 14,5/20. A la carte for me! "Tartare de tomates de pays au mousseux de bufflone" (local tomato tartar with mozzarella mousse), a super refreshing and airy starter, 15/20. Then "pêche du jour à la plancha" (fish of the day à la plancha) (today, Royal daurade) and varied violet artichoke". Two big fillets, perfectly cooked, and artichoke mousse, barigoule style and ravioli. A stylish exercise at 15,5/20. And last of all "délice de Mathilde à la crème de

marrons" (Matilda's delight with horse chestnut cream). Thanks to Mathilde for her bravery! 15,5/20! And listen closely my dear little ones, the restaurant has just re-opened, there are other pleasures planned soon! Richard Lepage has a historical passion for wine, expect the best: bigger wine menu, wine by the glass and even theme days. The village, the air, the table, and the wine, all deserve the little climb!

Chef : Sébastien Marquet

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

8 rue St Sébastien

13105 - Mimet

Phone : 04.42.58.91.06 Port. 06.23.21.40.66

MOURIES

Le Vieux Four

ΨΨΨ

The Crouvoisier couple continues to navigate with regularity and serious. Regularity, serious but with smiles too. "Le Vieux Four" is going to end up as an institution that we didn't see coming. On some days, they have to push the walls, become bigger to welcome the greed's who are knocking on the window. This has been going on for 8 years now (already?) and every day the house is collecting belligerent dividends. Collaborators in the shade or the light, handpicked suppliers, fruit and veg chosen simply following the season. All of these good people are here at the service of fine and pertinent cuisine which is attached to making classic bases rebound. "Why re-do what has already been done, why not make it evolve?", this could be the maxim up in Frédéric Crouvoisier's kitchen. Ah! These famous snails! Fresh snails from a "Vieux Four" (old oven)! They don't stay fresh for very long in an oven these snails, oh, but here my little pink haired ladybirds, this is the best of the best! A local supplier. A bandstand starter: "brochettes d'escargots au lard fumé et pain perdu" (snail kebab with smoky bacon and bread and butter pudding). Frankly delicious, and it doesn't mess around. It could give some ill-inspired cooks an idea for original recipes. 15/20. A casserole dish surrounded by pastry for my "homard et cèpes en cocotte de pâte feuilletée" (lobster and cepe mushrooms in a flaky pastry case). Clever! The mushroom is simmering in the subtly consumed. Laid on top nearly at liquid level and so steamed, the pieces of lobster are perfect, supple but crisp. Of course it's very hot, but are you in a hurry? 15/20. Do you like cheese? Local? Varied? Enjoy the "plateau de chèvre des Alpilles" (goat's cheese tray) and its bar code references on top. Nooo, it's not true! But this is a great native moment, and the bread is good. 15/20. The attendance is young and lively, the terrace is shaded by plane trees in the summer, and the cuisine is frank and healthy. There is a will to do well which is going to last, at least let's pray my dear brethren. It's just that time sometimes harms our dreams.

Chef : Frédéric Crouvoisier

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 18/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 16/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

5 cours Paul Révoil

13890 - Mouries

Phone : fax.04.90.47.64.94

ORGON

Aux Petits Pavés

ΨΨ_{1/2}

There is no relation between the Brès family and the song called "les petits pavés" by Claude Nougaro (have you heard it?) but here they have been playing pretty music for some time! Thousands of times we walked past saying "we really ought to go in one day". So here we are. We thought that traditional cooking had been completely thrown into the dungeons because of the cheats! All that I found in this nice house was people who liked their jobs, plates as well presented as the inside of schoolchildren's satchels, and customers smiling as if the world in which we live in was suddenly better. It's just that Nicole and Virginie Brès, mother and daughter, are very maternal towards their dear customers. They take care of them and look them in the eye when serving, and even wishing them a "bon appétit"! So the customer is happy! I could be blasé from trying out different tables every day! At 12,50 € on a weekday lunchtime, you can even have a generous plate of "moules gratinées" (mussels). The important thing is that the butter is homemade, which is rare. 14,5/20. What follows is simple. "Jambon à l'os sauce poivre" (ham from the bone with pepper sauce) with a succulent gratin dauphinois, some well worked vegetables and some mixed vegetables. Good ham is becoming rare. It is too often a thin, vaguely pink and nearly liquid slice straight for a plastic packet, which is as appetising as its contents. In our case, the chef has done what all chefs should do, and that's not bad in today's day and age! So bravo! 14,5/20! I end with a crème brûlée which is fine and maybe even better as I hand out a last 14,5/20. I have to admit that for 12,50 € you're painted a pretty picture with this kind of meal! Hearty dining room, fireplace, tables with proper tablecloths. Which just goes to show that it's not a question of money when you want to please, even for 12,50 €! It's simply a question of principle with the Brès family.

Chef : Frédéric Brès et Serge Smaal

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 12/20.

RN7 (entre Orgon et Sénas)

13660 - Orgon

Phone : 04.90.59.00.22

PLAN D'ORGON

Auberge Franco-belge

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Maybe it's true that people from the north have the blue in their eyes that is missing in their sky. But the local people have the table that was missing in their panorama! Oh my dears! What a nice surprise! A real face lift! Astounding! "Chez Mireille" is no longer but a distant memory. May I introduce you to Pascale and Michel Decallonne, fifty year old northern exporters.

Of? Cookery specialities from up there, millimetred, adjusted. At their's, it is also a little of nearby Belgium. Alright, which ones then? Chicory salad and crisp lard, American filet, potjevleesh, poultry supreme with maroilles cheese sauce, Brussels waffles, bread and butter pudding with dark sugar... I haven't finished the inventory but I must get on! At lunchtime and for 14 € my darlings, I had a perfect feast with myself! A starter with a "cassolette de chipirons". These tiny cuttlefish are delicious. They can be nibbled like sweets, very finely prepared. With eyeballs the shape of exclamation marks I note 15/20. The "carbonade flamande", you have to taste it at least once in your life. Beef, beer, onions and lots of other simmered bits that cross the Provence culinary habits. You may be lucky and be served homemade chips with it. A generous native dish that I give 14,5/20. In this "petit" menu you have the possibility of having a choice of cheeses. Without a supplement. Or dessert. The "crème brûlée au spéculos" (crème brûlée with cinnamon biscuits) is a good idea. Sweet and crisp, a jarring mix, and it rhymes (nearly!). And makes me happy with another 15/20. The boss is a great chef and also a fine butcher. Which easily explains the specialities such as terrines and pâtés, as well as the quickly made sauces. Which also means: no industrial stuff, if you see what I mean. No need to tell you about the setting. You can't tell, you have to see. I will cut it short by simply saying that there is nothing of the previous proprietors deco left. Everything is new, comfortable and bright, here I go again, I'm talking too much. The attendance is all smiles and the beer menu is good. The kind of place that fills you with good food. And happy times, from the heart!

Chef : Michel Decallonne

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

RN7 533 route de Marseille

13750 - Plan D'orgon

Phone : 04.90.53.78.60

Le Flamant Rose

Ψ

We didn't have a happy memory of this place. Thanks to the new proprietors, the customers are no longer welcomed by guard dogs. It's Monsieur and Madame who do the job and it is infinitely nicer. Especially as the dining room is now bright, the bay windows let the light stream in, there are glass paste wall lights, and carefully laid tables. It would be difficult to do better. Except when contents and imprecision are being looked into. 18 € for the menu with "tarte fine de tomate provençale" (fine tomato Province tarte). Rectangular plate, varied green salad on one side and the tarte on the other. Flaky pastry with a sort of tomato purée, and anchovies. A slight aniseed smell from the oven heated tomatoes. It's good, only the temperature is wrong: impeccably hot on the edge, cold in the middle. 14,5/20 even so just to show the potential. To follow: "croustillant de dorade au coulis de basilic" (crisp sea bream with Basil sauce). The Basil is orange with Saffron! But the creamy sauce is good. The fish steak, stuffed into the brick leaf (just turned out...) has not got a nice taste at all.

The leek: has! Maybe my favourite vegetable! 13/20! The dessert is to be avoided, a pseudo "fondant au chocolat" (sticky chocolate cake) which isn't one. A classical shaped cake. The accompanying cream looks like "crème anglaise" (custard) but there is nothing English about it. It is very sugary, flavoured and original, well done for that! Thanks to this, the dish gains an 11/20, which tells you what the cake was like! The lady who's attending is helpful and very smiling. It's pleasant, hotel restaurant owners who aren't sulking. Quite often, they are pale and propping themselves up behind the counter, and then whilst handing you the key to your room, they make the effort to grumble and blow that you mustn't forget to close the door whilst leaving. Here, the lady even opened the door for me, whilst smiling and saying that she hoped to see me again. A real shame, the mistakes in the kitchen.

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.

**Route de Saint-Rémy
13750 - Plan D'orgon
Phone : 04.90.73.10.17**

PLAN DE CUQUES

La Bastide Giono

ΨΨ_{1/2}

The house will have quickly gained a reputation, customers from the offices delighted to have the well made little lunchtime menu at 12 € or the evening one, just four eyes together or more, it depends on what you're used to, customers who have time, time to have a nice time. The patio under the tall trees and the not too heavy deco make "La Bastide Giono" a nice little place for the amateur restaurant liker as we are in the house. It has to be said, certain dishes need feel no complexes when compared to the fashionable less cared for, and sometimes with a better view less cared for. Examples with the fried foie gras, tuna carpaccio, red mullet fillets with white Martini, St-Jacques shellfish flamed with aniseed, wild bass "al pesto", several meats of course and it goes without saying: homemade desserts. Welcome and attendance looked after by Nawel Martin who I have been told, pushes his skills as far as the kitchen when it tickles him. An impulse that takes nothing away from the young titular chef's know-how, who we have known for some time. The good meat amateurs will like me appreciate "l'entrecôte grillée" (grilled steak). I don't often have steak. It's just that restaurant steak is often a calamity. Too thin, too small, too fat, bad quality, served with greasy fries, so the disaster is a general thing. My piece is thick, with parsley, cooked just the way I like it and the sauce that I asked for, is a good on the minute made gorgonzola sauce. The garnishing is also "cuisiné" by the chef, mushrooms stuffed with cheese, ratatouille... meat in great form for a 14,5/20. The dessert is homemade, it's a brilliant "tarte tatin aux poires" (upside down pear tart), very professional. I shouldn't say that. "Professional". After all, it's professionals that make the industrial stuff isn't it? Let's say that it is delicious then and homemade, the second not always a guarantee for the first. 15/20. Cuisine well done which just goes to show what homemade is about, tradition

with a ray of sunshine. Sunshine! It is the least you would expect in a place that uses the writer Giono's name. A big example served by an enthusiastic team in the dining-room.

**Chef : Damien Benvenuto
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.**

**22 avenue Jean Giono
13380 - Plan De Cuques
Phone : 04.91.05.09.62 - Fax : 04.91.68.66.92**

PORT DE BOUC

La Table De Maitre Panisse

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

History has a habit of repeating itself. Isolated on the edge of Port du Bouc like trappers in Alaska, the Caillard couple keeps going, without dropping into the local traps. If only you could feel how good it is in the place. It's just that Christian Caillard is not a half toque, nor a fashion addict who puts his white uniform on to go and act like an idiot on the telly. This man puts his uniform on to cook, not for the photos. My autumn meal starts off with "la mini-cocotte de boudin noir aux pommes vertes flambées au calvados et confit d'oignons doux" (black pudding with green apples flamed with calvados and onion conserve). A greedy and clever dish, which fits very simple ingredients into its bag. A terrific start as 15,5/20. What follows remains the same as far as simple, quality products are concerned, but well worked products. Here's "le pot au feu de magret de canard et saucisse de choux au légumes frais et petits raviolis aux cèpes" (duck breast boiled with fresh vegetables, cabbage sausage and mushroom ravioli). If the breast doesn't really make much difference to this culinary classic, the sausage is divine, the vegetables are succulent (a few potatoes!) and the sauce is real nectar! Golly it's good! 15/20. My menu includes "le Rocamadour à l'huile d'olive et aux herbes de Provence aux pignons de pins grillés" (Rocamadour cheese with olive oil, herbs from Provence and grilled pine kernel). By the way, this enables you to try the excellent bread as well as the rest. The dessert is bluffing. Although sweets are rarely a success. We get to the end of the feast, the old taste buds are trained and ready. To start with, it's always good when you're hungry. But in the end you often tire. "La crème brûlée caramélisée au sucre cassonade" (crème brûlée caramelised with brown sugar) is served in a chocolate biscuit bowl. On top are matchsticks of granny smith apples. A red fruit sauce, clementine slices. Hot and cold. Well done with all ten fingers. 15,5/20! Attended by the always smiling Cathy, it seems to be a religion to this young mother. She is very well helped by a capable young waiter. Nothing noisy, not modern, nothing cynical and finally nothing common in this restaurant. We see so many shooting stars in our culinary galaxy that invariably the solid, serious, super competent type boosts our guinea pig moral no end.

**Chef : Christian Caillard
Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes**

= 15,5/20.

**route de Fos (face à l'ex-musée Moralès)
13110 - Port De Bouc
Phone : fax.04.42.06.63.36**

L'archipel

Ψ

Isolated from everything else. A snack rather than a restaurant, but a nice moment even so. Over-looking the "big blue" so that if you lean over the edge of the terrace you can nearly reach the water with your toes. If Mauricette was here with her size 47 stilettos she would have no problem tickling the sand! So! Pizzas, chiche-kebabs and only one dish on the menu: swordfish steak because there is no red meat left, top of sirloin I think. It's a bit short but it's good. So without much spirit I order a "petite royale" with mushrooms, ham and cheese... It arrives within 30 seconds, steaming, beautiful and as big as a... big one. I'm not complaining! I try my first slice (it arrives pre-cut). It has character; I can see minced meat, but aubergine too... I am beginning to wonder when the sweet waitress arrives with another pizza under her arm like a fireman for a fire or a hair in the soup, or at least, in the pizza! "We've got it wrong sir! This isn't your pizza! This one is!". But I had started this one which isn't mine! Through his hatch the boss shouts out to me with a smile "go ahead! Eat up! It's our fault! You can take the rest home if you don't finish it!". Two pizzas for one guinea pig is a lot, even at 13 or 14/20. At the end of the meal they put the only just started pizza into a takeaway carton. Well let me tell you something: under such extreme humane conditions I shall be pleased to leave a tip. Especially as the "sea view" coffee only costs 1,20 €! This was the story of the day in Port-de-Bouc. Some places remain to be discovered if only we can get rid of our terrible a-priori.

Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 13/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.

**Avenue du Golfe
13110 - Port De Bouc
Phone : 04.42.40.33.32**

ROQUEVAIRE

Le Cri De La Fourchette

000

The evolution in mentality is quite amazing! How can a restaurant be considered good when it insists on handing out the catalogue of all of the industrial food producers? No law forbids it though! It's hallucinating! It's not even dishonesty on behalf of the proprietor, just a calculated, calibrated, weighed, measured work to allow a maximum safety margin. On weekday lunchtimes, the regulars spend their restaurant tickets. These "tickets-resto", help you forget that you're paying. False freedom that costs a bomb in such conditions! 13 € for a menu with choice of a micro-salad as a starter. Mauricette, who will believe that all men are good at heart, found herself with a stingy "salade de chèvre chaud". A half slice of sandwich bread with a

thin slice of melted industrial goats' cheese "spitefully plonked" on top. Spite is the word, 8/20 is the mark. As for me, "salade de foie de volaille". Goodness only knows what this poultry had swallowed for their livers to taste like this! Floury, granulous, acid. The only good point in these two salads is the slices of fresh button mushroom. 7/20. Next for me: "steak-frites" which remains the best dish of both meals. 12/20. The "pâtes au roquefort" for the lady with the green hat are abominable. The spaghetti is normal but the sauce, oh goodness, is acid and strong. Badly industrial. This kind of thing should be forbidden by legislation. A horror that we have already had to put up with elsewhere. 6/20. Shall we talk dessert? Oh, if you insist. A "tiramisu à la framboise" (raspberry tiramisu) is alright (12/20) and a "mousse au chocolat" over sugary. But we can't blame it on the chef, it's nothing to do with him! Sordid industrials. We regret the previous owners of the "cri de la fourchette" (literally the forks' scream). Now it is only the customers scream.

Chef : Who knows..

Welcome = 11/20. Attendance = 11/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 12/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

53 avenue du général de Gaulle
13360 - Roquevaire
Phone : 04.42.04.00.41

ROUSSET

Auberge Des Bannettes

ΨΨ_{1/2}

When it comes to restaurants, there are all sorts! The ones that bore you, the ones that wear you, the ones that get past you... and the ones that will still be the same as the last time you were there! We haven't been here two years! We were welcomed as if we owned our own serviette rings here! Like regulars! Stéphanie and Frédéric Schild know that if they want the place to last, they must look their vocation in the eye! Rather like the Sainte-Victoire Mountain! Facing it! Isn't it superb? It is watching you through the bay windows! Anyway! You may just as well know that this place is very busy at lunchtime. It would drive any local critics to desperation! The recipes are simple! Good, well presented, generous and quality price that reminds us that before euros there were francs and before francs, old francs. Think! Lunchtime formula at 11 €! And a menu at 16 € and the last at 20 €! There is no need for credit here although the kitchens here will gain credit by Mauricette! Which means a lot on the lady with the green hats Richter scale of bad nature! Let's say that she started off with a "velouté de potimarron aux truffes" (smooth pumpkin soup with truffles). It is the end of the season for this, you're out of luck, 15/20 to start. Just as well mastered and pleasing to both eyes and taste-buds, here is my "terrine de foie gras" (foie gras terrine) "mi-cuit" fashion. It's great to look at and worth 15/20 without a doubt. What follows is generous: "fricassée de joues de loup au safran" (sea bass cheek fricassée with saffron), my first holy communion shirt will remember this sauce for a long time. It'll teach me to be greedy... 14,5/20. Red meat for Mauricette with "médailon de filet de boeuf aux trompettes" (beef fillets with mushrooms), it is a

good size, 14/20. Something to be stamped with a red iron: we both agreed about the "crème brûlée au calisson" (creme brûlée with calissons) which was prettily presented, 14,5/20. I didn't see any small eaters here or anyone obsessed by scales! Only happy faces! Including the waiter's who seems to like his job as if it was his own! What am I talking about?... Quiet terrace, nice fireplace, a wine menu axed on local products, a deco that has been rethought in a minimalist Provence style, two steps away from Aix-en-Provence...

Chef : Tony Guyard

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 15/20.

RN7 Les Bannettes

13790 - Rousset

Phone : fax: 04.42.29.05.69

SAINT MARC JAUMEGARDE

Les Ecuries De L'aube

ΨΨΨ

What beautiful countryside! Jean-Pierre Marie arrived one morning whistling, a blade of grass between his teeth whilst looking at the sky, the weather is going to be good. His wife Elise will soon be on the war path, getting the dining room ready. The son, Julien, has been ready for some time. The chef arrived early, picking a branch of rosemary here, or else thyme, he doesn't know if there is any left in the kitchen. There is a serene atmosphere at the "Ecuries de l'Aube". It must also be said that the property goes from the hills at the back of the Sainte Victoire Mountain to very near the centre of Aix-en-Provence, busy Aix, frantic about the calendar Aix, anxious about time. Squirrels and oak trees are like two lungs here! To us, the greenery lovers, these old stables are a real remedy for regaining our natural good humour! We feel good here! And eat well! Especially! Listen! The cooking doesn't give in to the effects of fashion, doesn't deal with molecules, and you don't eat with tweezers. In any case, cookery done in the fireplace rarely goes into excess sophistication! Here are a few recipes of the moment! Roasted, stuffed Farmhouse Turkey, shoulder of lamb with sauce, T-bone steak... As starters there are some weird ideas! Notably "La Paysanne"! A green lentil terrine with crystallised gizzard, grilled bacon, smoked duck breast. The dish could be overflowing, and sadly without spirit. Except that it is good and not without a certain finesse, 15/20. The suggestion of the day from the wood oven is "rouelle de porc sauce Calvados" (pork roast with Calvados sauce). My dears if you're looking for a production, this is worth it. Sliced by the attendance before your goggling eyes, this is no small portion. The sauce is served on one side: good! Eat slowly, you will get to the end! 15/20. Desert which is clever and extremely light! "Tarte d'Amélie"! Crystallised citrus fruit zests, cream, a ring of raspberries, yummy: 15/20! Fine cuisine with dominating native accents, in which each dish knows how to make the most of each product. This place is a concentration of the bucolic kind! Let it be said out loud! Don't worry! The neighbours are far away!

Chef : Franck Stornello

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

Domaine de l'Aube. Route Vauvenargues

13100 - Saint Marc Jaumegarde

Phone : 04.42.24.92.86

SAINT MARTIN DE CRAU

Hotel-restaurant De La Crau

ΨΨ_{1/2}

A trip into town will do you the most of good. Saint-Martin de Crau, it's like a giant observation post built by Mother Nature between the Alpilles and the Camargue. Where birds, insects and animal life are still peaceful. Most important place in the village, The Michaud couple's establishment which didn't open yesterday, it is in fact a big family business! You can sleep there if you wish to do so, can camp if it tickles your fancy, can swim if that is your whim. And you can regale in a style that we enjoy, never tired and not even blasé B&O guinea pigs! The style doesn't go for small portions or homeopathic doses. To feed the most in the best possible way is to us, a real feat. The formula is easy and stupidly financial. An exceptional "buffet de hors d'oeuvres" with let us say... at least 80 propositions. Hot or cold. An entire room is consecrated to it. It has to be seen. 14,5/20. The choice of main course is difficult, but I finally opt for the "pavé de selle d'agneau" (saddle of lamb). Lamb in a menu at... I'm not telling! We'll see at the end of the text if you are good! Tender meat, creamy gratin dauphinois and fried well prepared mushrooms. Another 14,5/20. The cheese buffet and the dessert come after that, you never know, you may still be hungry. You must be told that my menu is priced at 13,80 € (there you are, I've told you), how does the houses accountant not just get up and run away screaming? Goodness only knows! It's nothing to do with us! So jump to it! Trot to La Crau and the Michaud house! Big rooms for groups, rooms for the sleepy, camp site for the ecologists and pool for the water lovers!

Chef : Louis Michaud

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

13310 - Saint Martin De Crau

Phone : 04.90.47.17.09 - Fax : 04.90.47.09.92

SAINT REMY DE PROVENCE

Le Jardin De Frederic

ΨΨΨ

We have been zigzagging around the restaurant world for long enough now to be able to state that Simone Vizier is a case. She doesn't even know it! Her ego is at low tide, she refuses to

show off; demagoguery is missing in her dishes, and is frankly and simply unusual in the toque wearer's microcosm. Which in a town such as Saint-Rémy, where the slightest improvised cook acts as the worlds best, this is a nice change! In France we say that shoe makers aren't always the best shod, here good chefs aren't always where you think they are. These two don't go together, but I liked the sound of the phrase. Anyway! As far as cooking is concerned, we appreciate no end these classic dishes made by a precise cook. They are serene and don't over do it. Good products and the right cooking times (ah! Cooking...) are pleasingly welcome. Whilst wandering through the menu, I decide to opt for a lamb meal. It's just that on the market, the quality of lamb often makes Mary stay at home. Enough to loose your words, or even your fork. Starter "petits légumes farcis d'agneau" (small vegetables stuffed with lamb), three sweets full of delicately worked meat, peppers, courgette and tomato, laid on a bed of fresh tomato and basil sauce, very nature like. The taste of real things. 15/20. To follow "carré d'agneau de Provence rôti aux herbes et sa crème d'ail" (roasted Provence lamb ribs with herbs and garlic cream). The quality of the meat is remarkable, classic-greedy garnishing: a flan and (real) sauté potatoes, but most of all, an exquisite cream that whispers garlic with finesse. Another well earned 15/20. Simone Vizier is a lady of character, filled with ambition. She has brought her relaxing establishment up to modern standards. It has now become a "lounge-bar" with DJ music to fill your ears and fluorescent blue and red lights to fill your eyes. And it's free for ladies on Friday nights... But noooo! Don't go! It's not true! This is still a delicate cocoon where you feel at home, at ease amongst the materials and paintings of a boss who loves (when she gets the time) to greet her customers. Long live this house full of the flavours of Provence and the scent of honesty. And I apologise if I frightened you...

Chef : Simone Vizier
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 16/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

8 boulevard Gambetta
13210 - Saint Remy De Provence
Phone : 04.90.92.27.76

Restaurant Gourman'dine

ΨΨΨΨ

We're not going to dilly dally around the plate! Mauricette and I had a perfect meal, of an exceptional level at the Signouds'. And in Saint-Rémy de Provence if you please! The town is often content to trundle along with all day everyday tourist pleasers. Of late it has by chance gained an absolutely remarkable table and the chef that goes with it. They are a pair. You can get your hankie out; some of the dishes will have disappeared when you come here to dunk your moustache. It's just that these greedy titles vary according to the market! And you're never altogether sure that they will be seen again! The chef seems to think that there are more recipes to invent than already exist. After a pleasing "mise en bouche" follows: "petit

marseillais farcis de ris d'agneau et homard" very fresh, splendid flavours and 16/20 just like that. The lights on Mauricette's hat start to flash when she digs into her "artichaut poivrade en barigoule, anchoïade et crevettes sautées" (peppered artichoke, anchovy sauce and fried shrimps)! You should see it! Just like a Christmas tree! 16/20! Her dish is just as good! Precision, finesse and 16/20 for "noisette d'agneau, panoufle confite au basilic, pêche et caramel d'orange au safran". A wonderful recipe with Autumn scents: "pigeon au foie gras et giroles" which is remarkably mastered at 16/20 for me. Sober and memorable "tarte aux framboises", which is refreshing and modern, 16/20. As a last screech from her bugle Mauricette squeaks "16/20" for her "macaron crème moelleuse au citron vert et fraises". The charming Signoud couple who comes from high up above Annecy have come to rest in Provence. The chef is carrying a "star" in his medal bag. Less than two years in Saint-Rémy, and here is an address to mark down for all gourmets. If you dare ask why, I shall get cross! Read again!

Chef : Jean-Pierre Signoud
Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

Place Mireille
Route des Antiques
13210 - Saint Remy De Provence
Phone : 04.32.62.03.45

Les Arenes

00

This couple which seems not to be native from Provence is, or at least seems friendly and welcoming. But the question is: is this because there is only sad looking cuisine on offer? Let's see. Take note that one of the propositions is called "menu bouche à oreille", I was nearly tempted, you guess why? I opt for the menu at 19 € with a so often repeated recipe: "velouté de potiron aux moules" (smooth pumpkin soup with mussels). If I was a bad cook, I would avoid doing the same recipes as the others in order to avoid being compared with good ones. It's difficult to thwart: insipid, a sort of purée diluted with hot water. 8/20. The dish? "Basse-côte de boeuf et sauce au Bleu de Bresse" (Beef rib with Bleu de Bresse sauce). How wrong! This is from no rib cage! It's new, has just been brought out! Hard and stringy as if it had just been defrosted in hot water! Appalling! Don't count on the garnishing to bring the average up: big reheated potato cut in two and still trembling from having been put through the oven! Tempted? The only thing that brings it up a little is the sauce. Although not enough. 7/20. Obviously I was expecting this kind of bad "fondant au chocolat" (sticky chocolate cake), which was knocked out by a merciless microwave. 8/20. The chef opens his unhappy heart in the dining room to his boss's ears. And the amazed client's who pretend that they haven't heard, plunge their forks back into their dishes and force down another mouthful, and another, get me away from this chef! A chef who ought to revise his recipes. But in order to do so, he would have to know them.

Chef : Who knows..
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20.

9 boulevard Gambetta
13210 - Saint Remy De Provence
Phone : 04.32.60.13.43

Sette Et Mezzo

Ψ

I was expecting Italian specialities, which never arrived. The best they could do is expensive pizza. And ear splitting music coming from speakers facing me! I feel like jelly on a plate! Escorted by my paper napkin and tablecloth (although cotton underneath), I meet an adorably friendly waiter wearing glasses that add to his charm. It's not a bad start if you find an estimable attendance in Saint-Rémy. You nearly relax about the contents of the plate. La carte: pizzas of course, salads, carpaccio, things put together mostly. Including the attractive ice-creams that cost 10 € all the same. In this place, with a pizza, an ice-cream and coffee you quickly add up to 25 €, which is the price for a correct restaurant just as long as the kitchens are up to it. As much in the mood for dancing as Mauricette when listening to rap, I fall back on the daily formula at 13,50 € with "filet mignon à l'avocat, tagliatelles fraîches aux giroles (pork with avocado, fresh pasta with morel mushrooms). A pretty plate that takes its' time in arriving (20 minutes) although the room is empty. If the meat is correctly cooked (pink) it is laid on a bed of cold avocado carpaccio and smothered with a balsamic mixture. Chefs lacking inspiration should stop tickling our canines and noses with the stuff. The original is the one who doesn't use it! The roles have been reversed! The pasta is sticky in a sort of creamy paste with mushroom powder and topped with a generous portion of morel mushrooms that are correct, a whole raw tomato is a bit odd and an honourable mixed salad. As the plate is cold, it's best to gobble it down otherwise the pasta is going to go solid. 12/20 for the meat alone. Today's dessert is "mousse citron", which is light and not over sweet; I was afraid. Some industrial preparations are less atheistic than others? 11/20. There is squabbling going on in the kitchen just when the music pauses. Or maybe they shout at each other all of the time but no-one can hear because of the decibels being blasted out by the loud speakers, but who knows? The place which has just set itself up is already exhausted. The inside courtyard is the only novelty. And the waiter is very good.

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 16/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

34 boulevard Mirabeau (cour Tectona/Florame)
13210 - Saint Remy De Provence
Phone : 04.90.95.12.83

SAINT-ETIENNE DU GRES

La Marmite Provencale

ΨΨΨ

What do you get when you find a discreet

restaurant, in a discreet courtyard, with a discreet chef who really cooks, in a discreet village in Provence? What? Stéphane Grassi of course! You know him? Oh, good. I would have been surprised. Stéphane Grassi is a real phenomenon. His unconscious (I think) search for the truth has brought him as far as here. His table is certainly precise and favours tranquillity, but deserves to be twined with "les Oubliettes de l'Herm" in Rouffignac-Saint-Cernin-de-Reilhacou! You know it? Oh, good. I would have been surprised. Well! What cheek to settle in such a place! People come here for the food, not for show! I'm telling you! There's philosophy in the man! Here! Me: I've come from afar! And each time it's perfect, rather like a ritual year after year. Like a birthday for this chef who incidentally was born on the 8th of April between Robuchon (the 7th) and Gagnaire (the 9th). He could be worse off! Menu at 26 € Limpid, the names of the dishes are nearly monastic. Menu: "terrine de foie gras, filets de loup, moelleux au chocolat" (foie gras terrine, sea bass fillets, moist chocolate cake). If it were shorter, it would be short hand. "Terrine de foie gras" as a starter. The texture is well worked and refined, simply cooked. If you wish, there are crystallised onions and dried tomatoes. Pepper. Yummy. 15/20. "Sea bass fillets" to follow. I say the same again: texture and refinement. The cooking times are perfect, the meat (sea perch) nearly gives me fish bumps. 15/20. The "moelleux au chocolat" is good, garnished with coffee ice-cream and a "croustillant", nicely worked texture. 15,5/20. The dining room is bright, the cooking is bright. Bright and discreet are two words that qualify Stéphane Grassi's place, a chef who has more than one chord to his frying pan. I leave any further commentaries up to you.

Chef : Stéphane Grassi

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**3 route de St Rémy de Provence
13103 - Saint-etienne Du Gres
Phone : 04.90.49.01.27**

O'bistrot Gourmand

0

We go through the bar, where a couple of people are finishing their coffee. The new boss with his heavy gold chain completely ignores the customer who happens to come into his place, just jerks his chin towards the back. So we go to the back, knowing that this is going to go badly. What do you expect... A big change in the dining room where Madame is full of smiles, the waitress too. Hope is renewed! Not for long, just long enough to read the menu at 15 € stuck together with a quarter of "pizza au thon" (tuna fish pizza). I would have preferred a bus load of Japanese! Qu'est-ce qu'on riz! (Did you get that?) So: the dough is not cooked, limp, micro waved. 7/20. The followings efforts are insufficient, but efforts even so. "Dos de colin" (coalfish) well cooked in its dish. The fish isn't nice, hard, something frozen that's been reworked badly but the sauce is alright. There are two garnishing bits. The ratatouille has been over spiced. And the yellow rice (the well named) has no taste at all, just plain boring. A

10/20 is generous. And for dessert the "tarte maison" isn't but doesn't do too badly, in fact much better than its savoury friends. 11/20. No coffee. 15 € is a lot. Even if we were in a pretty setting with real table cloths and friendly waitresses.

Chef : Who knows..!

Welcome = 8/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 12/20.

**2 avenue Notre Dame du Château
13103 - Saint-etienne Du Gres
Phone : 04.90.49.17.56**

SALON DE PROVENCE

Le Petit Verre D'un

ΨΨΨ

For the greed's that are allergic to hazardous offers as far as Salon restaurants are concerned have come across a jewel! It's just that we have seen so many ballroom taverns in this pretty town! Rare are the serious ones that last and the bad ones that go! New people! A 30-year-old couple! Food and dining room professionals! I'm in a hurry to tell you about this meal of such high standard and low price! Whether full menu or menu, you want it all! I choose the menu at 19 € A menu inspired by Lyon but which seems to have merged with the Mediterranean! A brilliant and surprising alliance! The best of both worlds without their faults: heavy sauces too much garlic... in very pretty plates. A superb "millefeuille de gâteau de foie de volaille et ses tuiles aux herbes fraîches" (poultry liver millefeuille and fresh herb biscuits). The liver is warm and tasty, the biscuits are made of parmesan and cantal cheeses. A sprinkling of Provence herbs in the preparation. My barometer measures success with pleasure! 15/20! The same goes for the "pavé de sandre cuit sur plat, sauce crèmeuse au Sancerre" (pikeperch steak, creamy Sancerre wine sauce) this excellent freshwater fish is very common but today plays its true role. Perfectly cooked, the sauce is light, the garnishing is just right... 15/20! Just this minute my fluffy little ducklings, as a reflex I end up with my fingers in the homemade bread, which I may say is remarkable. And then I dream of cheese. And that dream comes true. Céline Jacquet, who is perfect so far in the dining room becomes even more so once she brings me the cheese tray. In a menu of this standard at 19 € it doesn't look bad and explodes the quality price report... Epoisses, Cantal, Roquefort, Rocamadour and others (cheeses of course)! About eight of them! And the bread... Choice of desserts and "crème renversée à la minute et son beurre à l'orange confite" (cream Caramel with crystallised orange butter). It looks good, sober and sweet and really fine. Homemade cooking from beginning to end. Rare, very rare. So. One last 15/20, and not the least. This enormous restaurant can sit 150 people, it dominates the big square and is lit up by enormous lights in the evening. No, I'm joking. It's as big as a pocket handkerchief and is hidden in a tiny street on the edge of the historical centre. Search, you will find, and not regret.

Chef : Yohann Jacquet

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 16/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.

Toilettes = 16/20.

**17 rue de Verdun
13300 - Salon De Provence
Phone : 04.90.53.83.62**

SAUSSET LES PINS

La Dolce Vita

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Whatever is hiding behind the name of a transalpine speciality it can't be very original. Excellent wood oven pizzas, really, it must be said. But when you think of the number of pizzerias that know how to make pizza, it's enough to bring you down to earth! My dear greedy wasps; Robert Boyer is a great cook! It's funny how he manages to turn ordinary everyday dishes into surprises. Lightly and with finesse! Not only am I lunching by the sea, but what's more it's good! I've seen it all! Mind you, I've also eaten it all! Or nearly! So! When we tell him that his "sole meunière" and garnishing threesome are delicious, not greasy and impeccably cooked, the chef raises his eyebrows in surprise! Doesn't understand! It's the contrary that would be abnormal? That his fish should be overcooked and swimming in oil! That the garnishing should be botched up! You eat! You leave! Good-bye to the customer that you will never see again, because he won't come back! That won't happen here! Loyalty is made here! Here is hard work! Well done! 14,5/20 for this major sole! Wait! You haven't finished giggling! Some of the desserts are homemade! I swear! Take today's "fondant au chocolat" (sticky chocolate cake) for example. "Terrine" style, served in slices, it's very chocolate and very good, so very bravo: 15/20. Wine is offered by the glass, the coffee is good. Friend-associate Patrice Guimard delivers dishes as you would say hello: with a smile. Let me say that certain dishes are cooked on a wood fire before your smiling greedy faces. Good. I'm keeping one bit of information for the end. Now that you have chosen a restaurant for your next meal out, I can tell you that you can see the horizon and the sea from the first floor, and that a pretty covered terrace overlooks the port of Sausset-les-Pins. I wish you a very merry day and a happy new meal.

Chef : Robert Boyer

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**18 avenue Siméon Gouin
13960 - Sausset Les Pins
Phone : 04.42.45.15.81**

Le Colonial

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Remember. A famous singer sang "le temps béni des colonies" (the blessed times of colonies)! Today the BâO will whistle the blessed times of the "Colonial"! If this was an idea for dominating the world, "Le Colonial" in Sausset-les-Pins dominates the port and that suffices our fork pricking, Stakhanovist happiness well enough! What a beautiful restaurant! On the first floor,

big bay windows, and a well pronounced exotic atmosphere. But to be truthful as you know, eating curtains is not yet in the BâO creed, but when it's beautiful, it has to be said. And when it's good as well. We come across someone we already know, Damien Garcia, who was previously a cook at "l'Auberge du Mérou" in Rove. The style is simple, clear, and does not hold back when pleasing the eyes. The dishes play with transparency with vegetables which are roughly chopped and relevant sources. If you are normally constituted, which means on the opposite to Mauricette, you should appreciate the "soupe de moules aux carottes et oignons confits" (mussels soup with crystallised onions and carrots) which is escorted by small croutons ready to be rubbed with garlic. She's not here to defend herself; I'll make the most of it. Mussels in their shells. Once at the bottom, you regale with a thick and tasty sauce. 14,5/20. My "pavé de dorade à la crème de vin blanc aux perles de saumon" (sea bream steak with white wine cream and salmon pearls) is worth a look. The vegetables aren't hiding, I feel that they are even playing the premier role. 14,5/20. The dessert is a "gratin aux fruits de saison" (grilled seasonal fruit), it is well on the rails and is given 14/20 to end this meal. Of course weekday lunchtimes are calmer. But my little finger says that in the evening, the festive side shows off its full dimension and some of the houses specialities are a real success such as the "rodizio", a traditional Brazilian dish made with either meat or fish. Now, if you would prefer a "suprême de noix de St Jacques poêlé au lard et au jus de truffe" (St Jacques shellfish supreme fried with lard and truffle juice) or "tournedos de filet de boeuf" (beef steak) or even "carré d'agneau" (lamb ribs), we won't mind. If you would like to drink a cocktail: the corner with cushions is marked as one of the good things in our inventory! As well as the welcome and attendance carried out by Maéva and Bruno Castellon, accomplices without being too friendly. But don't forget: this house possesses a real chef would is not playing at being a star and who puts together some very pleasant dishes! Which is most important despite the context as the panorama is worth its weight in urchins!

Chef : Damien Garcia

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

**34 avenue Siméon Gouin
Rond-point du Port
13960 - Sausset Les Pins
Phone : 04.42.44.21.70**

Le Nid Croustillant

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Life is full of little pleasures. So that you don't miss this one, you'll have to tear yourself away from the strict town centre and follow the coast for a little while. You'll end up in this island of conviviality less than a kilometre away. Let us reassure the hedonistic! The BâO doesn't fill itself with smiles and friendliness! Necessary but not sufficient! It just so happens that Florence Kudszus does not mess with recipes! We can even add that she has adopted the "don't mess with homemade cooking" religion! She works with seasonal products; a limited series of gourmet dishes today, tomorrow is another; day

and dish. More a sort of made to measure type of cooking, not sophisticated or fussy but the kind that reconciles you with "like at home". That means if you have someone at home who cooks that well... I watched tables regaling with pork stew and spicy red wine, salmon and spinach lasagne with curry sauce, a simple fresh tomato and feta cheese salad, and more. The Provence recipes rub up against others inspired by the friendly boss's journeys around the world. I head hesitantly for the daily formula. I am expecting my "endives au chèvre" to be chicory with bits of goat log thrown in... whole chicory leaves stuffed with creamy worked cheese. A well deserved 14,5/20! We don't find them very often in restaurants! And for a good reason! They are long to prepare if you want to do it properly! And this is the case! My "petits farcis" (small stuffed vegetables)! A big plate with pepper, courgette, aubergine, tomato and potato. Great! 14,5/20. Full of joy (yes that too), I decided on a sweet conclusion: "ananas caramélisé, glace café" (caramelised pineapple, coffee ice-cream). Cubes of fried fruit, quality coffee ice-cream. A smashing association for a last 14,5/20. A pretty covered terrace, personalised deco. A boss-cook-waitress who serves meals that look you straight in the eye, fully idealistic and modest. Facing the sea. Rare my dears.

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**Place de l'Horloge
Parc du Grand Vallat
13960 - Sausset Les Pins
Phone : 04.42.40.18.07**

SENAS

Chez Michel

ARevoir

We return to "Guinguette Sénassaise" that we had put down not that long ago. Re-named "Chez Michel" when the proprietor changed. At least this is what we read on what is supposed to be the bill. A painful change if what the lady says is anything to go by, a nice lady though: she serves our meal. With each dish, she explains her sorrows since the take-over. "We've only been here for three months..." is her leitmotiv! So many doubts and fragility are touching. We can feel desperation, like the perpetual fear of doing it all wrong that some people train behind themselves. That is when it all happens! The wine knocked over, the bread that falls from a neighbouring table, etc. A vicious circle! We sit outside, under a magnificent plane tree which must have so much to say. A breeze, Italian music in the background, we're fine. Even Mauricette isn't in the way; it just goes to show you! But we can hardly forget that we are sat by the main road. The traffic goes whizzing by! Anyway! The menu has been hastily printed. Slipped into the sort of plastic envelopes that school children use, it offers Italian specialities and we choose "de facto". For the entertaining green hated lady "saltimboccas" (entertainerboccas) at 13 € generously served. Five to be exa ct. Not bad, but swimming in too much liquid. Fortunately she chooses fresh pasta which sponges it up. When I think that the waitress had offered chips! They wouldn't have

enjoyed the bath! 12,5/20. For me "lasagnes" at 12 € Here again, the portion is generous. But 90% pâté and 10% meat. And I'm being kind! And a thin slice of ham in the middle. Curious and 13/20 even so. And dessert? Ah, yes! A "tiramisu" of course! In a glass bowl for Mauricette. A slice on a plate for me. We don't get the same presentation, goodness knows why. But here again: very generous. I couldn't finish it! 13/20. Without a doubt there is lots of good will in these newcomers, but they're going to have to pick their socks up. Correct the faults both big and small. Stand out. Well, make a fresh start quickly. Even if "we've only been here for three months..."

Chef : Michel.

Welcome = 13/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 12/20. Bread = 12/20. Coffee = 11/20. Toilettes = 13/20.

**615 RN7
13560 - Senas
Phone : 04.90.59.03.29**

SIMIANE-COLLONGUE

Auberge De La Ripaille

ΨΨ_{1/2}

The frozen food dealers and other merchants of the "ready to eat" have something to worry about with Carole Martinasso! She is not their friend! It is not the regular restaurant visitors who are going to complain! We are more the kind to have eyes like question marks seeing that this work philosophy is rare! It proves that it is possible, including in the small menus! Anyway! "La Ripaille"! Rather like returning to the source for Carole Martinasso who knows the walls well, as this is where she spent her childhood. A jump into the past which at the same time is a big jump forwards for this young sparkling woman who is full of vitality. One day, with her convictions over her arm and children at school, she decided to give the best in a dish at the best price. Thanks to a solid team in the kitchen who refuses the least concession as far as mediocrity is concerned: as in today's case! 12,50 € and a perfect spread which is rather surprising in this sphere of prices where asparagus is often passed off as melons! A "buffet d'entrées" to start, varied and not lacking in originality. 14/20. To follow: a "bavette à l'échalote" (sirloin steak with shallots). Sirloin steak with shallots being successful is as rare as having a good cook to do it. The gratin dauphinois is sumptuous and the small carrots are well cooked. 14,5/20. Everything should fall apart at dessert time, disillusionment will bump into despair, as usual. Nothing of the sort! Goodness! A homemade "tarte au citron meringuée" (lemon meringue pie)! I swear! And good too! Even nicer as unexpected! Good quality work, which is also very good: 15/20! The wood oven pizzas put together by the person in charge are excellent (as I have been told by the specialists)! A grand house without fuss or flourish, not devoured by the fashionable three little pigs and where we feel at home: whether a modest old aged pensioner, local employee, lonely representant, starving tourist. A happy little place.

Chef : Patrick Thomas

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting

=15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.
Toilettes = 15,5/20.

Route de Gardanne
13109 - Simiane-collongue
Phone : 04.42.22.60.47

VELAUX

Restaurant Des 4 Tours

0

I had a good feeling about this place which seemed to hesitate between "bar" and "restaurant", it didn't look very much. "A badly dressed pearl" said the ones who had told me a lot of good about it. If you could judge how good a place is by its looks, pretty shop-fronts with a neat middle parting would get our blessing. It isn't the case; otherwise it would be common fact. Anyway! A joyful bar on one side, separated from the meal side by partitions. Paper place mats and napkins, menu "all included" at 15 € without very much choice, this is where my optimistic nature heads for. "Endives au gruyère" (chicory with gruyere cheese) which is in fact nothing more than a chicory salade with cubes of cheese. Not far from canteen style but fresh. 12/20. I then choose "jambon braisé" (braised ham) with mashed potato. The ham is a slice slightly thicker than usual, it does its best. The badly beaten packet mash (there are lumps) tries to hide behind some Provence herbs that have been thrown in. It doesn't succeed seeing as I tasted it, too bad. 8/20. And the "salade de fruits" has all the characteristics of the tinned variety, which is sad. The ¼ of wine is ordinary but the coffee is exceptional. If you compare the price of the show (15 €) to the amount of pleasure, the addition is a simple one: the coffee is worth 15 €. Even with a speedy but friendly attendance, this is "quality/price" that doesn't make me want to come back. Unless it is at the counter for a coffee in the morning, perhaps with croissants.

Chef : Who knows...
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 16/20.

30 avenue du général Leclerc
13880 - Velaux
Phone : 04.42.75.03.62

VITROLLES

Le Cabanon De Marthe

ARevoir

GB LE CABANON DE MARTHE It is difficult to follow in such brilliant steps. In this case, it's best not to try to slip on someone else's coat, just get on with what you know how to do with your own convictions and good will. There's lots of good will here. The new impetuous person here is Sandrine. She is seconded in the dining room. Two menus: 17 € and 25 €. It will be 25 € for me as I am tempted by the "escargots en persillade" (snails with parsley and garlic sauce) served in a slightly dry cabbage, but the cooking remains calm and the sauce is nice. Superb presentation, z's with balsamic vinegar, dots of red... a pleasant effect and 15/20 for the effort! I was rubbing my hands whilst waiting for my

"Saint-Jacques sur fondue de poireaux" (St-Jacques shellfish on bed of leeks)! A tricky dish that leaves nothing to chance. This time there is a little too much in the plate, I mean chance. The presentation is as elegant as my starter but the leeks are made with olive oil (why not) and the St-Jacques have been massacred. He's chewing away at n° 11! That's my table number! What a disaster! These beasts have been nicely fried though! But anyway! It takes what it takes! No more! No less! 9/20. The desert is delicious: "mousse au chocolat", really (15/20). I had chosen a "diplomate, crème anglaise" (sponge cake with fruit and custard) with added caramel it said, but the waitress came back to say it had all gone. That's crazy! The dishes are presented on the blackboard and the staff doesn't even know what is left in the kitchen? You check beforehand! And then wipe out the missing dish! It's as simple as professionalism! Oh yes: I'm still waiting for my tooth-pick!

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

24 avenue Padovani
13127 - Vitrolles
Phone : 04.42.79.56.15

Haute Garonne

TOULOUSE

Michel Sarran

0

A trip to Toulouse with Mauricette, she believes that pelote basque and calissons d'Aix were born in this pink city. On going into the newsagents to buy "l'équipe" (a French sports newspaper), she made the most of flicking through the Miche, the famous Miche. She galloped out of the place, jumped in to our Torpédo and we're off! Following the directions given to us by the famous tyre constructor guide. What better than a guide in an unknown town? We head for the "Michel Sarran" and its two stars. An old boy from the "Mas du Langoustier" in Porquerolles, what is more. To be truthful, Mauricette so far this year has gobbled her way through three excellent although very different places all sanctified by the red bible: "Le Sud de Petra" in Le Lavandou, "le Moulin" in Mougins, "Llorca et Bajade" in Tourtour! A tantalizing perspective for the lady with the green hat. It's not every day that we get to test chefs known nationally outside of the PACA region. The setting is elegant and chic, and leaves a lingering doubt of modern cookery. Lots of waiters in classic uniforms but seemingly relaxed, nearly a miss compared to the strict decorum appearances. One or two tables seem to be composed of lawyers who are talking loudly, we look beyond them, pretend to not be embarrassed. What is interesting in this kind of table, is that they often make an effort to attract lunchtime custom. 48 € for a lunchtime menu with starter, main course, cheese or dessert, glasses of wine and coffee included. We salute the effort. If it's good... A start with "la soupe de champignons en cappuccino frirots volaille aux noix de cajou" (mushroom soup cappuccino style poultry with cachou nuts). The name makes your

mouth water, wakes up an autumn instinct. Except that you're going to have to make do with the prose! When sipping this cream, I felt sick! Very (too) creamy, no particular finesse, heavy. Great deception and a 9/20. And don't bank on catching up on the homemade olive bread! We get the feeling that the management is trying to get rid of last night's bread to today's customers! Or then the fresh is kept for the regulars! With Mauricette, we are not regulars! And it doesn't look as if we're going to become that either! She more happily eats, but without much passion nor flight "le vol au vent d'huîtres et coquillages sur la crème de cresson" (oyster and shellfish vol au vent on a cream of cress) marked at 14/20. My "filets de rougets sur la graine de couscous vinaigrette tiède aux agrumes" (red mullet fillets on a bed of couscous with warm citrus fruit vinegar) arrive. A completely incompetent dish, cynical. Fish with no flavour. Incomprehensible, my moral is flailing. No interest. Except economic, for the houses accountant. 7/20. Mauricette won't save the day with a "magret de canard laqué cruchade aux abricots secs" (lacquered duck breast with dry apricots) which is pleasant, but doesn't fly high either: 13,5/20. My cheese comforts me a little, whilst the lady with the green hat swallows her "rhubarbe vanillée sur la liqueur de vieille prune glace au miel de lavande" (vanilla flavoured rhubarb on old prune liqueur lavender honey ice-cream), nice, but yet again not really adapted to the double badge in the Miche. Bill please! Not pleased. Expensive. Annoyed. Disappointed. We were expecting a discovery, sensations, pleasure on the same height as the bill and medals. We find ourselves glooming at each other like two students who have failed their exams. We wonder about the Miche's criteria. We do recommend the place though for its pleasant toilets and exceptional soap! Does the Michelin give marks for the toilets and soap?

Chef : Michel Sarran
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 8/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 18/20.

21 boulevard Armand Duportal
31000 - Toulouse
Phone : 05.61.12.32.32

Lozère

MENDE

Les Voutes

ΨΨ_{1/2}

In the centre of Mende, pretty capital of the Lozère region with its ramparts, cathedral and 15000 inhabitants. The centre of town seems to have been freshly renovated: lovely! Good. In all parts where tourism is the key, you have to slalom between the traps to find real cuisine. With an excellent pizza take-away (Fanfan) we had flair with "Les Voutes". A row... of vaulted ceilings and dining rooms, stones... flee oh thee claustrophobic! Or at least stay by the door, on the terrace. It's busy, not really surprising seeing the amount of lunchtime regulars. I say lunchtime as if I were here everyday! I expect that they come here on the other days! A very friendly, young feminine welcome takes us as

far as we can go: the last room! A real obstacle course! You mustn't be in a hurry! Menus and a la carte but especially, a genial idea, six lunchtime formulas at 13,50 € with original culinary virtues! Oh yes! Dishes with four corners, starter, main course, garnishing, dessert! Practical for the attendance, all very smoothly planned and it adds optimum profitability! Come on! Mauricette opts for a "landaise" including a starter with lots of bits (14/20), pink duck breast and lovely sauce (14,5/20), a vegetable flan (14,5/20) and a banana and chocolate tart at 15/20. The same idea for me with "italienne"! The same excellent dessert that I give the same mark without arguing (these little places that make their own desserts are rare). I didn't enjoy my vegetable flan as much, too much caraway for me (12/20)! The "jous de porc sauce Porto" (pork cheeks with Port) were great and I had a good time, 14,5/20. Port sauce in an Italian dish in Mende, Mauricette who never waits for the music to end before noticing any paradox or contradiction won't stop giggling until after coffee! The boss cashes us in behind the counter near the entrance. He's really friendly, says a few words whilst taking the time to look us in the eyes despite how busy it is: tourists are not just credit card carriers to him! Well done! And such ceilings!

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.

13 rue d'Aigues-Passes
48000 - Mende
Phone : 04.66.49.00.05

SAINTE-ENIMIE

Auberge Du Moulin

00

A magnificent village in Lozère, very touristy. In the middle of holiday maker (which Mauricette and I are) shops, we decided to flee flip flops and waffles. An attractive entrance, an enticing menu at 17 € comforted by medals from guides such as the gomillo and miche. Even we long winded fork testers get caught! The lady doing the attendance is remarkable. Just as is the panorama over-looking the Tarn from the terrace. This is the end of "the good news" chapter. The jug of Côtes-du-Rhône is appalling, a big red stain. An appetising starter called "méli-mélo au magret de canard, copeaux de parmesan, bruschetta" (jumble with duck breast, slivers of parmesan cheese and bruschetta). The lady with the green hat sees a mountainous dish arrive including lots of bits that weren't mentioned and that the chef must have had at hand. Green beans, artichoke hearts, green salad and a burnt crouton with black olive tapenade, which are the same colour. Without a doubt the bruschetta! 9/20. My "terraine de poisson maison, quenelle de sauce tartare" (homemade fish terrine, quenelle with tartar sauce) is as soppy as it can get. 9/20! Mauricette's "truite meunière du Rozier" is honourably cooked. The garnishing is the sort that wants to transform you, in the long run, into someone from a copy of one of Botero's paintings that are up in the hallway: the potatoes are swimming in oil! So much grease is frightening! I have the same garnishing despite the name of the dish: "gigot d'agneau des Causses, tian de légumes" (roast lamb, vegetable

ring). So, potatoes it is, and one thing is confirmed: the kitchens are run by a calculator and its coefficient! The meat tastes fine but is as thin as a slice of ham! 11/20. A local speciality recommended by the attendance: "la coupétade", a sort of local prune and raisin pudding. As dry as a summer without water, no taste, and its mark is only due to the industrial sauce that goes with it, you see what I mean? 7/20. My homemade apricot tart is as hard as cardboard, annoying. 8/20. Don't expect to find refuge behind more expensive menus at 23 € and 35 €. We saw them all! They included the same defrosted bread, oily potatoes, and measured proportions: sliced salmon so as to use less, scallops instead of St-Jacques shellfish, terrine sliced as thinly as paper, cheese tray reduced to the strict minimum (3). And then the lady-boss watching over the dining room, with severe eye and tight mouth. After having involuntarily kicked my bag, her smile is back. Only fair, I've just asked her for the bill. Something for you to read up about and to keep you quiet, find out all about King Dagobert. Why? Sainte-Enemie was his sister. And here, "L'auberge du Moulin" didn't get its knickers in a twist, but its kitchens!

Chef : Who knows..!

Welcome = 18/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 7/20. Toilettes = 9/20.

48210 - Sainte-enemie
Phone : 04.66.48.53.08

Pyrénées-Atlantiques

SAINT-JEAN-DE-LUZ

Zoko Moko

ΨΨΨΨ_{1/2}

The Basque country. Lost and wandering the streets with Mauricette in Saint-Jean-de-Luz. Searching for inspiration, or something. Hey! We'll go there! On the shop-front, there is a load of stickers, the routard, the Michelin guide... We sceptically put our noses round the door whereas we really wanted to put in our tongues! You can't win... The welcome is correct, discreet and well balanced, an art. The atmosphere is neo-bistro with old stones and Star Wars chairs. We opt for the menu at 42 € At 42 € it mustn't go off track, the partition has to be clear and spotless. It is an out of the ordinary price, but when talent is invited doesn't trap the clients because of mechanical accounting to cover the restaurant owner's costs. Are you following? Mauricette starts off with "croustillants de langoustines aux cépes et jambon du pays, jus de persil plat" (crisp langoustine with cepe mushrooms and local ham, flat parsley sauce) which are truly delicious, fresh, original, perfect! 16/20 as a starter! I am swimming in happiness with my "foie gras poêlé au topinambour, jus au miel et à la cardamome" (fried foie gras with Jerusalem artichoke, honey and spice sauce. A generous quantity, perfect cooking times, and successful perilous associations. Remarkable 17/20. Right now, Mauricette and I can't wait until the rest arrives, if it is the same standard as the starters. Knowing how to remain simple is also a talent, to make products talk and offer pure dishes... The "morue confite à l'huile d'olive, persillade de navet et crème à l'ail doux"

(crystallised grouper with olive oil, turnip and gentle garlic cream sauce) is a perfect example at 17/20. The trip continues with a "filet de Saint Pierre à la plancha, risotto crémeux au parmesan, fumet lié à l'encre de chapiron" (John Dory fillet plancha style, creamy risotto with parmesan cheese, sauce with squid ink). The risotto is fabulous, exceptional. Everything is divine, clever, limpid: 16,5/20. To end this extraordinary moment, Mauricette still hasn't got over her: "fromage de brebis et sa confiture de tomates maison" (ewe's cheese and homemade tomato jam)! My "déclinaison de chocolat de notre pâtissière Julie" (range of chocolate by Julie our confectioner), 16/20. For once, the B&O can admit that the other guides that referenced this shop are competent. Well... the Michelin guide only puts two forks here, when you think that this chef could make certain chefs who have earned their stickers think again. Two stingy forks handed out by the red guide for the "Zoko Moko" and its captain Charles Olascuaga, are totally ridiculous as far as we are concerned.

Chef : Stéphane Poulin

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 16/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

6 rue Mazarin
64500 - Saint-jean-de-luz
Phone : 05.59.08.01.23 - Fax : 05.59.51.01.77

Var

BANDOL

L'assiette Des Saveurs

ΨΨΨ

Well, nearly out of place two steps away from the port. The address has taken on the skills of four none-routine liking, joyful toque wearers. Pascal Grebot mixes beautifully cuisine from Asia and the Occident. There where other restaurants stick their noses into stuffy or ordinary, caricatured Provence type food, he has found the magical formula! A few examples of dishes so that you understand, I will not repeat this. Foie gras mi-cuit with chutney and figs in gentle spices facing a salmon tataki with mint sauce! Roasted anglerfish with orange and Rosemary facing fried Saint-Jacques with a black bean and ginger sauce! Lamb cutlets in a mustard crust facing lamb cutlets with a Saté sauce with peanuts and coconut milk! Right I will stop here! Can you see the creed? It's clever? To resume, the traditional is still here, but Asian flavours add a bit of fun! Do you get it? And as for cost, the lunchtime formula remains the best publicity for the house with a quality price report from another world, in any case not from the Bandol world. 13 € with a delicate and clever starter, a "salade de papaye à l'agneau" (papaya salad with lamb). A dish well put together. The young lady boss's delight in suggesting this starter made her forget to specify that the chef pushes on the pimento pedal! I say that in order to warn any reader who is reluctant to eat spicy things! Because the lady with the green hat, she likes it... strong! A 15/20 on a common accord! Two suggestions of the day! One each! "Côtelettes d'agneau jus au thym" (lamb cutlets gravy with thyme) with vegetables of the moment, which pleases poor Mauricette who jumps on this rare

occasion, 15/20. As for me it will be from the sea with a "croustillant de Saint-Jacques gambas et asperges" (crisply topped Saint-Jacques prawns and asparagus). Very pretty indeed, to say it all: we were silent for a long time when our dishes arrived, and at the same time used the past tense to express ourselves. Another 15/20. Emeline Olive rolls on the solid rails that she and Stéphane Iaria have built. An exemplary address which knows how to renew without destabilising the "historical", classical customers. Bet that pays off where lots of other restaurant owners do the ostrich act before clients and their evolving tastes and colours. Bravo without reserve and a well-deserved "three" that we would like to see last.

Chef : Pascal Grebot
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

1 rue Docteur Marçon
83150 - Bandol
Phone : 04.94.29.80.08

O Thai

ΨΨΨ

Asian cooking has the wind in its sails. In the kingdom of Siamese tables though, very few have gained our blessing. Self-service is the fashion, factory style dishes with series of sushi that you gobble whilst on the phone. This is why. Take the time to come to Kanda Wongthee and Bruno Saliba's place. Let's put the clocks right. Who do you bet does the Thai cooking? Well done! The menu hasn't changed much since last year. It's just that when you are alone behind the stoves, this "minute" cooking gets complicated when the place is busy. Basil, lemon, curry, coconut milk, red or green pepper... beef, chicken, and shrimps. Thai cooking is represented by its products, hereby giving you a lesson. The already initiated will be delighted. As for Mauricette, the one who over spices my existence because of her own adores her starter. Maybe because it sounds the same as one of her famous sneezes: "tom kha kai", chicken soup with coconut. A sprinkle of herbs and Asian condiments, a rich smell, pretty contrasted colours, I could say that about all of the dishes! 15/20! It seems spicier than last year (I adore this soup), here is a second 15/20 for my "tom yam kung", shrimps with lemon. Here we go again with the "ped pad hed hom" that Mauricette chooses and which according to my ear-throat and nose specialist means "duck fried with flavoured mushrooms and cachou nuts". The lady with the green hat looks me in my still leaking eyes and says: "it's a big 15,5/20!". What about my dish? I shall start with the translation: "chicken with aubergine and green curry with coconut milk". What? How is it said in the Rattawut Lapcharoensap language? "Kaeng kiowan kai"! And how do they say 15/20 €? This address is a must of its kind (there are only 3 that we know of in the Var). It doesn't do an exotic show off act, or try to be something that it isn't. If you are allergic to creamy sauces you will be delighted by these light, flavoursome preparations. This Thai cooking is truly fine.

Chef : Kanda Saliba née Wongthee
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting

=15,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

5 rue Voltaire
83150 - Bandol
Phone : 04.94.05.83.50

Le Christina

ΨΨΨ

The Christina in Bandol. Distinguishing marks: very good, facing the port. Eh? What? How? Do you need a chair? There's one waiting for you! With proper napkins, tablecloths, smiles, capability in the dishes and nearly as much in the dining room! Oh yes Ladies and Gentlemen! Cross my guinea pigs heart, I've seen some odd things and will doubtlessly see more! Sabrina and Raphaël Petit don't seem to stop in their courteous restaurant! Here! A blatant symptom of how much they love their job: in the middle of a busy sitting, some tourist customers wave as they go past saying "see you this evening!". Tourists that are happy with a restaurant with a sea-view in Bandol are not seen all that often, on the contrary! And dishes as exemplary as the ones handed out here, not so frequent in the "seaside resort" context! When the chef sends out a "marmite de moules et écrevisses en feuilleté" (cooking pot with mussels and crayfish under flaky pastry), he doesn't just do the minimum work with a mussel here, a crayfish there and if you don't like it you lump it and go elsewhere! Oh no! He adds touches of seasonal "chic" in each corner, pretty and good. I nibble with pleasure, 15/20. Goodness only knows that I am a little blasé to duck breast! Salmon too for that matter! Two beasts whose quality has gone as low as its production has gone high! Except that my "magret de canard aux zestes de citrons" (duck breast with lemon zests) is quality, plays the part of semi-gastronomic and doesn't pause for the photo: not fatty, adjusted cooking times, well worked garnishing and sauce. 15,5/20. Surprises all round for dessert. Some homemade, others are not. But sub-contracting can be a good thing! Here's proof! You just have to choose well! My delicious sweet is called "Ivoire" (ivory). A three layered round biscuit with (if I remember rightly, ouch) dark chocolate, white too and a smooth caramel heart which is so good that Mauricette would exchange it against a weeks holiday in the Maldives with George Clooney! I'm only just exaggerating! 15/20! After a trip around the best places in Western Europe, the Petit couple has come to stay. They have perfectly captured the subtleties of the job, found a balance between a quality meal and a privileged spot. I may just as well say that they have a lot going for them... A smiling attendance, a terrace which will please all of the boating amateurs: don't hesitate out of season! A general professional performance with healthy looks.

Chef : Raphaël Petit
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Allée Alfred Vivien
83150 - Bandol
Phone : 04.94.29.41.18

L'esperance

ΨΨΨ 1/2

Two minutes please. I am thinking... Good, right. It has been a long time since Bandol last gratified us with a table on this level. When one says such a thing, when one puts one skills into the balance, the place that you are aiming at has to have an awful lot under its toque. Which in our opinion is the case, having tested, as usual. "L'Espérance" builds its own history in replacing "La Fontaine" in the road which is parallel to the Bandol port, the rue Marçon. The Pradines couple comes from the other end of the county, from Saint Raphaël where they successfully ran "Le Jardin de Sébastien" for seven years. In the dining room Maria is a model of gentle kindness, she covers you with thousands of small attentions. 26 € for the menu: le paradis. It will be paradise without Mauricette. An "amuse-bouche" with truffles which sets the picture on a 15,5/20 straight away. Some prestigious tables offer this kind of dish in their menu at the same price as the complete menu concocted by the Pradines chef. A greedy jewel called "caille désossée cuite au foie frais de canard dans un feuilleté, jus de carcasse réduit au vin rouge parfum de sauge" (boned quail cooked with fresh duck liver in flaky pastry, stock reduced with red wine and flavoured with sage) which is noted at 15,5/20. A seaside dish to follow with a "tronçon de turbot, beurre citronné, quenelle de brocolis en purée et asperges verts" (slice of turbot, lemon butter, broccoli quenelle in a purée and green asparagus) full of poetry, tasty. Another 15,5/20. A fresh, light dessert seems indicated. It will be "suprêmes d'oranges et zestes confits, jus vanillé, sorbet citron" (crystallised orange and zest supreme, vanilla sauce, lemon sorbet), adjusted and harmonious, a last 15,5/20. The menu changes following the market and more or less, the propositions remain for around a fortnight. From beginning to end, the integral panoply of a perfect restaurant, I can't say better. Still "taken in" by this fine surprise in Bandol, I shall cease any further commentary.

Chef : Gilles Pradines
Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 18/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

21 rue du docteur Marçon
83150 - Bandol
Phone : 04.94.05.85.29

Hotel L'ile Rousse

Restaurant les Oliviers

0

1 p.m. I enter the famous four-star hotel. Not bad! Two members of staff in the dining room are chatting together. Only 2 metres away from me, not even a look, as if I were transparent. Which will please my doctor no end because he'll think I'm eating less. Then a lady comes towards me with a severe look and gestures to me with her chin. She must be waiting for me to talk. Oh yes? It's my turn? Fine then: "I'm here for a meal" I say! I am set at a table for 12, which is wonky but has double tablecloths. Rather like Mauricette in her nightie. The first menu is at

18,50 €. no sorry, that's the children's menu. 52 € I opt for the full menu! It is frankly attractive, from whichever angle I look at it. I go "direct" to the middle as one would say in my jargon. The house is delicate enough to offer me an "amuse bouche" whilst I'm waiting, it is a kind of "ravioli au foie gras et champignons" (foie gras and mushroom ravioli), well put together, but definitely lacking salt! It spoils the atmosphere, my jaw hesitates as if in doubt, I expect it's an accident; an error is always possible, 13/20. My dish arrives, a "suprême de Saint-Pierre, crevettes, bonbon de blettes, petits oignons, jus de laurier" (John Dory supreme, shrimps, Bette, small onions, and laurel gravy). Served under a dish cover, very o' la la. It looks very good, pure, go on: I just dig in. No shrimps but a King prawn... with a blackhead! The sauce is original. Laurel is rarely used in Provence, maybe because it doesn't mix well with other aromatic plants. No doubt about it: the fish is overcooked, falls to bits in dry slices. One of the bits even smells a little strongly. Redhibitory defect. 9/20... and 28 € for the dish! No joking! My desert at 12 € (good gracious) is called "souvenir des îles" (Island memories) but leaves me without any satisfactory ones. A pretty champagne glass filled with three or four layers, sauce, vanilla cream, pineapple crumble, and passion fruit sorbet... the mixture is of no interest, unless it is a practice for style. Or something else. 11/20. The coffee costs 3,20 € Altogether the presentation is scandalously expensive. Something is quite wrong. But with first loves, things are always the same. You should never see them again.

Chef : Who knows...!

Welcome = 8/20. Attendance = 9/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 12/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.

**25 boulevard Louis Lumière
83150 - Bandal
Phone : 04.94.29.33.00**

Le Mil-pat

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

The streets are becoming very sure in Bandal. Less and less sad looking restaurant hunters are sitting on the church steps eating sandwiches out of spite... sandwiches that are spiteful too! Good news eh? Listen in: not too far away from the church, 25 year old Mathias Grand (including VAT) has laid down both his suitcases and job philosophy. Cooking is his life. He is much attached to "Chez Marceau" in Ginasservis, and also "Gorges" in Pennafort, fond of "Chez Loubet" in Lourmarin and "Auberge des Maures" in St-Tropez. It would be slightly complicated to try to describe this hyper-creative chefs cooking, especially as the dishes are soberly named. The spirit is joyful, contrasting flavours, mastered temperatures and calculated densities. Our four dishes are presented "triptych" style. That is a word that Mauricette suggested. The lady with the green hat and nose in several episodes opts for "conchiglioni brousse et basilic, coulant à la mozarella, émulsion à la fleur de thym" (pasta stuffed with cheese and basil, runny mozzarella, thyme cream) that she sanctifies with 15,5/20. What's better is the "pissaladière de filet de boeuf lardé, fondant de St Marcellin au serpent de romarin et petit ragoût de gnocchi façon grand-mère" (beef filet with lard, creamy St Marcellin cheese,

rosemary and gnocchi stew). You should have seen her nibbling the edges! And leaning over her plate as if trying to stop her neighbour from copying! 16/20! What follows is seasonal (autumn): "crumble aux champignons des bois, dés de foie gras poêlées et crème brûlée aux cèpes" (woodland mushroom crumble, fried diced foie gras and mushroom crème brûlée) which leaves me with 15,5/20. It's great to nibble! And generous! In a different style, here is my delicious "sauté de St Jacques minute au giroles, snacking de mini légumes à l'huile de basilic" (St Jacques shellfish fried with mushrooms, small vegetables in basil oil)! 15,5/20! Nothing for dessert thank-you, I have to say that the portions were generous. Generosity is usually opposed to finesse. Open your ears as wide as you can! On top of all of this, "market" recipes sometimes appear on the menu depending on the chef's good will, the customer's receptivity to nitrogen cookery and the way the products are declined, very much in vogue in the culinary universe. The wine menu concocted by Alexandre Reglionni is scorching; my favourites are "Gevrey-Chambertin" from the Marc Roy vineyard, old vines 2004 or "Margaux 1998 Alter Ego" by Palmer. The "locals" are clever and give double pleasure whilst avoiding the usual vineyard "vino plonko". A shiver of pleasure at a reasonable price, in a little street in Bandal, like that...

Chef : Mathias Grand

Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**7 rue de la Paroisse
83150 - Bandal
Phone : 04.94.29.84.09 et 06.12.99.19.13**

38 Caffè

0

We have been to less exciting "brasseries". Here is a sea view; it's not surprising then that the place is busy, even during the week and out of season. You can imagine the misery. A blasé slalom between propositions from an un-imaginative menu, from the end of my line I fish out a "Saint-Pierre poché crème de vin rouge" (poached John Dory with red wine cream) at 14 € The plate is neat and I admit that the garnishing is well cooked. Fresh mushrooms with parsley and garlic, runner beans in olive oil, a well made ratatouille even if there is a bit too much tarragon. It very nearly makes you believe that you are in a benediction craving restaurant. The problem is the fish. To qualify what I was served as fish would be abusive. We could be talking about... some... No. There isn't a word for it. It's disgusting. Young beasts (there are two of them) that taste old. Frozen, not good stuff, but I mean not good at all, traumatised by violent "fin" cooking. The meat is dry, tart. One mouthful of this and the dices are thrown, as is the rest. 8/20 despite the resourceful sauce, despite the garnishing. Look at the marks if the garnishing was opportune: 3/20! Note that the full dish that was taken back to the kitchen didn't bother the boss-waitress one little bit, or she hides her emotions well. A catching up session with the "crème brûlée" that I am promised is homemade. The lady boss is very honest because she confides that the rest is sub-contract. It kills

romanticism but it is preferable. 14/20 and 5,5 € Superb yellow and white paper table cloths and napkins! I'm joking. It distracted me for a moment from thinking about what we are sometimes made to swallow.

Welcome = 11/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 12/20. Bread = 13/20.

**29 quai Charles de Gaulle
83150 - Bandal
Phone : 04.94.29.72.49**

Le Sans Pareil

ΨΨ_{1/2}

This address could slip towards the worst, the average, transparent. It's not always easy to follow in the steps of a good chef, you obviously compare. But the feeble timid may be reassured about the change of proprietor! They can keep coming to this place! Hidden in one of the Bandal streets! Great! Behind the wheel are Christine and Jean Ananti! Behind the engines is the lady's son! Guillaume Broueilh! 22 years since he hatched! In his experienced egg shell are: le Golf in Valescure, the Cavalaire Casino and Château de Taulane! Not bad! He has an evident will to please! What a weird idea to want to please in a restaurant? And what's more in Bandal! A cherry stone's throw away from the church! So! What are we having? Cherries? No! Something un-extravagant, classical and round! An excellent starter on my menu! A really tasty and unusually mastered "cassolette de Saint-Jacques au Noilly-Prat" (St-Jacques shellfish in Noilly-Prat). The shellfish often play the marshmallow role when over cooked and rubbery. Here it is quite the opposite! Chubby and fried before being plunged in to the little pan with mussels and other delicious titbits. Good work and 15/20 to start with! A slight hic with the garnishing of what follows, a little ordinary when faced with the generosity of my "entrecôte aux deux poivres" (steak with two sorts of pepper grain) which is perfectly cooked. "Meat lovers" will enjoy. 14/20. Something light and refreshing to conclude: "carpaccio d'ananas" (pineapple carpaccio) which deserves 14/20 without a doubt. Do you see? It's just right! You hate the incessant flow of traffic? The flow of humans covered in sun cream? You aren't obsessed with having a sea view? Bingo Romeo! Smiley, simple, pleasant: I've found you a place "sans pareil" (without a match)!

Chef : Guillaume Broueilh

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**9 bis rue Vincent Allègre
83150 - Bandal
Tel : 09.63.55.02.18 Port.06.34.90.55.58**

BARJOLS

La Cigale

0

This place has apparently been running for 6 years. But as far as we can tell, there isn't a chef. It's the boss who does the cooking at "La Cigale", and you don't need to be Sherlock

Holmes to see that he is no chef. And it's not such a rare thing! We have nothing against an enterprising spirit, but you have to believe the customers: when it's not good, it's not good. And it's not the customers fault. "Cuisine" is in fact a very big word if naming what I find in my plate. It says "salade mixte" on the blackboard of daily suggestions to start with! Green salad leaves are trying to brighten themselves up with a sour preparation that includes onions and peppers. As a bonus, a slice of ham is rolled up and stuffed with tinned mixed vegetables and industrial mayonnaise or yoghurt sauce, who knows, I can't work it out. 8/20, but when hungry; you eat. To follow is a "rôti de porc sauce forestière" (roast pork with mushroom sauce) and potato gratin as an alternative to the eternal de-frosted chips. Generous, the meat is correctly cooked but shoots itself in the foot with a mediocre sauce straight from a ready to serve packet. Soggy mushrooms and barely warm gratin: 10/20. The lady boss is doing the attendance! She suggests a dessert that I turn down politely, I'm mad, but not that mad. The coffee is the only thing that doesn't disappoint me. Of course the prices are reasonable, 12,80 € for my formula. But you eat a dish, not a price. The need to run as quickly as possible is what I plan, but an incident holds me back. The lady boss who has become very friendly whilst cashing in my card forgets to give it back to me and leaves it lying on the counter for all to see. I try to catch her eye; she is coming and going. And eventually, after a long wait and with much loathing she hands it back to me.

Chef : Who knows..!

Welcome = 10/20. Attendance = 11/20. Setting = 12/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 14,50/20.

**Rue Eugène Payan
83670 - Barjols
Phone : 04.94.77.10.29**

Hostellerie Des Trois Fontaines

ΨΨ_{1/2}

What a great idea for a touristic and greedy trip! Barjols and its fountains! What a charming and appeasing village! A buffet stop with Mauricette, not one not two: "aux trois fontaines" it shall be. A small quite elderly place with adjoining fountain, facing the mairie. Like the lady with the green hat whilst I write. If you haven't caught that, you're doing it on purpose. Attractive patio and quiet pretty pergola. Some places seem to be made for making you lean back and relax if only your braces will allow that. The boss is not the kind to carry his cross! A dynamic forty year old with a wonderful sense of humour welcomes us. He suggests the menu of the day which confirms that both simple and good can be achieved; we let ourselves be tempted! The lady with the green hat and beady eyes notices that the establishment works with fresh market products. Which means that an "ordinary" "salade gréco-romaine" becomes a pleasure, just as the "salade de chèvre chaud" served with homemade vinaigrette, fresh spring onions, crisp salad and tomatoes. Good tomatoes which is such a rare thing. Two 14,5/20s. To follow is "poulet sauce paprika" and homemade sauce. It's good even if the pieces of chicken are

slightly over cooked. 14/20, "well deserved" says Mauricette. For me it will be "bavette sauce texmex" garnished with homemade potato gratin and the same mark: 14/20. The desserts are sworn to be homemade: a delicious "crème brûlée au Grand Marnier" at 15/20. As for myself: "sabayon aux fruits rouges", with fresh fruit if you please! 14,5/20. We're getting to the end of our text! Oh go on, I'll tell you: menu at 13,50 €! With a small choice! Great eh? And Serge Sanchez is working wonders in the dining room! It's an art!

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 13/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

**12 place Capitaine Vincens
83670 - Barjols
Phone : 04.94.77.23.98**

BELGENTIER

La Table De Belgentier

ΨΨΨ

It is with great pleasure that this once slipping, age-old address in the Gapeau Valley has been saved! It once withheld an oil mill! With the Glénisson couple at the commands, there is going to be good food in town! I've had mine! What about you, what are you waiting for? Finish reading this first! In case you come across something you don't like in my prose! You never know! If for example you are the picky-nibbling type, you'll hate it! On the other hand if you cherish generous devilish dishes, picturesque recipes with southern native accidents ("from Occitanie" says the boss) that you gobble down with friends, Lyli and Alain Glénisson are your man. Ah! These two have given my happiness a rendez-vous! I start off with a "tête de veau ravigote" (calf's head with ravigot sauce) not too much jelly, firm and very fresh! And the ravigot sauce, this is ravigot! 15/20 to start with for the starter! Here is a "tournedos de filet mignon de porc au jambon du pays et au pain d'épices" (pork fillet with local ham and gingerbread). Two round slices of pork larded with ham, greedy garnishing, and a short sauce to complete the picture. A round of applause! 14,5/20! The "crème brûlée" is remarkable. Homemade. No nonsense. Did you hear? A real one! Taste the difference! 15/20! Alain Glénisson is an old-fashioned chef who flambés kidneys (I saw it all) and loves rugby. Nothing to do with one another apart from the mix and scrum... "L'hippocampe" and "La Banane" in Toulon. Big split between the gastronomic from Savigny-les-Beaune or Chenonceau which this man from the Lorrain County once worked with, or the remarkable hotel school in Strasbourg. The medals from the food world are of little interest to him, all he wants, is that you come back. Read the recipes below to whet your appetite.

Chef : Alain Glénisson

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15,5/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

**Place Etienne Arnaud
83210 - Belgentier
Phone : 04.94.48.97.14**

Les Arcades

Ψ

You mustn't go against the want for pizza. So "hand break" in the Gapeau valley. An un-swept staircase gives outside access, there are bits of plaster all over the place so you raise your eyes to the sky and listen to hear if the bombers aren't going to go past again just yet. Inside, the lady is nice; it is only once I am sat down that she informs me that pizzas are only at the weekend. For a pizzeria, deciding like lords of the land when these transalpine specialties will or will not be prepared is a bit much. Whatever the reason, it's annoying. Anyway. They can do as they please of course... So what is it to be? Well, we'll have what pizzerias do when they're not making pizza: prawns, red mullet fillets, tartare, rump steak, Milan escalope, pasta... At the entrance downstairs it says menu at 12,50 € It is equally written on the menu that the lady hands me. Let's go for this menu. Sorry, it's not possible. There is none. "It is our predecessors menu, not ours" she says without batting an eyelid. Incredible. We are at the end of April; they have been here since January 2008 and then haven't even made any modifications! Who is being taken for a ride? The customer? You've won John! They've left up the previous notices at the entrance! To bring in the idiots! There's no 12,50 € left! Instead: a dish of the day at 10 € I choose the "magret" (duck breast)! A skinny one! Pre-chopped and edible. But drowned. Oh yes? What do you mean by drowned? Under a mushroom sauce which incidentally is quite good. But the soup-like ratatouille smothers the lot. Including the fat chips. And the salad leaves. And the slices of orange that are just there for show. A nasty accident in the plate that I would like to save from disaster with the clever mushroom sauce, which leaves me thinking that the chef must know a thing or two. 11/20. And 10 € I had the only dessert that was admitted to be home-made, the "tarte à l'ananas" (pineapple tart). Thick and the size you would give to an Alpine hunter when he's just come back from a mission in Greenland, and the chef doesn't avoid the chocolate topping and insufferable whipped cream. 11/20. You mustn't go against the want for pizza. Or at least you must be warned in advance. Just like the fact that the credit card machine is "out of order". That's a good one. No pizzas eh? You get it?

Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

**RD 554
LES ARCADES
83210 - Belgentier
Phone : 04.94.48.92.78**

BESSE-SUR-ISSOLE

La Remise

ΨΨΨ

A chef that cooks. Funny eh? Good at it too. A laugh? And discreet. Stop it, my ribs are aching. It's so rare. Obviously the names of the dishes are strictly minimal. If there is less flow of words, it's shorthand. Somewhere so sober in a society where to show off is the done thing has become anachronistic. Of course, some chefs

know how to play the "modest detached". But the Pesavento couple is playing no role. They are the kind to look in surprise when you tell them it's good, that the salmon is perfectly cooked, that the lamb tastes the way it should always taste, that the John Dory filet is so fresh that it is doing breast stroke and that the nougat is classed "gold medal" in Mauricette's personal catalogue! But let's go back to the beginning because if all good things do have an end, they also fortunately have a beginning! "Feuilleté de St-Jacques au Noilly-Prat" (St-Jacques shellfish with wine in a flaky pastry case), well balanced, realistic, mastered and fine. The cooking times are just right. 15/20. To follow: "carré d'agneau rôti au jus de thym" (roasted lamb ribs with thyme gravy). Under these conditions, the lamb must be delighted to be a neighbour to the potato. They haven't had time to plan their future though! A well made native dish, tasty to the end. Another 15/20. Cheese, of course. Why "of course"? You should know better than me that few restaurants have cheese on offer! And a sweet end, a "tarte au chocolat" (chocolate tart) which is not too sweet and full of chocolate, if you see what I mean. A delicious butter and cream mixture... 15/20. The places reputation for its seriousness in the profession has gone further than the county limits. Without a sound, on tiptoes. There. All of the customers have gone; "La Remise" is empty. Nadia often dashes off to finish the book of the moment. Alain Pesavento sometimes gets out his guitar, and then moves on to something else. Let's say that they are reserved to the end, these two would be capable of saying that their success is probably a misunderstanding.

Chef : Alain Pesavento

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**4 avenue de la Libération
83890 - Besse-sur-issole
Phone : 04.94.59.66.93**

BORMES-LES MIMOSAS

L'olivier

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

The table is well known to the local gourmets. Or not, some aficionados from the B&O don't hesitate in jumping down a few counties to come and enjoy themselves at the foot of "l'Olivier", in Bormes-les-Mimosas. For a restaurant, nothing less simple than to make a name for yourself when you prefer discretion to noisiness. Laurence does not try to play the dame, she remains natural. Which doesn't prevent the chef from delivering good quality dishes, refined and made to be discovered. The flavours meet, say hello, kiss each other's cheeks, yes, all in the best of both worlds created by Frédéric Wierzbowski. A nearby table enjoys a "foie gras poêlé, citron confit, coppa grillée et pommes de terre au lard" (fried foie gras, lemon conserve, grilled coppa ham and potatoes with bacon). I would have had that. I could have done, but I wanted to try something else. So instead I had "salade de St-Jacques au wakamé, marinade acidulée à la mangue" (St-Jacques shellfish salad with wakamé, marinade with mango). Wakamé

is a seaweed. The shellfish are carpaccio style (raw), colours come up front, and the flavours are original. 15,5/20. I forgot to tell you about the delicious "mise en bouche", chopped tomatoes and whisked fresh cream, served warm. There you are! That's done! One foot in creativity and one remaining on classic ground! With my "carré d'agneau rôti à la fleur de thym, fricassée de cèpes" (lamb, roasted with thyme flowers, cepe fricassée). Last cepe of the season, tender lamb, short gravy. 15,5/20. Cheese, with flaky pastry, and a little chestnut cream! You have to wait till it cools down... Dessert with "cocktail de fruits frais épicés, gelée de noix de coco, crème à l'avocat" (fresh spicy fruit cocktail, coconut jelly, cream of avocado). You often forget that an avocado is a fruit, the chef reminds you. As he also reminds you that floating island, cream caramel and chocolate mousse are not the only sweets in the world. It's fresh, got style, daring, the opposite of transparent. 15/20. Now if you still prefer to go wrong elsewhere or you like tempting fate, that's up to you, and I'm not going to argue.

Chef : Frédéric Wierzbowski

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**Formula at 16 €. Menus at 24 €, 35 €, 43 €
Children 9 €. Carte. Birthday or party
formulas: inquire. Terrace in season. Open all
year round, except Mondays out of season. Air
conditioning. Booking recommended.**

5 rue Gabriel Péri (à côté de la poste)

83230 - Bormes-les-mimosas

Phone : 04.94.71.18.92

Le Tify

ΨΨ_{1/2}

These two chaps are incredible! Their shop is as full as an egg! In the middle of winter in La Favière at Bormes! The land of low prices and camper traps! But their egg is swimming against the philosophical atmosphere current! That's it! Pierre-André Romain and Fabrice Gounand's egg is swimming against the current! The prices are adapted to the competitive environment and even so, dishes which will surprise the curious, are being well taken care of! The chef is a little bizarre. In a menu priced at 17,50 € he is capable of serving a "chartreuse au lapin aux saveurs de noisettes" (liqueur with rabbit and nuts) which if it had been served as a starter in a gastronomic restaurant would have cost no less than 20 €. A delicious glass that I tax at 15/20. Mauricette starts off with a "salade de fèves au jambon du pays et figues, vinaigrette au miel" (broad bean salad with local ham, figs, with a honey vinaigrette) which is refreshing. 14/20. She who does not feed on nonsense and stories has marked out this chef thanks to his "ossobuco de lotte au coulis de crustacés" (anglerfish stew with a shellfish sauce). The cooking times are right, the dish is well presented, and 15/20 she says! The sauce is excellent, the vegetables fresh, but the fish is slightly overcooked for my "dos de colin rôti, crumble au citron" (roasted back of coalfish, lemon crumble). The crumble is a clever idea! It's good! 14/20! Our desserts are splendid, usually in this "price sphere" they are left to subcontractors. The Lady with the green hat has chocolate on the end of her nose! Because of her "champignon glacé meringué,

chocolat chaud" (iced meringue mushroom, hot chocolate sauce)! 14,5/20! My "gratin de fruits de saison" (browned seasonal fruit) which is zabaglione style is very good. I really enjoy it. For those whose greed compass has gone mad and who are looking for a friendly place to go with their wallets have found some kind of headquarters! Only two steps away from the water! In the dining room smiles and good humour are ladled out without any extra cost by sir Pierre-André! He never stops!

Chef : Fabrice Gounand

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

79 boulevard du front de mer

La Favière

83230 - Bormes-les-mimosas

Phone : 04.94.71.40.98

L'on Dine

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Another delicious place in La Favière! The Bormes port! A good address! I swear! Usually around here, disappointments line up behind one another in a row of culinary desperation! At last, we're going to have to get used to the idea that things can change, that if bluebirds fly over the rainbow then why, oh why can't I! So? "L'On Dine" replaces "l'Olive d'Or". It's going to be hard to not get the old boot polish out when talking about Jacques Russo's cooking. If this man is an unconditional, frank partisan of life and optimism, his cooking is efficiently simple and precise. When he serves you "croustillants de chèvre chaud au miel" (crisp goats' cheese with honey), you don't really expect so much care to be taken. The green salad is thriving, the deco isn't in mourning and I tuck in with pleasure, 14,5/20. Salmon is as common in a restaurant as "chèvre chaud"... But here again, they've wandered away from the path. Fresh salmon fried on one side, the cooking times are not a massacre, and a sumptuous virgin sauce, I often say that in the summer it is my favourite... when it's well made. Olive oil, tomatoes, garlic, lemon and spring onions. The presentation is worth some of the gastronomic places although this is generous. 15/20. When it comes to the time to think that it would be reasonable to opt for an ice-cream whilst wandering along the port, Julia Russo shows you the dessert menu. The restaurants' "mousse au chocolat" is as original as their "chèvre chaud" and the "saumon". Except that this chocolat mousse is divine. Very chocolaty, dense, not too sugary. A last 15/20. The Russo's are original. They make simple products into very good dishes. It is often the best way to see whether a chef is good or not. And then... psssst... listen closely... This house is acquainted with art! So! They come from the Savoie, from Valloire where the couple ran "l'Asile des Fondues" until 2004! The Russo's resto! "L'On Dine" where you dine and they give you their time, they're going to be fine!

Chef : Jacques Russo

Welcome = 15,5/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

101 boulevard du front de mer

La Favière
83230 - Bormes-les-mimosas
Phone : 04.94.01.09.41

BRIGNOLES

Chez Lee

ΨΨΨ

When we see what we see and we eat what we eat, I can assure you that to become suspicious is legitimate, to doubt before we eat. The Asian culinary register also plays the game. This type is like shooting yourself in the foot and bringing the reputation down because of stupid cheats who hand out as many nem as disappointments in self service places. Whereas serious tables, the discreet laborious, in fact the real promoters of this great often badly reputed cuisine, are appreciated to the height of their capacity. As along with Mauricette, we were two, we chose the menu for two. I didn't have much choice. A "Lee" for two or two for "Lee", that's better, eh? The feast starts with the famous "ilot du chef" (chefs island), a sort of soup tureen kept hot with a delicate sesame flavoured stock. King prawns, St-Jacques shell-fish and Chinese vegetables join in the dance. We understand better why the Asian food lovers class these soups among the best in the world. 15/20. It's time for the hors d'oeuvres with the classic nem, spring rolls etc. What sets Mauricette's eyes goggling are the "bouchées vapeur" (steam cooked mouthfuls)! Golly it's good! Perfumed, with a lot of finesse! Exceptional! A dish which altogether achieves an average of 15,5/20! A last dish to fill us up and conclude with "fruits de mer au gingembre" (sea food with ginger) garnished with Cantonese rice. It's true that this delicious dish isn't part of my Greek diet, but it is good from time to time. 15/20. No dessert, although included in my menu at 28 €. The lady with the green hat unwillingly says "gastronomic", but this time we agreed. The Truong couple's table in Brignoles is one of the rare Asian restaurants to have received Mauricette's total approval. Whoops! I nearly forgot: don't judge the place from the outside! Behind, there is a pretty garden for good weather!

Chef : My Lan Truong
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

18 ter avenue Dréo
83170 - Brignoles
Phone : 04.94.69.19.74

Le Mum's

ΨΨ

One of the best addresses in Brignoles, one of the best hidden too. To allow you the un-luxury of being hidden in Brignoles means that things are not going to be easy. It's enough to ruin fragile morals, a cookers purgatory. Pascal Gautier holds shop "rue Petit Paradis", which may be enough to help believe in a God. This small, prettily original and thoughtfully decorated restaurant has got itself some good regulars all year round, initiated people who love cooking from this region and also the little free car park opposite. The summer dishes don't over

do things, out of season, I have been told that they are more elaborated. My "club saumon" is fun though, smoked salmon on toast with a northern type of sauce on top made of lime and wild salad. I don't know if the salad is wild but its big leaves are very fresh. And instead of an avocado salad, cold ratatouille, it's delicious. A change that wasn't mentioned by the management, but it's good. 13,5/20. My dish is "le canard". A whole roasted duck breast with a Clementine and ginger sauce. When I say "whole" I mean "whole". And the fat has been removed! Remarkable! Not stingy! 15 € for the breast! Well done sir! A ring of grilled vegetables, and some un-necessary French fries. To conclude with 14,5/20. My pleasure is out of luck: I didn't even touch my glass of organic wine from Correns (2 €)! The ginger sauce with the breast is strong and acts like a good cleaner for my taste-buds! I've said it all! No! Don't do more than 50kms to go to "le Mum's". On the other hand...

Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

10 rue Petit Paradis
83170 - Brignoles
Phone : 04.94.59.03.77

Le Cafe De L'univers

Ψ_{1/2}

Brignoles on a rainy Monday. It's one of those days and I'm simply hungry. Let's get it over with. A small square and restaurant-bistrot-webthing. Yep. Lots of people, lots of noise, lots of tables but not much room despite the mezzanine which is already full. The noise could be compared with that of the big-bang which is ordinary for "l'univers". The welcome is warm but I'd rather freeze outside than leave with a migraine. Even if it is lively inside! Laughter, people running around and others who are simply laid back! I relax. My order is taken, I avoid the dish of the day "une fricassée de volaille" that I don't fancy. I ask for the carte. Not much but enough to find something. "Des raviolis aux écrevisses et pointes d'asperges" (ravioli with crayfish and asparagus) garnished with mixed salad. The attendance is efficient and carried out by the boss. A very nice man. I ask him if his ravioli are homemade. He tells me that he uses a lot of sub-contract food and that only the sauces and the fruit salad are homemade. Fine. Come on, be daring; I taste. It's not bad. Honestly announced and honest in itself, not bad at all! Far from being what the B&O would hope for, but there is nothing cynical here! So what? The ravioli are tasty and stay put together in the plate, the sauce is light and avoids trying to conceal anything. And the salad, my dear friends, is crisp and fresh with a homemade vinaigrette. Okay, so this is not homemade cooking like most restaurants. But these are quality products at a reasonable quality/price report (11 €), and it's generous. 13,5/20. I can still see people filing in at 1 o'clock who mention that they only have 25 minutes to eat, which they will do at correct cost. But there is a snag: despite being relatively pleased, can this place still be called a "restaurant"?

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 13/20. Coffee = 15/20.

9 Place Caramy
83170 - Brignoles
Phone : 04.94.59.28.92

CAMPS LA SOURCE

Le Petit Camps

0

Dribbling, I wandered off to this pretty village in the middle of no-where but so close to Brignoles. It's an advert in the Var Matin that caught my eye and woken my taste-buds: "elaborated Provençale cuisine with our good native products". Oh yes. The management uses "native" shamelessly. During the sitting, the lady crosses the dining-room with large strides without either a smile or a snippet of "hello". Fortunately the attendance and welcome granted us by the gentleman are honest in this colourful and gay room. But this isn't enough to make a "restaurant". It's the plates that decide, the dishes that dictate and the pleasure that is gained. A menu at 15 € with a dish of raw vegetables, beef with carrots and spaghetti and dessert. No thank-you, everyone else had that, I watched. Just to be different, I choose "magret de canard sauce aux cèpes" (duck breast with cep mushroom sauce) at 13,50 €! It'll teach me to be original. A white nearly jellified liquid covering six slices of meat on one side. And a mountain of McCain type chips, although not greasy, on the other. This is where the choice of garnishing stops, which is not what is announced on the menu. 7/20. The "tarte aux pommes" isn't homemade and thus, does very well. Two big blobs of whipped cream decorate the plate. A sub-contract "native" speciality. 12/20. The coffee is good and costs 1,50 €. The total comes to 15 € as this friendly man forgets to count the dessert. A worthy "native" last gift, a handy word to wave around like a flag in the wind of the Var Matin ad column.

Welcome = 13/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Rue Marcellin Marin
83170 - Camps La Source
Phone : 04.94.59.60.86

CARNOULES

Auberge De La Tuiliere

ΨΨΨ

As far as the panorama is concerned, the guinea pigs eyesight is not what it was, time goes by. But I know that it is still the countryside! Architectural absurdities have not yet set stock in the vine foot, or the other way round. Ah! Vines! As far as the eye can see! Or they would be if I had new eyes or I pretended to be a Sioux Indian and shade my eyes from the sun. Thanks to well prepared cuisine by a clever chef, Guillaume Astésiano's farmhouse continues a show that can do the splits. From a quite meal for two, nose to nose, between four eyes or 20 fingers, to the possibility of a wedding party comprising all of

the members of the Red Army choir and including all of Eton's youngest students as choir boys at the same time. Let's say that it's roomy. Here is the establishment's feat: to make however many people feel as if this is a quiet meal for two. Not easy. But possible, here's proof. A plump start with my "tarte au foie gras mi-cuit et pommes caramel" (foie gras tart with caramel apple)! Apples from the garden, but I don't know if I'm allowed to say that! No? Oh well, too late! The foie gras terrine is thick, which enables me to quickly work out the places tendency to avoid saving money in the wrong places. What I mean is: where are the savings when customers don't come back? Well! The terrine is slightly cold, but apart from that it was a nice moment in time and 15/20. The dish that follows is as interesting as good. "Plein filet de colin, sauce moutarde à l'ancienne" (Full cod filet, grain mustard sauce). After the perfectly cooked fish, a character filled preparation (onions, peppers and mustard) astounds both eyes and pallet. The garnishing, rice with butter and vegetable flan, are well adapted. In the full menu, the portions are magnanimous and not lacking finesse. But as it is possible to dine with the Red Army choir, there is a way to finish your dish if ever you feel full along the way. 15/20. I love the terrace, the stonework, the tranquillity. A short siesta is possible thanks to two or three rooms which stretch out their duvets to you. How about a week-end away? With the Red Army choir?

Chef : Philippe Allais

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

RN 97 (à 15mn de Toulon entre Puget-ville et Carnoules)

83660 - Carnoules

Phone : 04.94.48.32.39 - Fax : 04.94.48.36.06

CARQUEIRANNE

Lou Petoulet



We all know the type, toques like beacons, strutting around with belly buttons bigger than themselves, the aficionados of the micro sized, the soup tremblers who would like to be talked about on the TV as if they were UNO officials. And then there are the discreet ones, the ones who speak little. It's a question of style. Here, at the B&O, we like the discreet ones. Especially when they are good. Nothing on the outside distinguishes Damien Casani's place from the others. Hidden at the top of Carqueiranne, this chef makes the most of seeing far and doing right. And not only because of the open view, revealing the sea and Giens. Taste buds immediately fall under the charm thanks to the "mise en bouche". Which is followed by a "velouté de potiron, châtaignes et croustillants de poitrine fumée" (smooth pumpkin soup, horse-chestnuts and crisp bacon) which is round and evidently seasonal! It is a recipe that could be enjoyed all year round! 15/20 is a minimum for the association of benefactors which have just been named. My "pièce de veau aux morilles, pâtes fraîches" (piece of veal with morel mushrooms, fresh pasta)... is also homemade! Well put together, nicely laid out,

good cooking times and seasoning, quality products, sweet paradise. 15,5/20. You can try the cheeses, I didn't, maybe some other time. I'm on a diet. I'm joking! I could also have avoided the "tatin de poire" (upside down pear tart) which is very pretty, but I am not advised to try. The sweet roundness of the speciality is nicely broken by a slightly sour sauce, it's very welcome. 14,5/20. The wine menu is stimulating, splendidly independent and free... rather like the boss, not the kind to hide behind medals, but more the kind to wait for the customers point of view. The attendance is courteous, and fully assumes a light and friendly classicism. A covered patio in the summer, flaming logs in the winter. A nice place for a "pilgrimage" from our permanently over excited lives. Where professionalism is the law. A hidden place for the initiated, calm, and so healthy!

Chef : Damien Casani

Welcome = 18/20. Attendance = 18/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

Route du col de Serre

83320 - Carqueiranne

Phone : 04.94.58.50.07

Le Romarin



On the outside, this is what one could approximately call a restaurant. The shop front has not just done its first Holy Communion, one would nearly look away. But on the inside my sweet darlings, it is Byzantium. Byzantium for the guinea pig, it's when the house is kept like a salon on the inside, that the tables look as if they have been waiting for you forever, that the Lady boss welcomes you with a smile that leaves you feeling that you're sitting down at uncle Bob and aunty Sophie's table. A moment of pure felicity offered by Geneviève Pauquet, expatriated from Quebec and who has catching good humour. And the smashing recipes put together by sire Alain Pauquet, play like sweet music in your mind. This chef "who started late in life" has been through the Bay of Port-Cros and its delicious fish, is four times a jewel as a sauce maker and clever recipe inventor. With a simple starter like "hareng à l'huile pomme de terre" (herrings in oil and potatoes) well presented and pretty, he does the Madeleine from Proust. 14,5/20. What follows is also native and the kind of cheeky dish that you could happily have on the corner of the bar in a bistrot: "rognons de veau sauce moutarde à l'ancienne" (veal kidneys mustard sauce)! 15/20 which conforms to my pleasure. Seeing as I'm at it, today on the blackboard: "ris de veau sauce muscat" (sweetbread and Muscat sauce), "pavé de Cerf au cèpes" (venison steak with mushrooms)... it makes your mouth water doesn't it? On the dessert line, the industrial made is of excellent quality (you'll see) and the "crème catalane" (catalane cream) which is homemade does very well when up against this rival. The orange blossom flavour doesn't overdo it, good, 14,5/20. Now that you're drooling, I shall continue my torture. Wine menu: le Marge Montepulciano d'Abruzzo (Italy), Quinta de Ventozelo tinta Roriz (Portugal), Chilli and South Africa... but also Aloxe-Corton (Domaine Chapuis), a Cahors (Château Eugénie) and even a Meursault... and Port, good-quality whiskies. Right. It's not that I'm bored but that's not all,

I've got work waiting for me. We'll come back. With this kind of mentality, we are allowed to come here at least twice a year, or more, even us. It's not sinning, it's even recommended.

Chef : Alain Pauquet

Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 15,5/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

6 avenue Jean Jaurès

83320 - Carqueiranne

Phone : 04.94.58.86.03

CAVALAIRE

L'espadon



Whether rain or shine and facing the sea, this chef pilots his ship towards its destiny as a generous table. This seems to be the perfect restaurant according to the B&O criteria. On the opposite to medicine and according to himself, good old Grunberg is running a "generic" restaurant. What does that mean? "The same thing as prestigious restaurants, just as good, but cheaper". Restaurants... The principle being to eat well, giving us a good time, whilst relieving us from the claws of everyday life which touch everyone, except maybe the opportunist food cheats who play cards in the winter but don't accept them in the summer as means of payment. These, the toque workers like "L'Espadon" stay open all year round. An attendance dressed up to the nines without slipping in to the sophisticated pompous. And cooking that never, ever forgets the essential. Refined native, a dangerous exercise: a classic reference always rings in the ear. Thus my dear friends arrives my starter after a multi faced "mise en bouche" (tantalizer), including a truffle crouton. The kind Mauricette would like to see on both sides of her bread! 15/20! A pure and generous dish "gourmandise de foie gras de canard en habit de fruits secs et demi-glace de chutneys léger" (greedy duck foie gras dressed in dry fruit with light chutney ice). The home-made bread adds to the native taste that I love. 15,5/20. When I say native... Here is a "tête de veau à la sauge et petits légumes du terroir, sabayon à l'ail comme à l'hollandaise" (calfs head with sage and small native vegetables, garlic zabaglione dutch style). Served under a bell, a frying pan garnished with titbits. I dig in like a starving man, it's great, something difficult to achieve with this well known recipe. It stands out thanks to the light garlic zabaglione which is subtle. A second 15,5/20. The "Brie truffé" (truffle brie cheese) in my menu will have the last word. Like for the tantalizer, Mauricette would like to see both sides of the truffle! She's never happy! Anyway! Dessert ? Why yes of course. And 15/20 for a "poire caramélisée, crème légère à la liqueur de poire" (caramelized pear, light cream with pear alcohol) which is impeccable to conclude this feast. The Grunberg family is quite something! A great chef behind the stoves! A conscientious restaurant which throws dishes full of spirit in to the customers chops! It can happen facing the sea!

Chef : Jean-Philippe Grunberg

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20.

Promenade de la mer
83240 - Cavalaire
Phone : 04.94.64.66.05

COLLOBRIERES

Hotel-restaurant Des Maures

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Those who know Dorette Borello's house also know that there is only one way to come to her table. There are certainly two entrances, one on the street and one by the river with plane trees. But the only way to come, the only key, one magic formula: wearing a big smile! Any offenders will not be punished. They will just be given a lesson about the philosophy of life with Dorette. 7 days a week playing her favourite game of cook, serving, welcoming salesmen, doing the rooms, the accounts, but also listening, consoling, telling stories... In a world where everything is going too fast to even dare think about the future, a pilgrimage to Dorette's will make you happy in a jiffy. Including questions about table pleasure. With Mauricette, she to whom it suffices in giving her food for her to stop being hungry, we dug in to a meal made to fill you up so much that you don't finish the bread on the table, if you see what I mean... there is that much and so much more! "Hors d'oeuvre"! Raw vegetables, raw ham and terrine! Gorgeous home prepared ham, just this minute sliced and rennet stomach! 14's/20 and 14,5's/20! Cart loads! People come from afar and further just to eat Dorette's "omelette aux champignons" (mushroom omelette)! I have to say that she is a model of the kind! With real cepe as if you were family! 14,5/20! With the lady with the green hat, it is during our meals, different ones, that we go down separate roads. Not for long enough unfortunately. But you can get too much of a good thing! She: "gambas grillés" (grilled prawns) and me "grenouilles à la provençale" (provençal frog's legs). The strict absence of added fat adds to the pleasure of eating with your fingers. The garnishing is memorable even if... simple sauté potatoes. 14,5/20. It's difficult to avoid the Collobrières "crème de marron" (horse-chestnut cream). Here it is, with whipped cream or fromage blanc, or on its own, or however you like. But with one of Dorette's scrumptious meringues, oh yes. Because she makes meringues as well. 14,5/20 but 15/20 for the meringues. This is a real family affair with two of her sons in the dining room and a nice quiet second in the kitchen. Prices that would drive an expert-accountant epileptic. An island in the green, it's at Collobrières, to feel good it would be hard to do better.

Chef : Dorette Borello
Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

19 boulevard Lazare Carnot
83360 - Collobrières
Phone : 04.94.48.07.10 - Fax : 04.94.48.02.73

La Farigoulette

Ψ

In the charming village of Collobrières, well known to greenery lovers, in the Maures forest, a new place opened at the end of 2007. You can see it all from the outside. A sweet corner street restaurant with well cared for deco. Inside, there is a warm welcome. Oh yes! It has to be said! The boss is smiley! And available! Straight out, you feel at home, despite the muddle between dishes from the menu and the daily formula. It must be said that it is not so rare to enter a restaurant and be looked at as if Martians had invaded the soup, as if you were in the way. And then you expect family cooking. I start with a "terrine de canard au foie gras" (duck terrine with foie gras) which is alright but not exciting. It's just that the green salad is smothered in vinegar. To put green salad with foie gras... but with so much acidity... 11/20 and 9 € To follow is a well cooked "dos de cabillaud" (cod), but it is cruelly lacking a highlight, flavour. A memorable 17 € (bang) for 11/20, another one. At this stage in the meal where all has been said, assessment is frustrating as all hope in finding cookery with personality has flown away. But beware! There is nothing dishonest! You can really feel how well implied the management feels and there is a true wish to turn customers in to regulars, a big effort going on... in the dining room. The heart is there, you can feel it. But the heart isn't enough to please the good old taste-buds. So, the only bad mark arrives with the bill, brought through on a carbon copy of the order book, no stamp. Nothing more annoying. The restaurant doesn't accept credit cards either. These two are often a pair. It doesn't stop the little place from being full. And the boss dashes from table to table... but in the end it still comes to 35 € Oh yes! Adds up quickly doesn't it?

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 14/20.

2 Bd Lazare Carnot
83610 - Collobrières
Phone : 04.94.36.64.26

CORRENS

La Bastide

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Have you heard of Correns in the Var? The first organic village in France and a discreet jewel for green Provence! History and greenery! There are few restaurants here but at least one: "La Bastide"! Slightly outside of the village but right in the heart of our greedy preoccupations! And fields of vegetables! Straight to the plate! This is Steve Giraud's philosophy, he is a chef who understands that it is ridiculous to eat strawberries in December and chicory in July! Unless you opt for products from other latitudes! But you'll get me in a minute! So! A lunchtime like all lunchtimes for the BâO guinea pig! Well, nearly! Quite bucolic! A refreshing starter with: "concassée de tomates sur lit de chèvre bio" (chopped tomatoes on a bed of organic goat's cheese) which dares to be simple at 14,5/20. Now being in a good mood to continue I choose a "émincé de boeuf sauce basilic" (thinly sliced beef with basil sauce) with which the interest remains both with the clever preparations composed notably with okra, also called gumbo,

vegetables that look like Chilli peppers but taste like courgette. Not the other way around! It's curious, a classical mixture as well as a discovery at 14,5/20. The dessert would have been classical if it had been ruined. Restaurant made "mousse au chocolat" rarely gains my benediction. Here is an exception; it is also generous, 14/20. The attendance is relaxing! Relaxed too but not lacking the fundamentals! A nice fun moment accompanied by Délphine. Oh yes! Do not be mistaken! This "Bastide" doesn't have an English garden in front, stone statues at the entrance and gold threaded curtains at the windows! It's quite the opposite! It nearly looks like a peasants hut rather than a palace. Oh really? Do you prefer that? Good then!

Chef : Steve Giraud
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

Route du Vallon Sourn
83570 - Correns
Phone : 06.86.93.90.67

COTIGNAC

Le Clos Des Vignes

ΨΨ

The newcomers who have been here since January 2008 are very welcoming. Henri Bastian, the cook, has left his greedy little nest in the vineyard. Great. No full menu. Two menus at 28 € and 37 €. But not on bank holidays. Only the one at 37 €. At this cost, the cooks can't afford to cut corners. Although it more or less sticks to the road, the cost will not go down very well. It can even be said that the quality price report is frankly improper. You imagine that there must be know-how in the dishes for 37 € Not the cost for a spray of eye boggling decorum and no taste for some mouthfuls. With Mauricette we gobble down our "mise en bouche" "velouté de céleri" (smooth celery soup). Afterwards she tries "ricotta aux fines herbes en tournedos de saumon fumé" (ricotta with herbs and smoked salmon steak). She raises her eyes slowly, and looks at me vexed, her fingers touching the floor. Ricotta cheese is not reputed for its character, but even so... 13/20. More luck with my "poêlée de noix de St-Jacques à la fondue de poireaux" (fried St-Jacques shell fish with leeks). Good presentation, the shell fish are well cooked, no red coral (for the English customers) but a little stingy in the proportions. 14,5/20 and we have the same mixed salads for our starters. Then we have the same garnishing for our very different dishes: mashed potato! Good! But sad steamed green beans, carrots, dried spinach in a pan and lazy, soft asparagus. It's Mauricette's turn to have St-Jacques in her "feuilleté de St-Jacques aux épices" (St-Jacques in flaky pastry with spice). An ordinary saffron sauce, the pastry is soft. 14/20. Sea food for me again: "filet de bar crème de gingembre" (sea bass filet with ginger cream). With the fish, the chef is under pressure: what is the cooking like? It is well done! But it is farm bred fish! Nothing more! The sauce pushes as well as it can... 14/20. The cheese trolley pulls us out of stagnation. It is part of the menu, and plays first role: it pulls the quality report out of the depths. Shame that the desserts can't say the same thing. The propositions aren't very

tempting. With the lady with the green hat who is usually good natured whilst in Cotignac, we dived at our sub-contractors ice-cream like two cubs under a she wolfs teats: "colonel" and "vanille et cerise Amarena" (vanilla and Amarena cherry). We both hand out 14,5/20, and congratulate each other in not having chosen the chocolate cake that we saw on a near-by table. A sort of dry muffin... Idyllic setting, friendly staff, but cooking with hiccups and metaphysical prices.

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 11/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**Route de Montfort Quartier Nestuby
83570 - Cotignac
Phone : 04.94.04.72.19**

CUERS

Le 7eme Ciel



Well done to the management to have made themselves different. Good welcoming, attendance smiling, shady and appealing terrace, the most charming rest room I've ever seen. (I swear.) Everything or nearly is planned, organised for the customers comfort... or nearly? Why's that? There is a menu for the evening, which recites "world cuisine" recipes that we will avoid judging having not tried. It is only an evening offer. At lunch it's 5 different salads, two meats and a "plat du jour", "boulettes de boeuf à la menthe, semoule ratatouille" (beef and mint balls, semolina grain and ratatouille) for 13,5 € with dessert or cheese and coffee. Slipping out of this formula means heavily paying the price for something very ordinary. But well presented ordinary. Fries are replaced by potatoes put through the chip pan but not greasy. They belong to the "faux-filet de boeuf charolais, pommes de terre campagnardes, salade" (charolais steak, potatoes, salad) asked for "medium". It arrives in size, but "rare". Blood seeps out with every prick of my knife, but yeah, fortunately, it is soaked up by the potatoes. Which are already busy with the salad dressing. Lovely mixture! The meat has no taste, except water. Meat that tastes of water, then it must be fish? But nooo! The dish costs 14,5 € which is a lot for what I got out of it: 11/20. The sweets aren't very tempting, except maybe the homemade prune tart. The bread is good, it calls for cheese. A plate of three room temperature cheeses: bravo! Different goat cheeses, a little olive oil, a little salad (still the same) with nuts. A 14,5/20 is due here to rebalance the quality/price that seems to be missing in this place, especially as this dish is only at 3,5 €. A conceptual restaurant that changes the world as soon as you go in, but is a bit tight when you let go of the taste buds. At least at lunchtime.

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 18/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 18/20.

Lunchtime formula weekdays: 13,5 €. Menu à la carte. No banking cards. Terrace. Booking recommended.

**3 avenue Hourcade
83390 - Cuers
Phone : 04.94.48.63.90**

DRAGUIGNAN

Chez Lee



Were you expecting an orange stew and stuffed vegetables when coming to "Chez Lee"? Too bad! If you want to cut hairs with chopsticks, we suggest that you don't come alone to this place. If you are anything like the BâO guinea pig, you would drag your gaiters here to "Chez Lee" in Draguignan just once a year! At least this allows you to compare, taste, pick at, and why not eventually get cross with your neighbour who is more than picking at your dish. Everything is possible. Did you ever dream of having a ceiling covered with umbrellas? A charming hostess? Cooking that respects the fundamentals of the Sino-Vietnamese style? So then yes, everything is possible! And without opium! The "7 surprises" join together as one to please you! Pineapple salad, fried frogs legs, Imperial rolls, prawn fritter, stuffed sugar cane, phoenix rolls and king prawn rolls. I'm only repeating what I read! I haven't got much of a memory! Everything is good in this starter that my neighbour has his greedy eye on. Grass is always greener on the other side! Even in Vietnam! It isn't anything to do with Lao Tseu, but it is true! So! I covered all of my north side with pleasure! Sometimes eating with your fingers is the best bit! 14,5/20! My love of this cooking is rewarded with the "trésor d'amour à la sauce clémentine" (love treasure with Clementine sauce). Having this on my own is slightly embarrassing but after all, I love myself. A cooked combination with crab pincers, monkfish fillet, St-Jacques shellfish, king prawns and crayfish. If you can swallow a tiny mint leaf after these two dishes, I will pay for you to travel down the Ha long bay? with Mauricette on the same tiny boat! So? Puts you off a bit eh? 14,5/20! Proper tablecloths and napkins, renewed deco, large screen prices from the smallest lunchtime menu to a near-banquet. And what a delicious hostess, the chefs wife! The Asian restaurant in Draguignan as far as we are concerned and we haven't even got slanting eyes!

Chef : Le Qui Nam

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

**3 passage de l'industrie
(à gauche de l'Office de Tourisme quand on le regarde)**

**83000 - Draguignan
Phone : 04.94.67.32.39**

ENTRECASTEAUX

Auberge De Pardigon



Mauricette and I wanted to stop the caravan in Lorgues. But it was market day and too busy. So we headed for Brignoles and came across the "Auberge de Pardigon", its horses, old stones, greenery, tiny window panes, and chimneys. It's a good thing. We put this place down a few years ago; I even gained some quite severe comments from loyal readers about my judgement and nearly believed it. But well, I shall have to tell

all. About six starters on a blackboard naming "suggestions de l'été" (summer suggestions), and here are two 14,5/20 for our "filet mignon de porc, poire confite" (pork slice with crystallized pear) and "ballottine de lapereau jus d'olive" (rabbit with olive oil), dishes that prove that a chef is behind the stoves. Nice traditional cookery, and well presented too. What follows is a little less novel. The garnishing is basic chips next to an excellent crystallized ratatouille. "Côtelettes d'agneau découvertes" (lamb chops), two (a bit short) but well cooked, and pink. 14/20. My "aloyau de boeuf poivre vert" (sirloin with green pepper sauce) is replaced without asking by a sort of thin overdone steak, dry around the edges and badly hiding the animals' age. If they were trying to get rid of the stock to passing tourists they wouldn't have done anything different. The lady to whom we point this out is embarrassed and we don't know if the information goes any further. 11/20. Dessert is included in our menu at 21 € "homemade tiramisu". One for each of us. We dig in like starving 10 year olds rather as if to see who will finish first, but 10 years old is quite some way back, especially for the lady with the green hat. So. Suddenly I slam on both brakes! With my spoon I fish out a long straight, hard hair stuck to a friend. The two make a pair. This time it is the proprietor who enquires as to whether "all is well". Well no. I show her and she decides that the hard hair is from a brush. We all know what the other one is. But I lose all interest in the tiramisu! What a shame! No mark! Without the hair it was at least 14,5/20! There you are. Excellent country music as a bonus. It makes a change from lift music. The welcome was one of the summers' best! The girl doing the attendance (the boss's niece if I've got it right) welcomed us at the door with a natural smile just as we were arriving from the garden. A blessed moment in a world of automatic brutality: she likes her job which unfortunately is only a summer job. You should have to kill time for the summer to stay.

Welcome = 19/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**Route de Carcès
83570 - Entrecasteaux
Phone : 04.94.73.83.93**

EVENOS

Auberge Du Broussan



This is not really what you would expect for an Inn! It's a pretty, colourful "bistrot" sort of place which would fit in to any town, but it is in the middle of the countryside! The cuisine is refined. In other words, the complete opposite to a normal Inn, or at least as our starving ears would expect. Hidden up in Evenos, round and round you go, the road is marvellous. At the end, houses, a church, a false look of a Corsican village. The waitress who is on duty is fun and doesn't stick to the strict professional minimum. Very pleasant, just friendly enough. Which means that the traditional Inns should take a few evening classes on welcome and service. Blackboards, not much in the way of "starters". More choice for main course. With a "pavé de cabillaud au coulis de favouilles" (cod steak with crab sauce) delicious, good quality, supple and

smooth. Home-made potato puree with green olives, beans, sauce with character: a refreshing moment! 15/20! The sweets are out of the ordinary. I mean that they avoid the usual story. But here, they are good even when they are ordinary. Are you following? No? Well it doesn't matter I'm used to being misunderstood! Without a doubt the "fondant au chocolat" (sticky chocolate cake) (common) is delicious (uncommon). Signs of a capable toque wearing sweet maker stand out to attention with the "tarte au rhubarbe meringuée" (rhubarb meringue pie) which is home-made from beginning to end. Very well mastered. The only thing that you could regret is that the rhubarb is not a cream but in small crystallized chunks for example. A question of taste... The 15/20 is as evident as the caramel is home-made, the vanilla cream too... Bravo! How can I express my all round impression... I blow a raspberry to mediocrity! You're just going to have to come here! To Le Broussan!

Chef : Jean-François Chrestiens
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Le Broussan
83330 - Evenos
Phone : 04.94.90.37.08

FLAYOSC

Le Cigalon

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

In this discreet house which is slightly aside from the centre of the village, you can nearly hear music from a Pagnol film. Don't you think so? Born and bred here these people spent about 30 years in Shakespeare's country. Jeanine and Roberto Agresta have kept up their good habits when faced with demanding Anglo-Saxon customers who are used to luxury. The dining room cannot hold more than 20 people and its refined, very cosy atmosphere is bright. You quickly catch on that the lady of the house wishes you to be happy! Isn't it good, restaurant owners who want their customers to be happy? And with Roberto behind the stoves, we are not going to be lacking in good feeling! This fine chef and pâtisserie maker who notably went through Lenôtre knows marvellously how to pick and choose from different gastronomic cultures to avoid recipes from getting bored. He gives some slightly oriental accents to his cooking of which the English are fond, especially Indian-Asian. So my sweetmeat mates, my starter will be "Saint-Jacques rôties à l'unilatéral au jus de pommes vertes et dentelle de noisettes" (Saint-Jacques shellfish roasted on one side with green apple sauce and nuts). A very classic and elegant appearance, a clever and incisive preparation. It's explosive, it's good and the cooking times are appropriate. 15,5/20. Confirmed seaside ambitions with my "millefeuille de loup, pousses de soja et petits légumes, vinaigrette tiède aux pistaches" (sea perch millefeuille, soya sprouts and vegetables, warm vinegar with pistachio nuts). I bet you've never tasted that! It goes straight to the point and is subtle at the same time... and generous! Definitely the opposite to hazy, tasty! 15,5/20! If you are expecting chocolate mousse or industrial made floating island on the dessert shelf, you're

going to have to try elsewhere! Here is my "soufflé glacé aux pommes vertes accompagné de sa pomme au sirop épicé" (iced green apple soufflé and apple with spiced syrup). It has a heart-warming look except that it is round. Just enough sugar, gay, fresh, I thoroughly enjoy it, 15/20. It took Roberto Agresta a full year to get to cruise speed with this clever cooking. Except that he, who is a perfectionist-chef under his smiling, good-natured attitude, seems to think that he is far from being at of high enough standard. But can you tell me something? Hasn't a very estimable table been born! That's what I thought!

Chef : Roberto Agresta
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 18/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

5 boulevard du grand chemin
83780 - Flayosc
Phone : 04.94.70.45.85 et - Fax : 04.94.50.27.69

FORCALQUEIRET

La Marmite Gourmande

ΨΨ_{1/2}

This is a very good "traditional restaurant". Beware! You have to be extremely careful not to be mistaken! In provence, "tradition" mainly means taking the customer for a ride, rather than being honest! Everyone has their own translation of "tradition"! Ours in the BâO is to denounce impostors! Right! Doing "good" is not all that easy. Combining ambition and a craftsmen's zone, however modest, that too is complicated. Proper table cloths and curtains, patio with pretty greenery, and especially my dears, a chef who has a certain talent despite his young age (21). Not unknown, but a lot more feminine, Valérie Wauquiez jumped into "la marmite de Jackie" and has taken over. The locals (and the others) have certainly gained in this change, you can tell me what you think. The "croustillade d'escargots" to start off, you'll laugh, real salad leaves, as healthy as the ones you see on the TV or in Uncle Bob's back garden in Essex, a few chicory leaves and tomatoes to decorate the plate, and then, crumbed snails in a brique leaf with persillade. The dish is in good shape and I relish these sort of well made nem: 14,5/20! To follow in this generous register, "cuisse de canard confite en provenance du Sud-Ouest". The poultry is nearly second best whilst the garnishing does it all! Green beans, a little rice with a knob of butter, and green salad. Impeccable! 14,5/20! This dessert may be industrial, but the chef presents it elegantly "macaron framboise et crumble aux pommes", very pretty, 14,5/20! Ok, so it does less for my diet than a cure would, but when it's good, you feel in such a better mood! So please! Don't miss the way in to the ZAC Fontaites, ask Mike to take you on his bike, or just hike to this place I like, and step into Valérie's place. This woman gives a lot of hope to human nature!... And her kitchen too!

Chef : Loïc Teurkia
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.
Full menu. Groups up to 65. Smokers and

non-smokers dining rooms. Air conditioning. Patio and enclosed garden. Handicapped access. Easy parking. Closed Sunday evening and Wednesday.
ZAC Les Fontaites (sur la D43 entre Brignoles et Rocbaron)
83136 - Forcalqueiret
Phone : 04.94.69.54.67

La Marmite Gourmande

Ψ

Once up and going again this affair has deflated like a balloon! Valérie Wauquiez has abandoned us, has gone. I feel sad when I think of the regulars here, all alone with the new proprietor. Because the new boss doesn't even say hello to me. Never mind. But to have to see someone frequently who doesn't say hello would calm anyone's hunger. After having spent a while in the dining room, he now cooks; this shouldn't stop him being polite, even if he does simply drop in every now and again. Even Mauricette with her character would say hello to her worst enemy! Well maybe not all of the time! Unluckily, the dishes are a failure too! Intelligently, some recipes have been kept. I'm off with the menu and start with "brochettes de crevettes décortiquées flambées au cognac". I can just smell the brandy but can't miss the cooking fat. With a sort of coloured mayonnaise I have my fill of lipids. And with the vinaigrette drowning the green salad, it's a bit repetitive. The prawns are crisp which is a good point and allows the mark to reach 12/20. The dish is "magret de canard dégraissé et rôti au four, servi avec une sauce au foie gras" (roast de-fatted duck breast served with foie gras sauce) it is in fact a slice of cold foie gras terrine hidden beneath an avalanche of cream. Beneath that are 5 slices of duck breast. The garnishing tries to compensate for lack of talent: polenta, potato, rice and a sort of runny ratatouille that mixes with the cream. There's maybe some good will, but three types of carbohydrates on the same plate. If that isn't amateurism then it is certainly bad taste. 10/20. It is with little hope that I listen to the waitress whilst she lists out dozens of desserts. Option "crème brûlée" and ... a good surprise! It's fine! 14,5/20! Either an accident or sub contract, who knows. The attendance is shaky but friendly. My menu costs 21 €. It makes deception an expensive pass time. But the waitress gets in a muddle and charges me the cost of a cheaper menu: 17 €. But even then it's not a bargain.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

ZAC Les Fontaites (sur la D43 entre Brignoles et Rocbaron)
83136 - Forcalqueiret
Phone : 04.94.69.54.67

FRÉJUS

L'abri-cotier

ΨΨ_{1/2}

It's busy during the week for those who want to regale with the daily formulas, nicely prepared dishes and fashionable recipes. At the end of

October: early in the week and things are moving fast at the Latriglia's place even if the port is already pre-hibernating, the sails are down and the motors put away. Lots of people on the pretty covered patio that is heated and carpeted. The regulars are sat with the lucky who saw the light and decided to be adventurous, because you would have to be to want to hazard coming around here when it's time to be hungry! Menu at 18 € for your servant with a "terriner de foie gras et sa confiture d'oignons" (foie gras terrine and onion conserve). Note that foie gras in a menu at 18 € facing the masts, is not common on the coast, or else you're in Croatia. Garnished with a mixed green salad on a charming little white rectangular plate. 14/20. You know (maybe) Dominique Latriglia's sauces of which only he knows the secret. Sauces often have secrets. The one that is with my "queue de lotte sauce poivre" (anglerfish and pepper sauce) is in grand form! It isn't shy, it leads the pre-cut and perfectly cooked fish towards the best. A 14,5/20. In restaurants the dessert menus often make the industrials happier than the customers. At the same time, the "homemade" is not the guarantee of nirvana. With Dominique at the stoves, the desserts are often homemade and are often very good. It's not enough to have qualified from l'Ecole Hôtelière de Nice (76-78) to put nice tarts together, the panacotta, and everything else. All polished up for you. Except the ice-creams of course which aren't polished but frozen. What then? The dessert? I opted for a great "tarte tatin" (upside-down apple tart), the right apples, and pastry. 15/20. On weekday lunchtimes you can afford to rush, but at the week-end, take your time. It is cuisine often prepared at the last minute, so don't play the "Mc Do haven't got time" act. The attendance is busy too, but Christine Latriglia always finds a moment to slip in a kind word. Jump then! It's clean, tasty, you're not charged for the view, and you can't get bored with manners!

Chef : Dominique Latriglia
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

Bleu Marine B
quai Marc Antoine
83600 - Fréjus
Phone : 04.94.51.11.33

Brasserie Des Galoubets



A brasserie with menus at 24 €, 36 € and 45 € must have a lot to say in the plate, with or without a sea view. When the cuisine is not quite what you expect, material table cloths and napkins can't account for such prices. Maybe the proprietor's mortgage does, but is it up to the customer to pay? Intermediate menu at 36 € Intermediate that rhymes with nonplussed, but not with good sense. "Assiette des Galoubets" with a mixed green salad, some ham, bits of tomato and a few foie gras petals that finally seem to have come from a terrine that isn't bad. An assembled dish that is a little light, we hope that what follows will bring the mark up. 11/20. What follows is "dos de loup à l'unilatéral, sauce légèrement safranée" (unilateral back of sea

perch with a slightly saffron sauce). I naively expected a real back, finely fried and just seized, simply laid on an only just looked into garnishing, a circular deco for example. It will be like plaster. No back but simple fillets, grilled and not over fresh, far from it. Portions of fish married with a sad risotto. These two are in apnea under a sea of very saffrony cream, one could say a mountain of cream if it wasn't liquid! The chef must have thought that it was lacking in fat as he added a ladle of olive oil! I swear! You can see the stain on the cream! What's more is the plate is cold and the sauce is coagulating! 9/20! On the other hand my lovelies, the "tarte fine aux pommes flambée au Calvados" (fine apple tart flamed with Calvados) is a real monument. It is even this that saves the place from getting a 0! De-li-cious! 15,5/20! I avoided the coffee priced at 2,90 € I have given my reason to this in the phrase before last. It's not the 36 € (236 francs!) that bring you down, but the quality/price factor. Cuisine that has nothing to do with its prices! It would have been pleasing to have been pleased in this pretty address in Port-Fréjus.

Chef : Ah bon?
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16,5/20. Bread = 14/20.

Place des Galoubets
83600 - Fréjus
Phone : 04.94.17.11.66

El Patio



Heyyyyy! But it's getting late! Jump to it! Buffet stop! Either this one or another... Ordinary but nice deco, pretty furniture, wrought iron chairs, the same goes for the benches, no, really sweet. Lots of happy regulars, the boss jokes with them and chats with everyone, does a bit of back slapping and says nice things: a nice family atmosphere. No surprises from the kitchen. The menu lines up tapas, grills, prawns. Or salad meals. Nothing more than the very classical, I mean "common". Therefore there won't be a revolution at "El Patio". The dish of the day is so unexciting that I go as far as opting for a "salade de chèvre chaud" (hot goat's cheese salad). It acts as a main course. What else to say except that it is "log made goat's cheese", neither good nor bad. Out of season bland tomatoes, but the cured ham is good. This is average, ordinary served with all sauces. It's classical; many dishes in the area are the same. 11/20. The attendance plays the game with little illusions and is laid back. You can easily imagine the place being busy with youngsters who are searching for a place to hang out, a meeting place for friends to have an evening meal or drink a cocktail. I can't even be bothered to search through all of my restaurant bills to tell you how much I paid, it just goes to show.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

719 boulevard de la mer
83600 - Fréjus
Phone : 04.94.17.06.25

Brasserie Et Hotel Du Théâtre



In Fréjus, there are several options: the pretty village, the bunker Port-Fréjus, the industrial area. Eventually the trunk roads leading there, like the boulevard that goes along the sea front and then heads for Saint-Raphaël. It is here with Mauricette that we decide to stop. Despite an un-inviting shop front. It looks like the kind of fast food place for lonely reps, for people who are busy and the mad time watchers. All of this remains purely a personal feeling and it's true that the deco doesn't always mean much. What interests us at the BâO is the cooking. Right? Didn't you know that? We have to make quite an effort to distinguish the young lady, at the back, in the dark dining room. We're pleased to see she's friendly. As if to please us, she sits us on a tiny patio, which is frankly sad. Plastic tables and chairs, paper napkins: it's far from being the ideal context for asking Mauricette to marry me. Not such a bad thing. Nor the kind of place to perk her spirits up whilst asking her to get a nose job! So! We choose the formula at 12,50 € which is up on the blackboard, the details of which are given to us orally. A "salade, emmental, jambon, tomate" (salad, cheese, ham, tomato). Nothing very original, ready made vinaigrette, but the salad is good, fresh, but lacks interest, let's say 10/20 and not be difficult. To follow: "côte de porc" (pork chops) with French fries. Taste is cruelly missing and it is excessively cooked. It is enough to make me break the few teeth that I had left. We chew, and chew? As if to compensate for cuisine deficiency, the portion is generous. Totally un-interesting and 8/20. Tired by so much mediocrity, we join as a single man to avoid dessert which should have been "crêpe au chocolat" (chocolate pancake) and ask the sweet waitress for the bill. There's no scandal with the bill! But it makes you think that "low price" means in fact "lack of taste" and "no care". We know chefs who are capable of doing their best with little! It takes a lot of goodwill to take the job on! The BâO is full of small "cheap" places. But restaurants that delete your want to go out for a meal, no thank-you!

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 9/20. Bread = 13/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

126 boulevard de la Mer
83600 - Fréjus
Phone : 04.94.51.30.49

GASSIN

La Verdoyante



Today's colour is grey when talking about either the weather or the atmosphere in la Croix-Valmer. And Mauricette can't make her mind up! Where to have lunch? She who was named "lynx eyes" when she was young all that time ago and before she became equipped with her bottle bottom glasses that turn her looks into a road side advert: "La Verdoyante". After going round about, we climb to the promised inn. The panorama is worth it: view over the Saint-Tropez golf. Mauricette is silly enough to say: "we can't

see the stars so it's a good thing I'm here!". A pleasant welcome from a nice lady makes us confident. There are people everywhere but the reception is not hurried. It's amazingly busy for a Thursday out of season lunchtime. A first menu at 27 € and two "menu-carte" at 39 € and 49 €. Wow. The carte is quite dissuasive! Starters at an average of 18 € dishes at 24 €. With a feeling of cowardice we go for the menu "sarment" at 39 €. We begin in mixed fashion! Because although Mauricettes' "marbré de foie gras aux abricots et pistaches" (foie gras with apricot and pistachio nuts) is not lacking character (14,5/20) despite the vulgar dried apricot on top of the foie gras, my "tarte fine aux légumes de saison et croustillant de chèvre chaud" (fine seasonal vegetable tart and crisp goats' cheese) is bland and incongruous. The tart is a bit... tart; it's more like a dried, cold vol-au-vent with bland tinned vegetables, and tasteless peppers and onions. I remind the forgetful that this starter costs 18 € from the carte! 9/20. Our good humour fades slightly as we have to add a supplement of 7 € for the "escalope de foie gras aux figues et mesclun du jardin" (foie gras with figs and mixed salad from the garden) even if it is delicious and generous! Three slices including one thicker one which is cooked well, over done for the thinner slices. 15/20! Mauricette licks her fingers with her "épaule d'agneau confite à la menthe et cumin, caponata d'aubergine" (crystallised lamb shoulder with mint and caraway seeds, aubergine caponata). Between two gurgles of pleasure, she allows me to taste it: the quality of the meat is undeniable, good adjusted cooking. 15/20. Two "crème brûlée aux figues" to conclude, too cold to gain entire satisfaction, shame. 13/20. The house has been open for 35 years, their children took it over five years ago. Mixed up cuisine, irregular with the prices which head in the wrong direction. The coffee costs 3 € (bang), you pay for the view. The intrepid reporter from Nice-Matin; Gantié, the Saint-Tropez table version of Indiana Jones seemed satisfied as he wrote in his yearly critic: "a simple and good table and we need nothing more". It makes you wonder whether Gantié pays for his meals.

Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 15/20.

**866 Chemin de Coste Brigade
83580 - Gassin
Phone : 04.94.56.16.23**

HYERES

Le Poisson Rouge



This "gold fish" isn't swimming in ordinary waters, the ordinary being the usual predisposition that restaurants have of lowering their guard whenever boat masts come anywhere near. Here everything is regulated, measured. No or little improvisation in the plate, maybe only the attendance could trail slightly behind on the success track despite the obvious good will of the youngsters doing the attendance. The patio is chock-a-block, seats are expensive. It's just that everyone wants to be in this fish bowl to spend time with the "poisson rouge". Booking will help you avoid disappointment or being snubbed! Otherwise it will be the dining room which isn't

bad at all! Some nasty tongued people will say that the lady with the green hat at the "gold fish" is "two" fishy for words, but it is true that here, fish is on the menu. But also "foie gras" just like Mauricette who is always prepared to provoke. She enjoys it, especially seeing as the plate is colourful and attractive. 15/20. She follows with a "steak d'espardon, polenta, panaché de légumes à l'italienne" (sword fish steak, polenta, mixed Italian style vegetables) full of life and scent. Nice fish as cooked precisely. 15/20. On my side, I play with a salad, but a pretty salad called "Le Piémontais" with Italian raw smoked ham, parmesan cheese, green salad, balsamic vinegar and nut oil. 14,5/20. My main course joins the sea-side context with a "panaché de poissons à la plancha, riz basmati at assortiments de petits légumes" (mixed fish à la plancha, basmati rice and assortment of small vegetables). Nice work, playing with colour and scent. The pretty crockery adds a joyful note, 14,5/20. You'd serve it on the moon, she would be capable of stealing a rocket, Mauricette leapt on the "brousse au miel et crème de marrons à l'ancienne" (yew's milk cheese with honey, and old fashioned horse-chestnut cream). It didn't last long seeing the way she went at it. 15/20. Just like my "gaspacho de fruits du moment" (cold soup with fruit of the moment), generous and greedily a success. A nice time at table in an exceptional environment with view over the Niel port and Porquerolles, we nearly forget man's sad inclination to destroy all that is beautiful.

Chef : Martine et Richard Cordier.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 16/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**Port du Niel
Giens
83400 - Hyeres
Phone : 04.94.58.92.33**

Le Ceinturon



It's true that the Feugier couple work miracles in their place! In the midst of touristic goings-on they go on looking straight ahead. Not too far though, the sea is just there, a stones' throw away. Knowing that there are tons of "concurrent" restaurants around, the best way to be original is to not do the same cookery as the others, and if possible do it well. And more by affinities. "Affinity" could be Christian Atelins' nickname! What a chef! Loyal to the house and born in the Limoges area, this happy man has caught all of the subtleties of Mediterranean cooking and treats us to it. No fabulous names to the dishes or nebulous inspiration in his cuisine, but always solid logic, rhythm and what's most: he steps off the track and does it well! Elegant and with temperament, pretty but with sense: "tatin de sardines marines au basilic, carpaccio de légumes" (upside down sardine tart marinated in basil, vegetable carpaccio). The famous filets are laid on a bed of fresh, worked vegetables. Provence does the rest, olive oil, basil... 15/20. We remain on the Mediterranean with "minute de côtes d'agneau aux épices, tajine de légumes" (lamb chops with spices and vegetable tajine). A fine subtle dish. Chefs often go over the top with spices but here they are finely mastered. Three chops, thyme, a drop of honey, a greedy trip at

15,5/20. This chef certainly knows how to present things. Helped by pretty crockery to look even better, I am brought an "Opéra thé vert "Matcha" pistache" (green tea opera and pistachio). Pleasant and the chocolate ice-cream adds to it, 14,5/20. With its back to the road, the building opens out completely onto a shady garden which will help you enjoy a couple of hours rest. What do you mean? Not enough? Do you want to stay longer? You're in! "Le Ceinturon" is a hotel too!

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**144 boulevard du Front de Mer, l'Aiguade.
83400 - Hyeres
Phone : 04.94.66.33.63 - Fax : 04.94.66.32.99**

Stella Maris



Seeing the proximity of the water, here I am a cousin to Captain Nemo. I bet you've never dared try that one... As if to reaffirm the proximity of the big blue, Patrick Kientzler shows off his fish of the day, at the entrance to the dining room. Today, it is an 8kg grouper fish which looks you straight in the eye in the same way that Mauricette would look at you first thing in the morning, with her green hat askew at the end of well celebrated wedding. Anyway! Today, I was unfaithful to the boss's fetish cooking, the one that is carried along with laughs, stories and good wine, bistrot cooking and loyal friends: "tête de veau sauce gribiche" (calf's head in sauce), "pied de porc pané tiède" (warm pork legs in breadcrumbs), "escalope de foie gras au vinaigre de cidre" (foie gras steak with cider vinegar), "côte de boeuf" (rib of beef), "Chateaubriand" and "pigeon braisé" (braised pigeon) which I had last year. I put aside this "bawdy" cooking with my "escalope de mérou sauce morilles et citron vert" (grouper fish steak with mushroom and lime sauce. Fresh grouper has become too rare on fishmongers stalls, and even more so in restaurant kitchens. Otherwise it is found frozen; its gustative limits will become evident once you have tried the delicate meat of this fresh fish. Meat which is crisp, the opposite to frogs legs, the taste comes after, short but intense. Beware of the mushrooms: the sauce could seem out of place but it sings a very clever song. A 15/20 seems indicated! I must say a word about the "mise en bouche" that came just before. I know! It doesn't seem right to talk about it now. But I'm not going to start writing all over again! Why should I! Alright, I won't say a word! That'll teach you! Dessert! Dear brethren! A Sea view! At Hyères! Pierre! A "café gourmand" (greedy coffee) deliciously composed with coffee. But with three pretty-sweet deserts which change following the sitting. 14,5/20. The attendance carried out by Isabelle and Vanessa Kientzler is very good, nearly family like with the numerous regulars and wise with the new customers. The attendance doesn't have time to appreciate the horizon: they are too busy! A place full of natural charm which isn't expected when you look at the shop-front. But aren't the best surprises the unexpected ones? Oh bother! Have I said too much?

**Chef : Patrick Kientzler
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting**

=16/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 15/20.

3609 route de l'Almanarre
83400 - Hyères
Phone : 04.94.57.63.50

La Belle Epoque

ΨΨ_{1/2}

When I mentioned "la Belle Epoque" to the decrepit Mauricette, it brought back memories to her. She doesn't remember which ones, but it makes no difference. It's her age. But I saw her dull eyes light up like headlamps when I suggested we went there. The dining room is still as charming as is the pretty, colourful terrace, both run by Corinne Dalmasso. She goes to lengths to make her interior as smiley as herself. The other aspect of her is her cookery, which for a restaurant is not insignificant. In this place where he arrived quite so, Bruno Menanteau was born in Châtelleraut, and as a rhyme for the BâO, that's great. But for the taste-buds also. This chef has rapidly learnt the subtleties of Mediterranean cooking thanks to fortunate experience in places in St-Tropez and Bandol. With the lady with the green hat, we in turn have quickly learnt these subtleties as well. A mixture of tons of influences served in pretty dishes and even prettier crockery. The "cigares de camembert au pistou, cresson et tapenade" (camembert, basil and garlic cigars with cress and tapenade) are generous! I raise my hat to the quality of the vegetables, a small grocer up the street I think. 14,5/20! Me, "biscuit chaud de saumon fumé au corail d'oursin et asperges verts" (hot smoked salmon biscuit with sea urchin coral and green asparagus). Different from last year, smooth and has character, very pretty, and 15/20. A well applied sauce and here comes a dish of "gnocchi au chèvre et Roquefort" (goat's cheese and Roquefort gnocchi) for Mauricette, and could be shown off in cookery schools. Instead of teaching apprentices, which brand of packet to open, they would make customers happy with real sauces. A severe 14,5/20. As is my "cassolette de la mer au fenouil frais, beurre blanc safrané" (seafood with fresh fennel, white butter with saffron) which seems well prepared, the cooking times are right, which is not always the case. Conclusion with "salade de fruits frais" which is dominated by strawberries, noted 14/20. Here is how to spend a couple of pleasant hours at table: with a couple of restaurant proprietors who are happy doing their job, as if suddenly life was worth living. Remember: it was "la Belle Epoque"...

Chef : Bruno Menanteau
Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

14 rue de Limans
83400 - Hyères
Phone : 04.94.28.69.82 et 06.21.30.52.56

Le Désiré

ΨΨ_{1/2}

How do you show real devotion for food, that you enjoy the contact with people, that you want to please others in your home and capitalize your

know-how as a waiter? You set up a restaurant of course! A simple idea no? Well yes, but you have to take that step, smash the piggy-bank, eventually stir up a strategy with the bank manager. And then: you're off! Several (big) strokes of a paintbrush later... Here is the story of Michael Pinoncely, pro to service and prince to receiving people. He knows only too well that "Le Désiré" is not Ducass's Louis XV. But with a little care of the dish, joyful presentation and good-will, mountains can be moved, well I actually mean customers, the darn customers that count their pennies and take no nonsense. My starter is not really seasonal (it's the summer) but is there a season for good? A "camembert au four et sa sauce rougail". For original, this is original! A whole cheese! Not a half portion! Hollowed out and stuffed with the garlic preparation, tomato, pimento! Who wants a spoon? I lick my lips! 14,5/20! The following is reasonable and native. Well maybe. My "duo de poissons sauce aux agrumes accompagné de germes de blé" (fish duo with citrus fruit garnished with wheat) is unusual. The red mullet and cod filets are cooked properly. It's quite a miracle seeing the "botch up-cook" we usually come across. And no tomatoes, no rice, just a big portion of cooked wheat and a worked sauce that motivates the fish. 14,5/20. I skipped dessert and no doubt shouldn't have... On weekday lunchtimes, prices flirt with the social register: formula at 8,90 € My little finger tells me that the fish soup is worth a try. Just watch this! Michael Pinoncely and Christophe Berger have rolled their sleeves up, the place is already gaining a name. It's a good thing. Simple, careful cuisine carried out by a young chef who avoids commonplace cooking. And mainly, a big heart and tons of humanity!

Chef : Steve Marhem
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

13 rue Crivelli (proche du Casino des Palmiers)
83400 - Hyères
Phone : 04.94.65.21.46

Le Mary Jo

00

Let's set the decor: on the edge of the road, the walls without a doubt deserve a coat of paint, a certain moody feeling but "haven't we seen fire gush out of the old volcano that we thought was dead" (extract from a song written by Jacques Brel: Ne me quitte pas)? Tables, pink cloths, paper napkins. The daring guinea pig hopes that the sad appearance is hiding a nice surprise, a bit of pleasure. I re-centre my ambition and study the long menu with its mussels, pasta, fish at un-cheap restaurant prices... Lacking inspiration and not really helped by the un-engaging propositions, a sceptical Mauricette goes for the "moules-frites" (mussels and chips). As soon as they arrive on the table, the lady with the green hat and big mouth says "these mussels are nearly my age!". That's telling you. Very prudently she leaves the miserable dish and concentrates on her greasy but dry chips. 5/20. My "salade de chèvre chaud" (hot goat's cheese salad) is conform. A proverb says "if mussels and chips aren't a good dish then hot goats cheese salad isn't worth the ballade" is right again. I discover

the eternal log of industrial insipid cheese, and vinaigrette with no taste and surely ready made. Surrounding: some poor mushrooms and tasteless tomatoes, sad. We think that you have to purposely want to do badly with such simple ingredients. Mark you at 11 € a go, at least someone is satisfied: the proprietor. 8/20. Two coffees, and we run away from this sad place that we don't doubt, will contribute in giving tourists an urge to visit Brittany.

Chef : Who knows..!
Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 11/20. Setting = 7/20. Bread = 13/20. Coffee = 13/20.

Allée du Pousset
Route de Giens
83400 - Hyères
Phone : 04.94.58.20.91

La Coupole

Ψ

This famous address in Hyères will have known both highs and lows. Today we are in between, and the in between is far from satisfactory. "It's better than less good, but insufficient in comparison to if it was better" as Lapalisse would say! One has to recognize the complexity that implies serving so many meals in one single sitting. Some comparable structures play this game better, the French capital is full of them and in this area, some even have benediction. Menu at 19,50 € with a "salade de chèvre au parfum de garrigues" (goat's cheese salad with garrigue flavours). For once, I am not given the log sort from LIDL on toast. The cheese is correct! Well done for that. But the vinaigrette is having trouble making the salad leaves and the floury tomato quarters vibrate. Well: at least one, because I only tasted one! 12/20. What follows should be less risky "pavé de rumsteck au poivre" (rump steak with pepper) very tender and cooked the way I asked, but served with warm-ish fries, a tomate provençale which is in the norm and de-frosted badly worked green beans, sprinkled with bits of garlic in pretence. We painfully get to 12/20 thanks to the meat and its sauce which is served on the side. To escape this place quickly, especially due to the noise in the dining room which is full and could be compared to a 1980s disco, I finally opt for a "café gourmand" (greedy coffee). Four pretty mini deserts, crème brûlée, floating island, opera chocolate and a sort of madeleine. 14/20. The coffee is too long when I had asked for it to be strong. One can't be cross with the waiters who act as if in a factory, or the person responsible for serving aperitifs only to the regulars. Each individual has his role to play. The customers role, which is slightly curious, is to try to understand what could be his interest in spending 19,50 € for a menu which is soporific, especially as the benches are comfortable. The 1930s deco is full of charm.

Welcome = 13/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 12/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

2 rue Léon Gautier
83400 - Hyères
Phone : 04.94.12.88.00

L'anecdote

ΨΨΨ

These people are incredible. I'm going to be heavily pedagogical. After having propelled his new address into the top 10 of this palm tree city, Bruno Hernandez (the 25 year old brother) went to rest in his "Vatel" in Solliès-Pont. Which left Nathalie Hernandez (the 30 year old sister) and Lionel Hernandez (a 19 year old brother) to run "L'anecdote". On re-entering the place, I'm all a-tremble. I won't learn until the end that Lionel didn't get his talent out of a Christmas cracker. I must note that he was the second pair of eyes at "Vatel" whilst helping his brother Bruno. But even so. It is difficult to keep a kitchen going, especially in a passionate family context. And then, at the very end, just as the coffee is going past my Adams apple, just before the bill arrives, there will be no question about my judgment: excellent from beginning to end! I leave no chances to the chef with my choices! To start with "toast de foie gras maison, confiture de Mirabelle" (homemade foie gras on toast, Mirabelle-plum jam). The foie is at room temperature, the plate is out of the ordinary with research into colour and efficiency for the taste-buds. I have always preferred classic bread to toasted sliced loaf with foie gras, but this is worth it and 15/20! Second trap for the chef with "aile de raie meunière" (ray fish miller style). With this type of fish it's either all or nothing. Here; it is all. A nice thick slice, true "miller" style with butter! No olive oil! Did you know that vain chefs have tried to prove to me that in Provence "meunière" is made with olive oil? And why not "soupe au pistou" (basil and garlic soup) with lentils! A bouillabaisse with sardines! So! The garnishing paints a pretty picture and reality forces me to hand out 15/20 for this dish. The "gratin de fruits frais en sabayon" (fresh fruit zabiglioni) is super. Pretty, yes, but succulent too. The "zabiglioni" is thick, creamy and takes the original recipe off track! Green apple liqueur (Manzana) used with parsimony replaces the Champagne! Which means that here is a noisy 15,5/20! After having wandered through a not always crystal clear prose, maybe you haven't really caught on! This mastered cooking, one of the best in town, is carried out by a 19 year old young man. Good. They are clever in this family. Mauricette was wrong in not coming! But right even so: she would really have felt old! So: under such conditions, restaurant futures are glorious!

Chef : Lionel Hernandez

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 18/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

1 avenue Aristide Briand

83400 - Hyères

Phone : 04.94.65.35.65 et 06.61.22.23.88

La Baleine

ΨΨΨ

What is the inside of the whale's tummy like? Take the person asking the question by the hand and take him to the Giuliano family's restaurant. Without equalling the Natural History Museum, he will appreciate without a doubt the elegance of the situation. But so that the questioner definitely remembers this moment, have one of

these meals that he will remember with him! Limpid and seriousness from beginning to end! Seeing the touristy context of the port, the teasing onlookers may comment the situation as being ambitious! It's just that the dishes have thought about the way that they can please you best, which is out of the ordinary. To start with a menu at 26,50 € with no alternative, but which changes every day. The menu has personality, and is made to bring the greed to better worlds. Classical recipes doped with a strong Mediterranean influence (pimento, spice) and go alongside dishes that usually can be found in northern countries. Tantaliser followed by "foie de veau poêlée nature, déglacé au vinaigre de vin" (fried veal liver with red wine vinegar). You have to be strict with this kind of product! And this chef has the sense of presentation... and avoids ruining any hope that the old taste buds may have! Yes, for the photo! Always, for the taste! 15/20! Tablecloths and napkins in thick white cotton, even on the terrace, implied and complementary staff run by Chantal Giuliano, here is an establishment that plays at being a luxurious Brasserie. Such a level of quality facing boat masts is far from being the usual stereotype when the sea rings on the doorbell. A determined address.

Chef : Sylvain Dechelle

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16,5/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 18/20.

Port Saint-Pierre

83400 - Hyères

Phone : 04.94.57.59.21

La Brasserie des Iles

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

We from the BâO still come here: we came at least once every year and put our noses and pleasure into the Giuliano family's dishes, we then continued from one address to the next. But if having been forced to close down for a whole year put the grain of sand into our habits, it is those belonging to the local greedy orphan that were shaken. He was wandering along lonely along the port, abandoned. But Mr Giuliano and his two children, Chantal and Fabrice, are solid! After an admirable and Celeste facelift (you can see the sky!) "Les îles" are back! The spirit remains, and although the place is strictly run by a professional clock, nothing parasites the customer's pleasure. Still loyal at his post: Cyrille Farjon. In this nice collection of dishes, the chef still inspires himself as much from far away flavours! He doesn't hesitate in doing classical recipes as well! Which means that we go from: "nouilles japonaise au foie gras de canard, jus de soja et marrons" (Japanese noodles with foie gras, soy sauce and horse chestnuts) to "ris de veau à la crème et aux morilles" (calf's sweetbread, cream and moral mushrooms). A big split that can only be allowed by good places, especially at this level. My natural curiosity is totally satisfied with the "filet de thon laqué, graines de sesame et fenouil cru citronné" (Pekinese tuna, sesame seeds and raw lemon fennel). Disarmingly pure, preciseness that reveals no effort. The chopped, well worked crisp-cold fennel, the supple softness of the red tuna: it's perfect and it even better as worth: 15,5/20. To be frank, I was not expecting to be

surprised by the "millefeuille aux fraises" (strawberry millefeuille). Quite often for chefs, the dessert menu is "what on earth can I do?". But even if this millefeuille is not academic, it is frankly good, not too sugary and I get whipped cream on my moustache! I gobble it down. 15/20. An incredible restaurant of rare class, which on the contrary to the majority of restaurants who confuse professionalism and business in common dishes, is full of taste. A bright house, and not only thanks to the glass veranda, if you see what I mean!

Chef : Cyrille Farjon

Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 18/20. Setting = 18/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 18/20.

Port Saint-Pierre

83400 - Hyères

Phone : 04.94.57.49.76

La Terrasse

ΨΨ_{1/2}

It's frankly good and what's more, in the dining room we meet a restaurant owner who we had met in other latitudes! The only snag about this recent address facing the town hall is that you don't really know which seat to sit on. The customers get in a fix here because it is only open in the daytime, six days a week non-stop. Restaurant? Tea room? And the menu is as short as one of Mauricette's pollen stricken sneezes. Three starters, three dishes, but a few more desserts. For a good reason; the boss is a "pâtissier". It would be difficult to ignore this as the blackboard at the entrance spreads the fact by saying "Michelin guide star for the chef pâtissier". Once at your seat, the waitress adds a bit, as if the chef had won a Nobel prize! It must be frightening to have to hang on to a CV as an argument, to excite curiosity. It's a shame as this chef who also tries his hand at "savoury" is good and doesn't need violins. The lady with the green hat starts off with a "poulet citron" (lemon chicken), a supreme with a short, slightly acid sauce, a kebab of coloured fruits, an exceptional "gratin dauphinois" served apart. But the whole thing is ruined by a mountain of green salad that covers two thirds of the rectangular plate. 11,50 € and 14/20. I flirt with 100 francs (14,50 €) and my "St-Jacques et crevettes poêlées" (fried St-Jacques shellfish and prawns). I have the same garnishing as Mauricette. Great products, St-Jacques and prawns, three of each which are cooked perfectly, but that isn't enough for the price. The sauce dribbles away under the heaps of salad. 14,5/20. To follow is a citrus granita, rosé wine or something similar to punctuate the meal, just like that, for the pleasure of it. Nice thought. So? What about the desserts? Super. It's funny! As soon as the chef masters something 100%, the titles become chatterboxes! Two desserts which are often boring elsewhere! An eye boggler: "Tulipe glace vanille au coulis de fruits rouges et sa cage en sucre" (tulip with vanilla ice-cream and red fruit sauce, sugar cage) which my green hat wearing sugar addict stamped with 14,5/20. My classic and formal "tarte aux pommes fine, glace vanille, caramel chaud" (fine apple tart, vanilla ice-cream, hot caramel) academic to the last bit except for the caramel with a scent and taste of ginger that joyfully lead you astray from the historical

recipe. Bravo, 15,5/20. The bread which has been cut too early is dry in its basket. The coffee "only" costs 1,5 € A good place but a false restaurant.

Chef : Eric Hoenen

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 12/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

21 avenue Joseph Clotis

83400 - Hyères

Phone : 04.94.65.10.09

El Momento

0

This address was a butchers' for over 40 years. Now, the shop-front announces tea rooms but also "restaurant". Which is a slight problem as far as definition is concerned. Why not hairdresser and welder? It's crazy! The problem is that you don't know the identity borrowers until afterwards, after having dipped your moustache into the soup. So you go in to cancel any wrong ideas and sad certitudes, rather like you would go to the cinema: how do you know whether a film is good or not unless you see it? The lady boss is all smiles, very friendly and presumptuously slips in "we opened here because no-one else does this kind of cooking". I'm very sorry: loads of them do the same thing! And it's often more expensive too! It gives this address a good mark along with the smiley welcome! A plastic bottle of San-Pellegrino! And the dish of the day "poulet thai" (Thai chicken). At 10,50 € what are the risks? To get this sort of dish to start with! The dish is spacious, the salads' vinaigrette dribbles onto the chicken whose sauce dribbles onto the salad. A sad combination especially as the ratatouille sauce also dribbles onto the salad and the chicken. A devilish trio that surrounds the "Thai" rice which itself is sauce-less. This fashion of complete meals on one plate is becoming a bit of a pain. At least if everything was separate, punctuated, designed. But no, this is more a well organised paddling pond. Let's get to the point and the chicken: no doubt tinned! And having suffered the beast: crystallised. The sauce is monochord like a useless song. 10/20 for the effort. I asked for a "moelleux au chocolat" at 3,50 € and was expecting something mediocre and sub-contract. No way! A chocolate cake that is bland and burnt on top, clearly homemade and smothered in custard from a carton. And two squirts of whipped cream. Whipped cream from a bottle and carton custard: the dessert duo is lacking imagination! 9/20. The kitchens are underground, and the micro-wave is having a field day! A ding day! It sounds like Easter! Re-heated and mixed up "cuisine" that has nothing to do in the "restaurant" category! Like so many others!

Chef : Who knows..!

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 13/20.

11 rue Massillon

83400 - Hyères

Phone : 06.88.21.36.62

Le Wine

0

The least that can be said is that any form of welcome is absent. Only just across the threshold and you already feel abandoned. There are two or three people around but you'd have to wrestle a "hello" out of them! A welcoming notion from polar parts. The air conditioning isn't even on, it is very hot outside... and inside! The oven isn't clean and the extractor fan is lacking, in any case it smells smoky. A shame in such a pretty establishment, big bar, salon, deco lounge. And the music is too loud, you're going to say that I'm picky. It's just that I like music too much to leave it to lifts and establishments that act youngish. So! The wine menu is well laid out in its' plastic folder, but the food pages are all muddled up! It's already difficult to understand, the menu is a really mix! Oh, right! I get it! It's up to the customers to make an effort! Say hello! Put the menu back into order! Get up to ask for bread! Get up to ask for the bill! Amazing! Slightly disorientated, I opt for simplicity with the daily formula. And choose an "entrecote aux cèpes" (steak with cep mushrooms) to limit any risk. A pretty well planned plate, a potato sliced chip style, soggy with vegetable oil of one sort or another, a good cold ratatouille but it is swimming in oil and the meat, which is correct. The sauce is not lacking mushrooms. But they are a little hard. They are de-hydrated ones that have hastily been re-hydrated. 12/20. Trauma happens when you are least expecting it. The "café gourmand" (greedy coffee) that I choose to end my meal, finally finishes burying any pleasure that I had left. The coffee is very good, but the greedy bit is bad. Two glasses (tequila glasses) with a brown melon puree that demoralises me and a sort of botched milk-shake with raspberries or something. Fashionable and only just tasted. When you feel like sticking your teeth into something you are given two liquids, three if you include the coffee. But two frankly bad ones! 5/20. Immodest and far from reality.

Chef : Who knows..!

Welcome = 8/20. Attendance = 10/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

2 avenue Ambroise Thomas

83400 - Hyères

L'Aqua Resto

ΨΨΨ

We may well be in Hyères, we are far from the post card view. Despite the name, there is no need to bring your flippers and snorkel to eat here! But you can come straight from the centre by foot! The avenue that leads away from Le Lavandou... If there is sand... it is in the bottom of the aquarium that is in the middle of the big dining room which is of modern inspiration with a lounge-bar corner. To be truthful, the lady with the green hat and I scratch our bald patches and wonder whether or not this is going to be a classic trap. Mauricette, the young old maid, wrinkles her snout straight away. It lasts until her "bavette de boeuf grille, sauce au foie gras, gratin dauphinois et légumes verts" (grilled beef steak, foie gras sauce, potato gratin and green vegetables) arrives. It's all in the bag as far as description goes except for what the lady with the green hat is thinking, hang on, it's coming,

it's not easy to chew at her age. Here. Very tender meat (red for this type of steak) and well made sauce on a pretty plate. The strong point being the fresh well worked vegetables prepared by the young chef (28 years old). Succulent peas, everybody, all children should be allowed to eat these. 15/20 for the dish. My "darne de cabillaud poêlée au safran, spaghetti de courgettes à l'huile vanillée" (cod steak fried with saffron, courgette spaghetti with vanilla scented oil) is original. Well planned presentation, saffron sauce on one side (good) but the fish is slightly over cooked. 14,5/20 even so. If this is a success, it's not by accident: my dessert! A remarkable "fondant au chocolat et coeur caramel, beurre salé" (sticky chocolate cake with caramel heart, salted butter). The shape and flavour, the crumble crumbs, line of sauce, tasty bits... 15,5/20. Very lively cooking with exotic intonations, absolutely organized and very professional. Thus all is explained. He started out as an apprentice at "Revestel" in La Ciotat (13), then three years in service with the Raimbault brothers at "L'Oasis" in La Napoule (06) and a trip to St-Barthélémy (far away). He did serious "pâtisserie" training and was only 28 at the last count. Even if some details still need to be looked into, Mauricette is going to have to get used to the idea of another good table to add to the forest of restaurants that are brightening up Hyères.

Chef : Luc Rolland

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 15,5/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

44 avenue Alphonse Denis

83400 - Hyères

Phone : 04.94.65.75.72

Les Jardins De Bacchus

ΨΨ

Claire and Jean-Claude Santioni have moved on. The keys belong to a different ring now. Part of the team remains. The second now holds the reins to the kitchen, and the dining room second is now running the cellar. Right. But if they're not careful, the place is going to become second best. When I arrived, I hung around a bit, but to the sound of disco music. What an atmosphere! I must say that I was the first customer. I was also the last this lunchtime. The waiter-sommelier is attached to his function but the young lady with him is a pain. She never says hello. What are we having? Lots of things, a menu at 27 € with no alternative, but it changes every month. A nice announced "Velouté de potimarron" (pumpkin soup) with as bonus a spicy meat samossa. 15/20. For a tantaliser it's a good start. For starter "salade d'automne au magret fumé et écrevisses, pommes Granny, rattes, mélanges de pousses à l'huile de noisettes grillées" (autumn salad with smoked duck breast and crayfish, Granny apples, potatoes, mixed young salad leaves with grilled nut oil). The central salad is a bit limp. I nibble round the plate happily as the crayfish for once aren't rubbery! A bit tight but only three potato rings. More please! How dare you Oliver! 14,5/20. The dish is "bocconcini d'églefin au jambon Serrano, vert de blettes, emmental, légumes et champignons de saison" (haddock rolls with Serrano ham, green blette, emmental cheese, seasonal vegetables and mushrooms).

Research has been made; the kitchens know how to make good food without spending (too) much. Except that a bit of artichoke is bathing in a lobster sauce, the bette are like frozen mashed spinach and the ham is far too salty. Super: the crisp green beans, the only thing to put a little joy into the dish. The kind of dish that costs too much, 13/20. For dessert "parfait glacé aux framboises". The best bit: the "pomme Granny" served on the side. 14/20. Tiny sweets are included in the menu! Well done! It pushes consummation as far as coffee which costs 3,5 €! A funny anecdote: I confided in the waiter that I came from a neighboring town where there had just been a terrible storm. "Yes but here in Hyères we have a micro climate" he slipped in proudly, as if it were thanks to him he looked towards the sky and made himself look taller. All I was left to do was look down in to my soup before Jupiter's certitudes, he's a friend of Bacchus. Not a minute had gone by that a strip of lightening made the lights go out! The sky went black and the skies opened!

Chef : David Carbonnier

Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**32 avenue Gambetta
83400 - Hyères
Phone : 04.94.65.77.63**

Cote Sud

ΨΨ_{1/2}

I'm a little concerned that this dining-room is going to be too small for so many! There's no-one famous behind the stoves though. There isn't even a patio. On the other hand, the absence of a famous name and patio isn't going to stop this well known address (previously "Le Tison d'Or") charming us all the way. What a lovely surprise! It's whilst wandering around the streets of the old town that a neighbouring shop keeper points in the direction of this place and says "that's a good one!". Well done John! Couscous and tajine! We had been waiting for such specialities to appear in Hyères! And not too soon! And freshly cooked, none of your ready to eat sachet stuff! A traditional outstanding cook, Christophe Cicconetti has caught the oriental cuisine virus. It's funny to find couscous and tajine rubbing up against octopus stew, lamb chops with cep mushroom sauce and thyme, or beef stew and homemade ravioli. In my formula at 17,50 € the lamb couscous certainly takes my pleasure on a merry trip! It has all it takes to charm and take care of me! Generous and well prepared, light and tasty gravy, fresh vegetables. The bad restaurants who prepare serial couscous... listen in! I stuff myself up to here! 14,5/20! Whilst we're at it: we're sticking to the oriental side with their quality patisseries! You'll never finish them all unless you haven't just had couscous! 14,5/20! The mint tea is perfect to finish. Congratulations to the chef-waiter for his culinary talents and his convivial spirit! The boss isn't the type to break his back when bowing to you! No fussiness or pretence! But proper tablecloths, wrought iron furniture and an original setting! In the town centre, your napkin ring is waiting for you!

Chef : Christophe Cicconetti

Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**1 rue Gallieni
83400 - Hyères**

Phone : 04.94.35.54.14 et 06.74.52.37.73

LA CADIERE D'AZUR

Le Regain

ΨΨΨ

No flimflams in the recipe, pleasure on the end of a fork. If working with fresh food should be a norm in the kitchen, rare are the stubborn toque wearers who are hostile to all concessions, the negative cold method and goggling tin openers. Here is one! A Chef! And he's not soporific! Classical recipes made to suit the day, ones that don't digress and that go on an original diagonal: that is the creed! As elegant as a site foreman who has just come back from mushroom picking, but is still wearing her green hat as camouflage, Mauricette appreciated the crisp nature and smell of her "roulés de gambas à la feuille de brick et coriandre fraîche" (King prawn rolls with fresh coriander) 15/20. Clever too my "cornets de jambon de Parme farcis à la brandade de morue" (Parma ham cornets stuffed with pounded salt cod), 15/20. The Lady with the green hat and nose in several episodes goes for another seaside taste with her "dos de cabillaud, huile d'olive et gros sel, et sa sauce aux favouilles" (cold, olive oil and salt, and fish sauce). She will search for her sauce for a moment. I have to say that sLa Cadere D'azurhe was regaling since the beginning with her cold, **olive oil and salt spiced up with a "old-fashioned" mustard sauce.** The mustard grains, she thought that they were fish eggs! No! I'm telling tall stories! She really did enjoy it and gave a 15/20. More fish, a "dos de saumon poêlé à l'unilatéral et son écume d'oursins" (back of salmon fried on one side and a sea urchin sauce), and another 15/20! Our desserts "panacotta à la crème de marron, coulis de chocolat" (panacotta cheese with horse chestnut cream and chocolate sauce) and "pot de crème miellée à la lavande et son biscuit provençal" (pot of honey cream with lavender and a Provençal biscuit) roundup our meal. A clever 25-year-old cook behind the stoves who despite his young age collaborates in several nationally "Michelinised" places. And at the attendance Julien Schintu, of the same age, same vision of the job helped out by the charming "Mum" Beatrice in the dining room. The setting is refined without being arrogant, we feel at ease. A "4 seasons" restaurant open all year... but it doesn't do pizzas! A pretty village worthy of Giono and Pagnol, a nice meal. The smile on the customers lips when they come out from "le Regain" is a signature.

Chef : Soufiane Elghazouni

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 18/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

**39 rue Marx Dormoy
83740 - La Cadere D'azur
Phone : 04.94.98.32.68**

Le Petit Jardin De L'hostellerie Berard

0

Bérard territory in La Cadière. It's hard to miss the signs indicating the spa, hotel, restaurant, bistrot and even the hotel car park. Mauricette and I hesitate between the Bérard gastronomic with its Michelin star, and the Bérard bistrot. After reading the prices, Mauricette needs a decompression chamber. So we opt for the cheaper of the two; "le petit jardin". The setting is pretty, wrought iron furniture in an elegant glass veranda which opens out over the vineyard. An open kitchen, Peugeot pepper mill and olive oil spray on the table. The young lady who welcomes us is elsewhere. Only an image I'm afraid. She is not busy: there are four of us in the room. She totally avoids being polite. All the same to her if we hadn't come. Despite her size, Mauricette feels transparent! That shows you! Too bad! She heads for the "menu proposé par Jean-François Bérard" at 35 € For me: a la carte. To start: "salade fraîcheur, trilogie de tomates de la bastide des saveurs et coulis basilic": local and ordinary, tasteless fresh tomatoes. No-one is going to tell me that these fruits come from the Bérard garden. Lack of salt or should I say: seasoning, unshared mediocrity: 8/20. Mauricette is luckier with her "gaspacho "double rich" et son sorbet basilic" which is tastier despite being grossly presented and is far from making her jubilate, 13/20. The September sun is cheeky: it is beating down on the glass and the air conditioning isn't on. Mauricette is having even hotter flushes than usual, this is Vesuvius. At the same time, we're beginning to have had enough of having to put up with the staffs' loud chatter and silly giggles both in the dining room and kitchen. What's to follow? "Gambas poêlées, risotto au jus de têtes, légumes croquants". The dish is boring but the king prawns are well cooked. Platitudes reigns, no strict pleasure in the cooking. 10/20. Mauricette nearly falls asleep in front of her "suprême de volaille, blettes confites aux légumes d'été" whose only interest resides within the poetic title. It's crazy to find such poor cuisine in a "medal wearing establishments" annex! 10/20. The heat is becoming unbearable. Our desserts match the quality of the meal! An over sweet "duo de melon et pastèque, granité pastèque" for Mauricette at 8/20. A "soupe de pêche à la menthe, madeleine tiède" which is interesting at 9/2. Our coffees arrive at the same time as dessert accompanied by fruit jelly (yuck!) and cost 3 € A good mark for the bread! Great! The Bérards should open a boulangerie! 21 € for a "domaine la Cadièrenne"... nearly the only alternative from a Bunan red at 40 € Don't laugh. So! The heavy bill goes down a treat, 102 € Paid with sweat and we're pleased to leave. A star in the Miche, Young European restaurant owner, Master restaurant owner in the Var... What about the chef? Is there one?

Chef : Who knows..!

Welcome = 8/20. Attendance = 7/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 16/20. Coffee = 13/20.

**Avenue Gabriel Péri
83740 - La Cadere D'azur
Phone : 04.94.90.11.48**

LA FARLEDE

Asia

000

Off we went with Mauricette to have pancakes and suchlike! "Excalibur" was what the place was called, we had been told. Not very lucky, it's gone. Sold! Exit "Excalibur"! Our arrival is like stabbing water. In its place, an Asian place as the name indicates. And quite small. The Lady is very kind, even if we don't understand everything she says. Menu at 9 € at lunchtime with choice. We didn't want that when we saw the menu with its long list of propositions (the amount of choice is amazing) which includes "l'assiette du bonheur" (the happiness plate) for two at 12 € Nem, samossas, fried ravioli, fritter... and loads of caricatures full of grease. So much so that after having tried one or two things Mauricette fell back in her chair with both hands in the air full of grease like an oil polluted penguin and saying "no way am I going to rust this winter!". A leaf of salad too. And no mint, true it is rare in this season in this region. I salute the calorie achievement with a 8/20. The Lady with the green hat saw arriving under her (oily) moustache a "Mi Xao de boeuf" (beef Mi Xao). A mountain with dry pasta, inedible. Spongy vegetables, and at the bottom a worrying sauce. It can be so good when it's well done. I will skip the details because I am already thinking of what I want to tell you next. 9/20. To follow, is my dish. I saw the word "Thaïlandais". I saw the word "shrimps". I saw the word "citronnelle". So I went for "crevettes à la citronnelle" (shrimps in a lemon sauce). It is presented in butter paper in a cast metal dish to keep it warm. So I joked about Mauricette who was disappointed with her dish, I cautiously opened the buttered paper equipped with my mocking smile, thinking stupidly of freeing a rich lemon fragrance up to my awaiting nose. All that will welcome me is a sea of oil. It's appalling. How could they hope that the customer would swallow this hot liquid in which little bits of onion are floating? Only the shrimps are swallowed, once they have been rung out. Our misadventure concludes with a 6/20, which is quite rare in the B&O pages. Not expensive, that's true. But completely indigestible, right through to the following morning, painfully. From continually pulling things down, products and salaries, bring into disrepute the value of work and criteria of which "restaurants" are made, we end up with this sort of culinary ineptness. And don't go believing that it is only the Asian type that is the one to mess around in the food world...

Chef : Who knows..

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 14/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

**130 rue de la République
83210 - La Farlede
Phone : 04.94.48.45.09**

L'ane Au Salon

ΨΨ_{1/2}

It's always funny to hear a chef who says that he is amused by the "good points" and other chocolate medals handed out by "the guides" when in the next phrase, he admits to having fallen in to bliss before "monsieur Gantié". It's enough to make the hairs on your back roll around laughing during a spring bank holiday. And then to proudly add "I'm in the petit futé, le guide vert...". In this new business taken over with his old bosses from "à 50-50", Frédéric

Chiron has gone from 20 sittings in his delicious "P'tit Clos" in Hyères to let's say ... 70 in what used to be the "Clos des Oliviers" in la Farlede. It's busy at lunchtime, there are lots of customers. I'm not sure that this chef's inventive cooking is going to gain in harmony. With Mauricette, we had a very nice little meal indeed. It would be difficult to recite the detail of the dishes, the menu up outside is out of date, isn't the right one. I shall try even so with Mauricette who was over excited at the idea of having "terrine de pied de cochon au foie gras" (pigs legs terrine with foie gras). An ordinary "block" foie gras, slightly acid. But 14/20 even so. My "St-Jacques au beurre d'agrumes et artichauts" (St-Jacques shellfish with citrus fruit butter and artichokes) are perfect, daring in their association, delicious for 15/20. "Côtes d'agneau en croûte d'olive et ravioli aux olives" (lamb cutlets with olive crust and olive ravioli). You have to like olives, a slice... Two cutlets, a precise and tasty sauce, 14,5/20. We head for Lyon with "bouchons Beaujolais à la queue de boeuf et foie gras" (Beaujolais bouchon with beef tail and foie gras). Basically carpaccio (frozen) rolled with delicately worked meat, a heavy, greedy sauce full of juice, it's well thought of, can be eaten without thinking, it's good, 14,5/20. The most subtle part of the meal was the tantaliser "potage au cumin", brilliantly precise, when you know how hard it is for a chef to play with cumin. 15/20 for him. No desserts, but a doubly shame-full coffee: bad, warm water tinted with a taste of straw, asked for strong and brought without tibits despite the cost of 2,5 €. When taking away my still full cup, the waiter didn't blink an eye-lid. I expect that it isn't his problem just as long as the till goes "gling-gling". Fortunately adorable Mme Chiron compensates for the lack of interest in the dining room: the man saw us leave without saying a word.

Chef : Frédéric Chiron et Régine Dozoul

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 2/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**3 rue de la République
83210 - La Farlede
Phone : 04.94.75.28.14**

LA GARDE

Hippopotamus

Ψ

Despite her glasses with coke bottle bottoms and the fact that she isn't always with it, Mauricette said to me "hey thingamajig! How about changing the van! Look! Limousines are on sale!". No sooner said and done! We went in. No cars to be seen. Quite normal, this is a restaurant. A chain one. Even though we are a little tense, we quickly pull ourselves together. A standardised deco, Buffalo Grill style, but a little more luxurious and less cowboy. Mind you my dear cheeky roller skaters, the staff is very good! I've never seen that in an establishment put together for common use. When it's like this, nothing is a miracle. Tell me who is the boss, and I will tell you what the team is like! The manager is in the dining room with his staff, welcoming, smiling, slapping on the shoulder, offering coffees, in fact animating the room

without being too friendly and better than most. And when I say most... Fortunately the cooking is wonky, otherwise with a phenomenon like this running chain restaurants there would be nothing traditional left. Anyway! In the end the lady with the green hat and I jump into the limousine. I'm talking about the meat. That's what the poster was all about. For her, a "coeur de rumsteck de Limousine sauce échalote et gratin dauphinois" (heart of Limousine rump steak, shallot sauce and gratin dauphinois) which will please her right to the end. A nice bit of meat! Impeccable garnishing! 14,5/20 and 19,90 €! A little less lucky, I have an "entrecôte de limousine" (limousine rib steak) that weighs at least 300 g, but that tastes of the oil from the grill despite a Béarnaise sauce which is surprisingly very well made! I don't like the taste of oil, I'll never get used to it. The chips are blond and particularly tasteless compared to the excellent crisps that are set on the tables to help you wait! The frozen green beans are boiled and have a little bit of garlic on top and are quite frankly unwelcoming if you get what I mean. 10/20 and 23,90 € The desserts are rather like the starters, of very little interest. The coffee is expensive. For a nice bit of meat, yes, a place to visit. And to see as happy and implied staff as these people. It is possible. A model for the kind. Have I already said that?

Welcome = 18/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.

**Centre commercial Grand-Var
83130 - La Garde
Phone : 04.94.35.32.14**

Chez Jo Et Kty

ΨΨ

Mauricette and I read what was written on the shop front for some time, the walls and the fence too. "Pizzeria, snack, roasts, sandwiches, weddings, birthdays, christenings...". So we are about to leave... And at the last minute the lady with the green hat reads... "restaurant"! So hop! A canteen! Or something rather like it! Under the paving stones is the beach! And under the bamboo shades there are tables! Two dishes today! That's all Paul! Hot goats' cheese salad and "moules au Roquefort" (mussels with Roquefort cheese). Mauricette and I look at each other for 7 seconds: what are we doing here? We finally choose the mussels. We wait for some time for our dishes, the Badoit water that we ask for never arrives. But the cutlery wrapped in yellow paper napkins arrives spot on with the advert covered place mats. Let's get back to our mussels: they are excellent! I don't remember having had such good ones in a long time! I don't think Mauricette was born! I'm joking of course! Her birth date is so far off that it has been forgotten! Anyway! Generous mussels that are delicately cooked, the sauce is full of cream and is cooked as it would be for a family with onions and other bits and bobs and some bacon cubes! The fries are good, not greasy and the oil seems to be frequently changed! Seeing the few people around at lunchtime, the boss offers extra helpings!.. Can't be wasted! Well done and thank you! In my guinea pig career I've never seen extra helpings of mussels and chips! Well! I have now! Well done to the lady cook! 14,5/20 for 9 €! No desserts apart from ice-cream. After the Roquefort sauce, Mauricette wants strawberry

ice-cream, two balls with hundreds and thousands to decorate. As if Mauricette was a child again. A family like, mono product, dance hall canteen. But the dish that was tested was better than a lot of restaurants. So...

Chef : Kty?

Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 11/20. Setting = 11/20. Bread = 13/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

457 avenue Jean Jaurès
83130 - La Garde
Phone : 04.94.75.43.93

LA LONDE LES MAURES

L'escale

0

The chef here doesn't hesitate in brandishing his medals on the chimney breast, or should I say: advertising in the regional newspaper. He isn't a "maître restaurateur varois" (restaurant master from the Var) but you never know, it might be about to happen. I quote the ad in the paper: "Academy of the table arts diploma". Until the customer has his word to say, the auto-congratulated can just get on quietly whilst admiring themselves in the mirror. But when the customer gives his opinion, other medals are handed out by him, this darn customer who opens his mouth when he's not pleased! For example: medal for the most liquid and blasé welcome. Madame doesn't even bother to raise her head from the table in front of the bar where she is sitting. So a young man does instead. A hedgehog haircut, untidy shirt, jeans with the zip nearly at his knees, and the knees by his ankles. It wouldn't really matter if he didn't give me the feeling I was bothering him. Menu hastily given to me, the order is laboriously taken. Choice. Lyon specialities... Seeing the context and the feel of ease, I'm not going to take any inconsiderate risks, offal and co. No 14 € menu on the horizon, although promised in the paper. 19 € menu it will be then, as a starter "mousseline de dorade sauce safranée" (daurade mousse with saffron sauce). Aren't mousses light? Well not this one. It is more like reconstituted bread with a vague fishy taste, made with white bread or toast, who knows. The sauce as a 70's style sauce... sorry... saves this dish from disaster. 10/20. What follows could resume the way high placed tenants take the Mickey in the beautiful Var. "Filet de poisson aux poireaux" (fillet of fish with leeks). I ask the waiter what kind of fish. From my table he calls out to the far away chef: "what's the fish?" he answers "daurade fillet". If this is daurade, then they are going to have to stop giving growth hormones in fish farms. A sweaty, body-built daurade straight from the gym, as it has been poached in hot water. A wet, un-salted, mediocre white sauce is added. The curly chicory is having a swim too. The same goes for the rice, and provençal tomato. 7/20. I was expecting the worst with the dessert, a home-made "tarte aux pommes" (apple tart) with a nice smell of rum, with lots of (too much) custard and even more custard, whenever will over used custard stop bringing our spirits down? 13/20. In between times Madame has received a couple of very

noisy friends, and there, she smiles. A business affair, an affair facing the sea, an affair that made me suffer.

Chef : Pascal Cocoluto "diplômé Académie des arts de la table".

Welcome = 3/20. Attendance = 10/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 14/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

1225 boulevard Bernard
Port Miramar
83250 - La Londe Les Maures
Phone : 04.94.57.27.62

LA ROQUEBRUSSANNE

Auberge De La Loube

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

4 years at Jean-Michel Lorain's sides (La Côte Saint-Jacques, 89), recent collaborator to the subtle Serge Gouloumès of "Mas Candille" at Mougins (06). He also admits to having a lot of esteem for Jean-Marie Chanove at Machilly (74). And then one day with Claude Lequeue, his companion, Sébastien Vion chose to set up his own restaurant. In Roquebrussane. And why not? It is not the Var residents who will complain! We will even pray that they don't leave! Everything goes so fast for the terrified chronometers and the present day stressed! Lovely dining room, which delightfully lingers between modern and classic. A quick look at the wine menu: well-advised! Light is made when you learn Claude's dining room course, she also was with Lorain. So what? Is that a good or bad thing? Are you in a hurry too? Don't get cross! Stay! I shall tell you! Menu at 27 €! Tantalizer! A mouth waterer! Then: "volaille fermière sur un tartare de betterave rouge au Xérès, une dodine farcie de dattes et noix" (free range poultry on a bed of beetroot with Xérès wine, poultry preparation stuffed with dates and nuts). Dashing presentation, in an uninhibited gastronomic style. The structure has been researched. Where do I start? The dish keeps me thinking and then I dig in. Subtle, delicious. And 15,5/20. My favourite today though is a "jarret braisé longuement à la Jeanlain, céleri et échalote, écrasé de pomme ratte aux olives vertes" (braised ham with celery and shallots, crushed potato with green olives). Generous! Tasty! These chefs that slip in to grand-mothers skins to bring out a classic recipe's in Sunday clothes, are marvellous, and this is so very delicate. 16/20 is fully deserved! This chef knows how to work his recipes! There is much pleasure for this hard work and endlessly licked lips! What is it? "Pruneau-pomme en soufflé glacé, émulsion au cacao, pommes confites à la cassonade et crumble au beurre salé" (iced prune and apple soufflé, cocoa sauce, apples crystallized with brown sugar and salted butter crumble). The flavours are flirty, mingle with each other. Presented in a glass, but sober and not rococo. 15,5/20. Not over done, and delicate all over. In a town that is not used to such quality cooking, here is a rendezvous for the gastronomic lovers and those allergic to mediocrity. If refinement is on order today, the bill also avoids over doing it. Open all year round if you are good, and make the most of the pretty terrace to take family photos. Super.

Chef : Sébastien Vion

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 15/20.

Place Gueit

83136 - La Roquebrussanne

Phone : 04.94.86.81.36 - Fax : 04.94.86.86.79

LA SEYNE SUR MER

La Rascasse

ΨΨΨ

"More than this year and less than next"! This is what resumes our love for "La Rascasse" and their food! They keep on coming back! We do wonder why! Isn't it because Patrice Hudry-Rahon, the clever chef, is very good? The problem is, he can't get rid of some of his recipes. It would start a revolution in Saint-Elme! And why not get rid of Friday's aioli? It would make some of our gourmets become orphans! And several of them don't yet know all of the dishes on offer! Here: you for example? I'm going to tell you about when Mauricette and I went there! It won't be too long! It just goes to show how good it is! The cooking is always generous, refined but beware! Not overcomplicated! Cooking times and mixtures that are mastered and hit home! She hesitated a bit with the grilled mussels, but finally fell for the "terrinerie de crabe maison et sa crème de ciboulette" (homemade crab terrine with chive cream). And 15/20. The same signature for my "petit gâteau de dorade sébaste, noix de St-Jacques, crème safranée" (small sea bream cake, St-Jacques shellfish, saffron cream). It's got character, it's not because it's a sweet that it has to be soggy. A second 15/20. The lady with the green hat and wise criticism suddenly started to applaud, just like that, in the middle of the room! Just three or four claps, but even so... She prized her "dos de cabillaud poêlée au pastis, petits légumes et confiture d'olives maison" (cod fried in pastis, small vegetables and homemade olive jam) with 15,5/20! The same for my "choucroute de la mer, sauce au Champagne" (sea side choucroute, Champagne sauce) which is finely surprising, and that I recommend to the curious. 15,5/20. Our desserts are two of the places classics! "Ananas frais en chaud et froid" (hot and cold pineapple), slices fried in butter, 15/20. "Verrine" (glass) is not a short cut for "verrine à la rose"! Or else maybe a giant short cut! If you see what I mean! Perfumed whipped cream, red fruits, shortbread biscuit. A last 15/20! The dining room acts in a light distinguished manner which is just what it takes to not weigh down the feeling of "all year round holidays". But even equipped with roller skates, I'm not sure that Didier Richard would get a chance to look at the sea! But who's complaining: it's for our good! Off the forced modern track, a nice table which leaves nothing to chance. Remarkably rigorous with time!

Chef : Patrice Hudry-Rahon

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Rue de la jetée, plage des Sablottes
Saint-Elme

83500 - La Seyne Sur Mer

Phone : 04.94.87.29.08

Asia

0

Despite the appearance, the concept offers more advantages to the shop than to the customer. A pretty choice with the whole usual panoply in the way of self-service: greasy prawn fritter (7/20), floury crab (8/20), good fried ravioli (14/20), well flavoured samossa (14,5/20), more than ordinary spring rolls with bits of reconstituted turkey (8/20)! That's for the starters! The "hot" dishes are warm. They have been in the buffet too long! The fried pasta is disappointing (7/20), the Cantonese rice is too dry and lumpy (7/20), the lemon chicken is as greasy as a pig (8/20), the spicy prawns have taste (14/20). And that's great! Not only can you see on the starter shelf tomato-mozza, but warmed up. The "daube" and the "lapin chasseur" rival with Asian dishes! It's a good idea, these dishes always gain from being re-heated! Practical! The rabbit sauce is worth it, but the meat is mediocre. 12/20. The grills: greasy king prawns but well cooked, why add fat? 12/20! But the porc ribs are splendid, 14,5/20. Avoid the ice creams and sorbets, bad, even if not home-made. Mauricette is adamant. She doesn't just suck ice but is a specialist. Go for the nougat or ginger. Price wise, it's not a give away. The price politics make me think of a coca-cola idea, selling cans from a machine depending on the weather: the hotter it gets, more the prices go up! It's the same here seeing as during the week, the meal costs 10,90 € which seems honest. But 16,90 € on week-end lunchtimes and feast days. And in the evening up to 19,90 € well, well, well. That is too much. It's filling, it gives you that feeling which makes you feel like making the most of it, a good thing seeing as the buffets are at will. The cook walks round the room carrying two cans, and the lad at the counter smokes a cigarette at the corner. The management should really stop trying to get rid of yesterday's leftovers to today's clients, they don't last long.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 16/20.

ZI Camp Laurent (derrière Stock O'Mani)
83500 - La Seyne Sur Mer
Phone : 04.94.94.10.44

La Table De Bacchus

ΨΨΨ

Need I say that the wine menu is serious? You can imagine that carrying a name such as theirs would leave them with little chance of slipping through what constitutes a filter for our hazardous cooking peregrinations. Especially with the blind as a bat Mauricette who despite her coke bottle lenses can see very well when she wants to. So! The proprietor has changed! The "lively" and hyper-active Hervé Liversain has handed on his pilgrims stick to Maguy and Jacky Rodrigues, a couple who are clever when it comes to keeping the machinery going. Nitpicker of precise cooking, here is a real chef. Initiated by some of the best toques, from Sainte-Maxime to? Saint-Barthélemy! At his side is another chef. You're going to say that it means that there are two chefs then. And I shall add "good". Having been through the "Le Negresco", the companion Philippe Adaoust is a

great sauce maker! On my guinea pigs honour! My dear readers, with the lady with the green hat and her 1940's handbag we had a timeless piece of lamb! One each! An "épaule d'agneau piquée à l'ail, jus réduit au thym" (lamb shoulder with garlic, reduced gravy with thyme)! The meat melted in my mouth, crystallised. A dish that reveals perfectly the way the chef works, the cooking time plays an important role. Reduced gravy, the juice is very pleasant. 15,5/20. The hurried people from the "midi" (as we are today) will relish in the fact that this exists: "Café gourmand", a coffee with two or three homemade sweets. 15/20. A chef who has expert hands and is well backed-up, ambition for quality that is held up like a flag against mediocrity: the Rodrigues couple strikes a bull's eye with this place and its pleasant modern setting punctuated with objects to do with "life in a vineyard", they have pulled it out from anonymity. And we are delighted. You will soon feel the same way, especially with their nice comfortable patio and pretty private park. You can even have your meal? in a barrel! Mauricette's dream! This is worth three candelabras! And big ones!

Chef : Jacky Rodrigues et Philippe Adaoust
Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

814 avenue de Bruxelles
83500 - La Seyne Sur Mer
Phone : 04.94.10.53.22 - Fax : 04.94.87.31.07

La Terrasse Du Port

ΨΨ_{1/2}

There's a look of a fisherman's hut about this place or a Corsican straw hut, it's going to be complicated to describe "La Terrasse du Port" in detail. You have to go up a few steps in winter, in the summer you can stay on the same level. The raised dining room opens towards the Saint-Elme port, which is smaller than the Toulon one. But not much. I'm joking! It's tiny! But on the contrary to its big brother, you're a lot less likely to go wrong when choosing a restaurant! Seeing as Sophie and Benoît Zanna's is the only one here! It helps the statistics! You regale with simple and good dishes! I swear on my guinea pigs oath, a good "friture de jols" (small fried fish) from time to time, it makes a good man happy! I nibble my dish which is this size whilst looking at the sea, and the crane which today is getting a little fishing boat (pointu) out of the water. It's always more interesting to look at that, rather than looking at Mauricette and her green hat. There's no comparison. 14,5/20. What follows in my menu heads north with the dish of the day, a fragrant "cuisse de canard confite au thym" (crystallised duck leg with thyme) served in a little casserole dish, and escorted by a succulent "gratin dauphinois", truly succulent. The 14,5/20 is indispensable for the honesty. A sweet conclusion at 14/20 with a "parfait chocolat-pistache" which has been left to a well applied industrial. And seeing as restaurant running is a sum of details, note that the coffee is excellent, that the red wine "vin du pays", "domaine de l'Estagnol" in St-Cyr-sur-Mer is perfect with the meats, that the dining room is run with a smile and get up and go by Sophie Zanna. Some of the fish cooked by the chef, her husband, come from the local fishermen, there,

just a step away from the restaurant. If that's not a friendly-change of scene trip that I'm offering, I had better change jobs.

Chef : Benoît Zanna
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

Port de Saint-Elme
83500 - La Seyne Sur Mer
Phone : fax.04.94.62.45.05

La Baie D'halong

ΨΨ_{1/2}

There are loads of "Baie d'Halong" in the telephone directory. Well: the real one is in Vietnam, I mean restaurants! But good ones, ones that make you come again and applaud with both chopsticks, can be counted on the spring rolls of one hand! We wander from one bay to another and end up in les Sablettes, La Seyne-sur-mer. It has been some time now that Thérèse has been regaling her customers with no false notes. Her son is in the dining room, he's a smiling pedagogue, and Vi-Dan, her husband, is in the kitchen, in the shadows. If we start off with the principle that most fervent customers are frightened off by the number of traps, here good and homemade are a creed. It seems a little silly to say this about a restaurant, but just think that it is also true with Provence cooking, Picardie cooking, Moroccan, the South-west and Wallis and Futuna too. Mauricette really enjoys her "assortiment frit" (fried assortment) composed of spring rolls, prawn fritter, fried ravioli, Chinese rolls. In double doses. Not greasy at all, delicate for some, a festival which averages 15/20. The same goes for my "assortiment vapeur" (steamed assortment)! 15/20! Two of each as well! With steamed food, the chef cannot afford to go wrong! Fried food can pass off the "average" thanks to crispness, but "steamed" certainly cannot deal with mediocrity! Ravioli, ha cao, xiu mai. Understand? Oh all right, I'm just checking. A classic "porc au caramel" (caramel pork) follows, it is good from all points of view, the sauce is well implied, 14,5/20. What does my pleasure barometer have to say for my "canard laqué" (Peking duck) Buck? It's not bad at all Paul! This chef is very serious! 14,5/20. Faults? Basic paper table cloths and the sight of the nearby beach that attracts crowds in the summer. But heated scented towels at the end of the meal. Here is an address to be noted in the best references of the kind in the B&O pages, rather demanding in its Sino Vietnamese peregrinations. And by the sea what's more!

Chef : Vi-Dan La
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 15/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

Saint-Elme
83500 - La Seyne Sur Mer
Phone : 04.94.06.67.19

La Vague D'or

Ψ

Now, you are made to wait just a little bit too

long at the edge of the dining room, in Indian file behind your lunchtime mates. You haven't booked? The deep voice belonging to the boss behind the counter makes you feel that you should have. With Mauricette, we waited patiently. Then Madame came to fetch us. She sat us behind a round table with double white tablecloths, white napkins and pretty glasses. One of them still has lipstick marks on it. Checking the crockery is useful, like the limestone around the neck of the jug, if you see what I mean. How can you play at being "high standard" when you let slip this kind of detail? Cigarette holes in the tablecloth, dry or too early cut bread, so dry on arriving at the table. The extractor fan in the toilets is covered in dust whereas the toilets are superb. And then the tables are too close together. Ours is about 30cms from the one in front, a little more from the one on the right. The advantage being that whilst nibbling her pitiful starter: "carpaccio de filet de perche aux agrumes" (perch filet carpaccio with citrus fruit) which is as finely cut as a Moldavian woodcutters trunk, two slices out of three are bloody, poor Mauricette was soaking in the surgical details of the same dish next door. The famous "Nile perch" from the Victoria Lake in Africa is shown in the "Darwin's nightmare" film which tells the story of its disgusting trip to your plate. So you understand that if the beast is bloody, no thank-you. 6/20. I am much luckier with my "toasts de chèvre sur salade d'endives aux noix" (goat's cheese on toast on a chicory salad with nuts). The cheese is nice, the chicory finely chopped, very good. 14,5/20. After her misadventure with the starter, the lady with the green hat started to look the same colour as her hat. What was her "queue de lotte rôtie sauce vierge, caviar d'aubergine" (roasted angler fish tail, virgin sauce, aubergine caviar) going to be like? Not bad actually! The cooking times are alright, it's too greasy though, the caviar is a little bland. She gives it 13/20 because it's pretty. "Jambon fumé grillé, polenta et tranche de lard grillé" (smoked, grilled ham, polenta and grilled bacon) for me. Loads of sauce! That wasn't planned! It is all shiny! Not good at all! Straight out of a packet! The polenta is fine. 12/20 thanks to that. Dessert? Mauricette doesn't fancy it. Doesn't feel like it. Don't get her cross. I'm the one who's going to have to put up with her. I insisted that she had "entremet fraise au coulis de fruits rouges" (strawberry cream with red fruit sauce). Seeing the characteristic pink colour, we expected it to be sickeningly sweet! Not at all! Just enough sugar, not bad if only the industrial sauce hadn't given it away. 14/20. A bit stodgy but not bad: "croustillant fondant praliné et citron" (crisp creamy praline and lemon). Shortbread with lemon peel, mousse on top. Made by a pâtissier. 15,5/20. The attendance is pushy, probably to respect imposed table quotas. Which means, that you come out feeling stressed which wasn't really the plan.

Welcome = 6/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 11/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

Plage des Sablettes
83500 - La Seyne Sur Mer
Phone : 04.94.94.80.00

La Griotte

0

To hold boutique in the centre of La Seyne is not an easy thing, it's history, but some of the ambitious manage it sometimes. When having to test this restaurant which opened about twenty years ago, I expected better. Probably the effect of tablecloths and napkins on the terrace facing the street, rather like a spread of pure white for a show. 20 years... except that the boss, versatile "cook-waiter" fell asleep somewhere along the road. First of all, the interior aspect of the restaurant reminds us at once that it has been in activity for 20 years: roughcast soiled and covered with spiders webs with various smudges. The deco is indeed old-looking in spite of pretty tablecloths. Clean but decrepit toilets. We could have done without this: what uproar! The TF1 television news on in the dining room with the hi-fi on at the same time on a "free" radio! With the French window open onto the street, the corner chemist must make its dough in selling aspirin! Exhausting! There is air conditioning here! That would have allowed us to eat without cars. Anyway! The nice and thoughtful boss-cook-waiter will explain that he doesn't do a dish of the day anymore. By "lack of demand." Nothing astonishing. As for us, we will be in "presence of alarm!" With my baffled woman in the green hat we both opt for the menu at 14,50 € with 3 starters and choice of 3 dishes. Good, we're going to go quickly: completely worthy of a school canteen! "oeufs mayonnaise" (egg mayonnaise) as starter for a vexed Mauricette. Me, a sad "salade composée" (composed salad) with tinned beans, cold and mealy tomato and subcontract sauce, as is the mayonnaise for my egg. Let's go for a 9/20 but no less because the green salad is fresh, not sachet variety. What follows will be dispatched just as quickly for Mauricette who has even stopped talking and is staring into space, her poor ears full of noise! Her "brochettes de poulet sauce barbecue" (chicken kebabs with barbecue sauce) will lose their plural once under her nose. Instead of "kebabs", she will have low quality chicken breast that sticks to her teeth, threaded onto a skewer. As garnishing, a vegetable mix and micro-plate of French fries. 11/20. For me, it will be "macaroni aux boulettes" (macaroni with meat balls), of the non-dated risky reheated type, not completely bad but just very average. Same mark, 11/20. For dessert, Mauricette takes no chances: an ice-cream. Courageous to the tip, my choice is a "tarte aux pommes" (apple pie) apparently "homemade". Out of the fridge and half re-heated, with too much sauce as if it had poured down. 10/20. The coffee is not good, and costs 2 € What? Is "La Griotte" old-looking? Definitely!

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 10/20. Setting = 12/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 9/20.

26, rue Pierre Lacroix
83500 - La Seyne Sur Mer
Phone : 04.94.94.14.85

Le Petit Prince

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Let's step off the path. A nice surprise in this part of La Seyne which is not exactly reputed neither for tourism nor for the quality of its tables. Except that here my little stuffed bunnies, at a stone's throw from the hospital, Mauricette and I enjoyed pleasant, honest dishes and

professional cuisine. No menus and few propositions. That's a bit of a shame. There are two dishes of the day, one each. 9 € for a "tajine pruneaux et agneau" (prune and lamb tajine) for the lady with the green hat, it doesn't take her on an exotic trip as is served on a classic plate. It is very good, generous, couscous grain served apart and 14,5/20 in the end. It is because of the three drumsticks in my "poulet tandoori" (tandoori style chicken) that I had to lick my fingers! No tandoori oven here (not all indo-Pakistani restaurants have them), but a clever, spicy preparation. Another 14,5/20 and equally 9 € Desserts from the Maghreb and a greedy assortment accompanied by mint tea at 1 € each. The "cornes de gazelle" that I was hankering for seem to have been kept for the regulars, which we are not. The attendance doesn't over do things, smiles in all the right places. The dining room is spacious and bright, with a comfy corner to drink with little Jack Horner, it's only for the rhyme, you can have what you like with whom you like. It is exemplary clean and in the busy kitchens you can see the staff all dressed in white. A trip to the Maghreb, darkest Africa and Madagascar, Spain, Italy, Greece and... Provence! Go and see the web site, it gives you all the details. Take note that Saint-Exupéry's descendants have accepted that the title "Le Petit Prince" and its famous graphic representation be used. Thank you to them, it is all for the good cause. Le Petit Prince has charmed the guide, just like a little boy in the desert charmed Antoine!

Welcome = 13/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Avenue Jean Rostand
83500 - La Seyne Sur Mer
Phone : 04.94.87.30.99 et port.06.71.82.10.24

LA VALETTE

Les Chenes

Ψ_{1/2}

This address puts a bit of fun into the area. I like this side of La Valette hidden behind the Mont Faron, that rubs up against its neighbour Le Revest. Cleverly the new owner has turned the dining room into its best, very light, but also very smoky (we are the end of October 2007). The tables are lined up like strings of onions, the boss-barman serves aperitifs whilst the people at the bar talk about the OM football team. A sweet waitress does a marathon run between the kitchens and the dining room whilst treating each table individually. It's rather rare for lunchtime, at a time where everyone is in a hurry, even the waitresses: in a hurry to see you go. Here it is not the case. No-one is pushing. There's no rest but then no-one is pushing. Menu at 12 € As I had guessed that 95% of the customers were going to jump at it, so I opted for the 5 or 6 suggestions on the blackboard. It will be "St Jacques rôties sur tatin de poireau" (roasted St-Jacques shell fish with an upside down leek tart). 17 € even so. I am brought a dish that David Hamilton would have photographed. Roasted St-Jacques shell fish, but a little over done on a bed of cantankerous leeks. It is well prepared though and the dish deserves a 14,5/20. No doubt about that. I dream then of a sweet that could carry me gently through to coffee, which

would end this little culinary trip that I hadn't even thought of 20 minutes ago. Oh no Joe, wrong there Clare. The "tarte aux pommes" (apple tart) (3,50 €) is completely ugly, soggy, too puree like. The 11/20 is well paid, but only because I avoided the whipped cream. So, no coffee. You pay at the till, the boss is really pleasant. That's why the waitress is pleasant. There are no coincidences in this case. A table with a true chef, a table that is humanly capable of doing better.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 15/20.

Les Favières

83160 - La Valette

Phone : 04.94.27.14.32 Port. 06.11.58.14.31

Ikea

00

Mauricette wanted to change her hat so we went to search in Ikea. Nothing could concurrence her hat (except maybe one or two lamps), so we forgot that idea. Then we headed for the queue in the Ikea cafeteria. I remember having had a meal about 12 years ago in an Ikea. It was, let's say ...correct. No longer. We join the queue, we're happy, get agitated, even excited, and the wait makes us even hungrier. So we jumped on "rouleaux de saumon fumé à l'oeuf" (rolls of smoked salmon and egg), mouthfuls not at all bad and original, 14/20. Things get more complicated with the "boulettes sauce groseille" (meat balls with red currant sauce) served with light chips. The meat balls taste of what they are. Greasy, neutral, they slide on the tongue. 12/20. We continue to go down to the lowest possible part of the meal with a "cuisse de pintade farcie aux morilles" (leg of guinea fowl stuffed with mushrooms), which is a bit pitiful and practically inedible. Industrial made food which does nothing for the famous mushroom. A shame. Not even saved by the potato purée crushed with a fork. 7/20. I certainly enjoyed my "gâteau Daim", the famous caramel. 14,5/20. Mauricette a lot less with her "verrine nougat marron chocolat, macaron framboise" (chocolate and chestnut nougat with a raspberry macaroon). Industrial again. The only difference being colour and texture. To taste, they are all hyper saturated in sugar. 8,5/20. You can have as much coffee as you like, it is very good. With the lady in the green hat, we are a little sad, we wanted to be as happy as everybody else, live this moment as simply as in this Disneyland furniture consumer empire which pleases both big and small (not all). Okay. A starter for two, main course and dessert each for 19,45 € is not too expensive. But even so, is globally not good at all.

Chef : Pour?

Setting = 13/20. Bread = 13/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

ZAC Valgora

Château Redon

83160 - La Valette Du Var

Phone : 0825.10.3000 (0,15€/mn)

Le France

Ψ

Don't invite your friends for a pre-lunch drink at around 11 o'clock. The waiters are all excited just before the midday sitting. They push you to get out of the way quickly, it's a near miss that the man sponged down my nose and Mauricette's glasses. It's just that we're busy in the dining room, you understand, I'm working. This makes my mind up, we're staying for lunch, to try the new "Le France", new deco, and especially the chef. The old "Le France" has dropped us. Anyway! A word about the new deco, care has been taken in choosing the deco colours and humour (involuntary?) with the pictures. It looks like a line of toads squashed to the wall! You can see what you like in these pictures, but even so! Which means, an aquatic option for 12 € "pavé de cabillaud nature poché à l'huile d'olive, légumes vapeur" (cod poached in olive oil, steamed vegetables). The plate is beautiful, surprising seeing the amount coming out of the kitchen. The fish is surrounded by worked and honestly delicious garnishing. For once we seem to have been spared pilaf rice... super! Except that the fish smells off, and tastes it too. After just one mouthful, I stop. Over cooked. What a waste! If the place was trying to get rid of out of date fish, they would have smothered it in herbs or other artefacts! That isn't the case! The waitress wonders about the amount left on my plate, that's good, but she doesn't push the investigation any further, nothing formal. 12 € So? Well... 10/20! The average between the garnishing (15/20) and the fish (5/20). What if I ate something? The dessert of the day is "financier abricot" (cooked apricot). Well done there. Usually "brasseries" deal out "île flottante-crème caramel-mousse au chocolat" (floating island-cream caramel-chocolate mousse). Restaurants too for that matter. Sober, slightly caramelised but supple inside, an easy 14,5/20 for 4 €. The kitchens aren't doing badly at all; I bet that the "un-fresh fish" was an accident. I would have appreciated being given an explanation. It's the done thing.

Welcome = 8/20. Attendance = 11/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Coffee = 15/20.

Centre Commercial Grand Var

83160 - La Valette

Phone : 04.94.75.54.58

LE BEAUSSET

La Grange

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Whilst number of tourists choke on their disappointment in traps that the Var merrily withholds, others smile like village idiots in front of Georges Ferrero's dishes. But they're cheating. They'd heard about it beforehand. At least since last year. Friends in "the know" had convinced them to come this far. This is what is called "bouche à oreille" (from mouth to ear or through the grapevine for the UK), and it's well done! At "la Grange" today, is an assembly of wine growers with happy faces in this local "traditional cooking" chapel. They're not mad these wine growers! They recognise one another! It's just that Georges Ferrero loves the land! Apparently he has always dreamt of being a shepherd! Anyway! Mauricette is still going

cross-eyed over the wine menu: over twelve Bando wines! Côtes de Provence! Excellent Souviou! L'Héritage! La Moutête! And more! Good. We shall now eat seeing the amount we are drinking... Prelude with a mastered "caillette maison" which is perfectly seasoned and 14,5/20. I follow with the dish of the day, a "foie de veau en persillade" which conforms to the rules: freshness and cooking! The lady with the green hat violently attacks her "millefeuille de légumes à l'huile d'olive" which is well prepared, she devours it as if she were hungry. An ogre's appetite for a stove goddess! Such voracity doesn't alter her judgment: she hands out 15/20 from her sea urchin lined purse! A "tartare de boeuf" crosses the path of the meat loving lady with the green hats. It doesn't last long even if it is generously served! 14,5/20! In her menu, cheese is included! At room temperature if you please! She ends up roughcasting her moustache with her "profiteroles maison" at 15/20, which are as good as my "tarte au citron", also homemade from top to bottom. Attentive attendance who know the music and what customers, who are becoming more and more demanding, are expecting. The Var, Le Beausset, "La Grange", its' big central fireplace, witness of an old forgery, ancient tools hung up here and there. As Mauricette says after her coffee "it's important to have landmarks in life!"

Chef : Georges Ferrero

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

34 bis boulevard de Chanzy

83330 - Le Beausset

Phone : 04.94.90.40.22

La Cauquiere

ΨΨ

The new people have slipped in to the previous' slippers. It was the best thing to do because usually when new owners arrive in new walls, they start a culinary revolution. Nothing like that here. It leaves you with a rather sad menu at 21 € But I have to say that the chef is a good sauce maker. The sauce is the principal interest in my "millefeuille de moules à la fleur de thym" (mussels in a millefeuille and thyme flower). Achieved! The sauce! As for the rest, we are flirting with the mouthful size portion! Shame! 14,5/20 even so! A full plate here with a "paupiette de veau chasseur" (a sort of veal roll)! But here again it is the sauce that does all the work. Super! On the other hand the meat is too fatty. But the garnishing does its job. 13,5/20. The desserts of the day are more expensive than the ones on the menu. I have to add 4,50 € on to my menu to get off the track. So I stay on it with a "tarte provençale" wonderfully strengthening, with figs and pine kernel. 13/20. The strangest thing in all of this is that the next door table has got really pretty plates. Modern, white crockery, glassware, pretty deco's with the sauce... A big destabilizing difference for the looker on, me. Which makes me feel that the chef has a lot more know-how than he's letting on, but doesn't want to waste it on the regular customers. Otherwise, what is wasted on me, the new customer, is that they don't take cards for under 70 € (yes, seventy euros, no typing error), and the stamp is missing

on the messy bill that I am given at the end. They accepted my banking card in the end and stamped my bill when I asked with no problem. Oh yes: adorable, young, natural waitress. Third day of work. Something fresh does no harm at all.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 12/20. Coffee = 8/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**7 rue du Puits d'Isnard
83330 - Le Beausset
Phone : 04.94.98.42.75**

LE CASTELLET VILLAGE

Le Castel Lumiere

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

The "Castel-Lumière" is under the projectors again! It has been absent from greedy reflex for some time! It's just that you don't find such pretty houses on the corner of every street. A panoramic view dominating all of Bandol and more. You can see the sea in the distance. A pretty point of view that would make either Mauricette or Mermoz in his bi-plane Breguet 14 jealous! And as for cuisine, there is no need to worry about the results: the only just thirty year old chef is from a qualified site in Nancy (Le Grenier à sel). Behind his tranquil airs, Eric Guidat is a pro in the restaurant world. He ran the "Au Coin du Feu" for 20 years, it is an institution in Nancy. It's all very well showing off a pretty CV but it's not all there is to it, it's up to the taste-buds to decide. No sweat off my back, Jack! A tantalizer to begin with! Followed by "rillettes de lapereau et son caviar d'aubergines, crème légère au Xères, pistou de roquette" (young rabbit rillettes with aubergine caviar, light cream with Xères wine, rocket pistou). It makes your eyes boggle! A real show off, although unexpectedly so, but impeccably put together. A multi-layered cake in a ring shape, it's generous. 15,5/20 to start with. The advantage with fish is that it allows you to judge the cook. He must keep his eye on it if he doesn't want to serve tyres to his customers. Well achieved!... My "dos de cabillaud pané aux herbes fraîches, crème de cèpes, croustillants de légumes de la garrigue" (cod with breadcrumbs and fresh herbs, cepe mushroom cream, crisp scrubland vegetable cakes). The cakes are in fact samossa, the cepe sauce could damn a saint, and the fish is not betrayed. A second 15,5/20. The dessert is well-applied, I didn't dare dream that my "tatin d'ananas à la cardamome, glace vanille bourbon" (pineapple upside down tart with cardamom, bourbon vanilla ice-cream) could be so well mastered. Caramelised, refined. Everything is pleasurable, including the worked sugar. A last 15,5/20! Brilliant cooking, joining flavours and beauty whilst sometimes using savours from other latitudes, but without being caricatural. The good news that you have all been waiting for is that you don't have to wait for a special occasion to come here. Really? Can we come any time? Oh yes ladies and gentlemen! And as often as you please! But beware: it can become a habit!

Chef : David Laurent

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**2 rue Douce
83330 - Le Castellet Village
Phone : 04.94.32.62.20 - Fax : 04.94.32.70.33**

LE LAVANDOU

Le Yaka

Ψ

Very few people in this chilly month of December have chosen to open shop rather than switch on the television. Maybe that is why I shall be tolerant after all, once I draw up the balance. It seems that the address is not very young but that the names on its identity card have moved around. "Point Break" then, now is "Le Yaka" it's a change, but not really. It started off alright with the waiter who kept calling me "young man". Once, twice, three times... well. I'd rather that than an insipid waiter who is totally uninterested. Only one menu that seems expensive to me now I look back. 19 € for moules marinières that are soaking in an uncertain juice. A whitish sauce, with nothing except a few bits of onion and a mountain of salt. Diluted in the water, the salt. Amazing! One mouthful takes you on a trip to the Dead Sea! Undrinkable! But then you can do as you please! 9/20 because the mussels are inedible. What follows is of the same suit. "Cuisse de canard confite" (Crystallised duck leg) with greasy and soggy skin served with blonde chips and a ratatouille that isn't one, too much tomato concentrate. Someone will have to explain to me one day why in the South-West duck legs are fried, grilled and crisp (yummy) and that here, not. 12/20. I was expecting the worst with the "crème brûlée", it didn't happen as the 14/20 seems fitting. Paradox: if the address offers the same performance in the height of summer, it is far from being the worst in the area! But well, for 19 € (125 francs without coffee), it beats the dough seeing the costs. Friendly team, it helps, a little.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 12/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**29 quai Gabriel Péri
83980 - Le Lavandou
Phone : 04.94.01.04.72**

Hotel Les Roches Mathias Dandine

ΨΨΨ

Heaven is the word. Even if I don't believe in heaven. So let's say rare. To continue in the celestial register: I don't believe in Father Christmas either! It's just that in this kind of place, dishes practically never cost what the contents are worth, but usually the price that general costs amount to. Including the dishes. It's difficult to do otherwise if you want the place to stay open. Even though I am modestly eating in the annexe to the "bistrot des Roches", the bill will not be as comforting as the food! Starters

from 12 € to 25 € (half-portions are possible), dishes from 25 € to 28 € and desserts from 8 € to 10 €. Cheaper than downstairs where there is even a Michelin guide star on show. "Not everything is a question of money" say those who have some. Today for us, it will be a joke. To serve and clear the tables, the otherwise perfect waiter permanently goes from the dining room to the downstairs kitchen. Let's say 150 metres with crockery and the lot. Sometimes, when laid back in your chairs dozing off whilst watching the sea, a horrid sounding telephone blasts out at him and deafens you in to the process. So he dashes off to get the dishes. Can you imagine the marathon? The man must have Schwarzenegger's thighs. Unless they change waiters every day. Maybe it's the bad one that gets to serve. In the staff room in the morning, for a reunion to talk about the previous days work. Everyone standing to attention: "you, you made a mistake at gastronomic table 14 last night, so you're up to the bistrot today!" Punishment! So! No tantalizer despite having a dish straight away. There are no small savings. Especially at 25 € a dish: "gibelotte de lapin, risotto de blé" (rabbit stew, wheat risotto). Served in a pretence, small white ceramic casserole dish as if it had been cooked in it. The sauce is delicious, but the wheat is under done and sticky with strings thanks to the cheese. Seeing the price of rabbit, wheat and grated cheese, even when well prepared, 25 € makes your purse shiver. Speculators: invest in rodents! Sell them to restaurants, there's a future! 15/20. The "café gourmand" (greedy coffee) is no more expensive than in some clumsy places, 8 € The coffee is average, but the "crème brûlée à la pistache" (pistachio crème brûlée) is delicious with, on top, a scoop of chocolate ganache, 15/20. The "duo de chocolat" does well with 14,5/20. A digressive "baba au rhum". Usually the rum in a "baba au rhum" is the cherry on the top. Here, no taste of rum, nor the characteristic flavour. An unknown alcohol, with a vague plant taste, rather like verbenne. Disorientating. 12/20. But Nicolas Sarkozy, Rachida Dati and Martin Bouygues (godfather to the presidents son) came here at the end of 2007. Ah...

**Chef : Mathias Dandine
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 16/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 16/20.**

**1 avenue des trois Dauphins Aiguebelle
83980 - Le Lavandou
Phone : 04.94.71.15.53**

Les Sarrazines

Ψ

Near the new port, the harbour masters office, the fisherman's key. The restaurants rub up against one another. I would put you off walking around with a pushchair. Or a difficult appetite. I was hopeful, a bit, when I noticed this slender shop. At the back in a wooden crate, fresh vegetables, salads, tomatoes, and fruit too. Seduced by this visual enticer which could nearly make me forget the smell of chips and sun-cream, I sit down. It's a pancake place. The waitress who is doing the outside attendance is a bit dry, but in this sweaty and stuffy touristy atmosphere, maybe she's fed up. Even if it's nothing to do with me miss! I only want a "Pont

l'Abbé" at 7,5 €! With chitterling sausage and crystallised apples! This is dry too! Four grilled rings of the famous sausage in the four corners of a pancake which is folded into a square. 13/20. My barometer from Brittany, my way of deciding about a pancake place: the butter and sugar pancake! Here it is called "Audierne" at 3 €! It's dry in Brittany this year. I'm looking for the butter, and the sugar for that matter. So much so; that I wonder if the order has been misunderstood. I don't get time to understand. In-between times, a lady has come to say a few nice words. This sudden humanity in my eyes and ears brings me out of my usual pessimism and here, I think that it might be an idea to try the place out of season. But we have better things to do in our job.

Welcome = 8/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 12/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

Le Nouveau Port
Quai des Pêcheurs
83980 - Le Lavandou
Phone : 04.94.71.11.47

Le Bistro Des Sables

ΨΨ

Another change of management for this address! The new people are concerned by their job and the local customers know what they're onto. Regular addresses can't be found everywhere. Monsieur is in the kitchen and doing the pizzas. Madame is in the dining room. Some of the formulas are a little far fetched, glass of wine or coffee as a bonus, all depending, which makes you have to work it out. 19 € with coffee for me. Which in fact means menu at 17,10 € Starter: "les gratins de chèvre sur lit de salade" (hot grated goats' cheese on bed of salad). Three little croutons that have been put through the oven and topped with strong goats' cheese. Little but good! The salad (very fresh) shares its' bed with red onion, the inevitable tomato cut into quarters and green beans for Jean. 13/20. What follows is a trap into which the chef didn't fall. The dish of the day: "filet de rascasse à la provençale" (Provence style scorpius fish filet) is generous and remains supple after having been fried. Well done. Pilaf rice and sauce with lots of bits of tomato, the garlic isn't missing either. This is good family style, careful cooking: 14,5/20. An effort has been made for dessert! The waitress assures me that they are all homemade! Yes for a delicious "tarte aux abricots caramélisée" (caramelized apricot tart) which is only weighted down by the custard and a blob of whipped cream. 14/20. The coffee is excellent, have another one. You have to have a second coffee when it's good. It's a way to congratulate the proprietor for making the effort to choose good products. So! End of the meal, I pay and chat with the friendly cook-boss who seems to like his job. It's just as well seeing the number of hours that he has to put in. On the other hand, Madame is bitter. She remains as far from my table as she can get, she seems put out that a guide could allow itself to test her restaurant. Oh well yes, that's the way it goes.

Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

1 chemin de la cascade

Saint-Clair
83980 - Le Lavandou
Phone : 04.94.92.88.61

LE LUC EN PROVENCE

L'olivade

ΨΨ_{1/2}

There's something fresh in town! In both senses! Let me explain! Ten years looking out for customers in "Les Arcs", three others at the "Maison des vins", capability and fine know-how about vineyard things. Here is the substance of Stéphane Arnaud's experience. After having taken over "Le Normandie", with Sandra, in the middle of 2008, this charming couple have set their clock, their compass has gone back to southern cookery, and things have been put into place: fresh products and 100% homemade cooking. This argument comes out of many chefs' mouths, and sounds evident to our romantic food lover ears. Except that here it is true. This philosophy is far from being the easiest road to follow in order to prosper, especially with these prices. But well advised customers are starting to come from all over town! It changes every day! What does? The lunchtime menu at 15 €! Finely thought out and freshly laid! Today's starter would cost the price of the whole menu in a gastronomic restaurant! "Poivrons confits en brandade de morue, mesclun" (crystallised peppers in salt cod puree, mixed salad)! Nice and firm, smooth on the inside, lively everywhere! And 15/20 to start with! I'm lunching in the summer so I need the lightness of "trio de brochettes" (kebab trio), the interest lies within the classic and simmered garnishing, vegetables and gratin. 14,5/20. "Tarte fine aux pommes" (fine apple tart) for dessert which really does its job at a time when your appetite is usually dwindling. 14,5/20. The seasons guide the dishes! It might be possible to have crayfish salad or crystallised tomatoes all year round, or vegetables stuffed Provence style, fillet of beef Rossini, sweet bread, kidneys, calf's head? and benefit from "week-end truffles" on order. The short wine menu is a delight (Château Réva, Domaine Dhommé coteaux du Layon, Poilly fume Bruno Blondelet, Domaine de la Feuillarde in Bourgogne?) at gentle prices. A healthy restaurant with a philanthropy connotation! Good health to you and your wallet! It is rare to see them both together!

Chef : Véronique Mariottini
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

RN7
Quartier Saint-Jaume
83340 - Le Luc En Provence
Phone : 04.94.60.08.81

L'etape

00

No menus on show outside. There must be a legislation micro-climate concerning restaurants in Le Luc. Only the cost of the hotel rooms is available. So I innocently go in and enquire "is it possible to eat?". From behind the bar, a nice

lady accepts! I then go on to enquire about the dish of the day. She replies "urm, there are at least 10!". 13 € for a full menu! The dining room is pleasant and the newcomers have done a good lot of painting. It's nice if not a little old fashioned. In the middle of the dining room is a reasonable buffet with well presented dishes. And green flies. I don't like flies very much, but I like green ones even less. They contrast too much with the grated carrots. The man attending is fun. Gentle, calm, totally disorganised. Wearing Bermuda shorts, flowery shirt and sandals. You quickly gather that he isn't going to compete in the Maître d'hôtel world championships, but I choose to appreciate this amateurism from the fun angle. He comes to my table, looks at me and says nothing. I do the same. He finally lets out "so, you've never been here before?". No written menus of any kind, here is oral tradition! The "buffet froid" including insects. I scratch the surface of the food on offer, at least trying to avoid any runways. The refrigerator must be a little out of order. With the heat, the mozzarella has become acid. I daren't have anything else. Let's say... 8/20. The places' speciality is apparently "confit de canard au chou" (crystallised duck with cabbage). I don't hesitate one bit! I should! Very greasy, lots of skin, and served with... choucroute! The choucroute is sweet as well! As if there is syrup in it! I don't finish it! 7/20. The waiter boasts that the desserts are "homemade". Who is he taking for a ride, even if this is honourable sub-contract at 12/20: a "tarte aux fruits". The knife that is brought to me with the tart is dirty, the staff doesn't notice. All you have to do is take a look before carrying it to the customer, second nature to professionals. Tut tut. It is amazing when you think about it. Anyone can open a restaurant, which is a good thing! But there is no criteria demanded to guide the more adventurous.

Chef : Who knows..
Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 9/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 11/20. Coffee = 14/20.

59 rue Jean Jaurès
83340 - Le Luc En Provence
Phone : 04.94.47.99.19

LE PRADET

Le Medaillon

Ψ_{1/2}

A return to the past with an address that had given us a lot of pleasure. It is then with a feeling of infinite sadness that we admit to not recognising the Médail couples house. There is still the refined family atmosphere in this bungalow and its small patio. Very pleasant. We can hear the sound of the chef whisking in the kitchen. Very reassuring. My starter from the menu at 39,50 € though: "terrinerie de foie gras de canard maison, toasts campagnards et compotée d'oignons" (homemade foie gras terrine, toast and crystallised onions) is deceiving. It had all it needed to please; the toast (only done on one side), fig jam, good presentation. But the foie gras is freezing in its little soup tureen. It chills you, icy foie gras. The point of the knife makes crumbs. No interest, and really, it's not very "professional" for a chef who has so many flying hours in the cuisine world. 10/20. He catches up a

little with the "confit de canard Médaille et ses pommes Sarlandaises" (duck conserve and potatoes). It's a little flat but the conserve is homemade, contrarily to the ones you are told are homemade when they in fact come out of a tin. The skin is flabby when usually it's a titbit to nibble when grilled and crisp. As should have been the Sarlandaise potato. 12/20. I don't feel like dessert, I feel frustrated by the lack of South-west cooking that I enjoy wooden table style, with knocking glasses, laughing musketeers, rolling r's. Madame Médail who is doing the attendance doesn't smile. Great sadness. So cheese it will be: "Rocamadour et confiture de figues" (Rocamadour cheese with fig jam). It is a bit consoling. I'm not offered coffee, so I ask for the bill. No stamp on it, I have to ask. It's a pain, annoying. The feeling of having been considered as a wrong track, a customer by mistake, when I had simply come to have a good time. Even more deceiving seeing as the address had been appreciated by the B&O for some time. Things pass, does nothing last?

Chef : Jacques Médail

Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 8/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 13/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

**96 chemin de San Peyre
83220 - Le Pradet
Phone : 04.94.21.05.68**

Le Saona



I like Le Pradet... On one side is the beach for those obsessed with flip flops and on the other is a more animated and ordinary centre of town view, especially on market day. On the big square, the gentlemen enter the newspaper stand quickly, holding their heads high and come out again slowly, dragging their feet, their heads low, noses plunged in to their open newspaper. Whilst sitting on café terraces wearing their sun glasses, spring birds laugh in to their phones, put their hands through their hair and stretch out their legs which seem to be impatiently waiting for the prickly midday sun to turn them pink: we're just coming out of winter. Oh yes. I'm in a good mood. Not my fault. It's the chef's, he's got a clever toque. A pure and restful décor, where the essential: the dishes, arrive like pictures: full of colour. Here is a "brochette de magret au sésame" (duck breast kebab with sesame) which acts as a full meal, small appetites must change paths. The chef is not stingy with his portions! The not over greasy breast has been seized on the grill, fresh salad and to garnish, a delicious lightly garlicky polenta. Super! 15/20. One dish and my stomach is already waving a white flag! But the sound of chocolate can not be ignored. In Eric Parisi's "tarte au chocolat". Just as this chef can please with titbits, raspberries, red currents, strawberries, oranges. Striking chocolate, plain, a frank tablet. Maybe slightly too hot... But 15/20 with no discussing! The chef changes the dishes depending on the moment, the market, the cost of copper in oriental Timor and the position of the Sagittarius constellation in the sky. I'm joking: when he wishes, depending how he feels! He barely manages to hide his emotion, this father of twin girls aged 28, when he expresses that he learnt a lot in the kitchen with Christophe Solé, during a happy time at "La Réserve" in Carqueiranne. And then this. One

day along with his partner Stéphanie who runs the dining room, they opened shop in a charming square in the Var, in Le Pradet, just like that, without warning. You know the rest of the story, and if you went there, you would become part of it too.

Chef : Eric Parisi

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**43 place Paul Flamencq
83200 - Le Pradet
Phone : 04.94.66.27.90**

Le Crabe Poilu



By far, the dark haired sparkling waitress is the best thing. She hands out smiles and kind words to all of the varied and disparate customers, which in fact means the same thing, but I felt like saying it. With someone as welcoming is in the dining room, the establishment earns remarkably high marks for "the attendance mark" according to our criteria. With Mauricette, although we played the busy game (we've got an appointment etc) just to test her limit with annoying customers, this pretty young lady carries on with a smile, a model, a model-employee. The dishes are less strict. To start with: it's expensive. The menu at 25 € is not very exciting. Correct prices near the sea are becoming a rare thing. What does "correct" mean? Nothing really! It's quality price that counts! This is what makes us remember places or not. For example Mauricette's "malfadines sauce roquefort" lack interest. This is pasta for those who don't know. They arrive warm, the sauce is ordinary. 12/20. And 10 € For 16 € I was hoping to do better with my "magret de canard" (duck breast). Pre-cut but burnt. No supple pink meat underneath the fat, it is as dry as a stick. Three garnishings: a cold ratatouille, hot not greasy French fries, tinned cold green beans. High season hasn't started but slaughtering has. At this price, you should expect the place to be a little more serious. 10/20. We end here, don't really feel like dessert, we just want to go. On one side it is a bar, on the other a restaurant. On the port, facing the boats which are not the only ones to be swaying: the cuisine is too, it is totally lacking rigour.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 18/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

**67 port des Oursinières
83220 - Le Pradet
Phone : 04.94.14.97.64**

LE RAYOL-CANADEL

Ali-zara



Here is a refreshing quiet little place, with a tranquil patio, much more a friend's house than a restaurant. This is Ali's, boss and unconventional official waiter. The man could give lessons on good and joyful manners to a lot of blasé restaurant owners. This is also Zara's, discreet

Zara, principal to flavour; she prepares pastillas, tajines, couscous, kebabs and even her own recipe of stuffed sardines! Patience is a virtue! Take your time! The menu may well be short, this cuisine takes a lot of time! Mauricette who is getting more and more like the queen mum every day, with her green hat, has awoken desire with her "pastilla au poulet", a jewel prepared in no time at all, it hesitates between sweet or salty finesse. I invite (now do I really mean invite?) readers who think they know what this is all about, too often micro-waved sweetmeat; come and try this! 15/20. My lady who often has a ferocious appetite takes on a "tajine d'agneau aux pruneaux et aux amandes" (north African stew of lamb with dried prunes and almonds). And me "tajine d'agneau aux légumes", which happen to be potatoes and carrots. To be honest, we didn't have time to talk between mouthfuls. We mentioned the meat, lip smacking! Really good! Both earn 15/20! Mint tea to close... at the same time starts a discussion with Ali, and a little behind him, Zara who has come to greet us. Desperate to let people know of this cuisine that has been handed down over the generations. Ali is really someone. Ali that rhymes with "ami", there are not many clients that could contradict me on that in this adorable little booth! Ah yes, just a stone throw away from a beautiful village, between sea and scenery, magnificent gardens.

Chef : Zara Zenkour

Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

Full menu. Take away. Booking 48h in advance preferable for certain dishes. Patio. Easy parking in front of the restaurant. Booking recommended seeing the size of the establishment.

**Le Cadénalia
RD 559**

**83820 - Le Rayol-canadel
Phone : 04.94.05.85.85**

LES ARCS SUR ARGENS

La Paillotte



Of course our youngsters are lovable! We aren't going to criticise the young waitresses yellow jogging bottoms or the chefs' Tahitian shorts and trainers... are we? Oh alright then! A global count: two attendants, two in the kitchen. Only one customer. At lunchtime. Mark you there is also the man plugging in the credit card terminal. To allow this to be installed during a sitting is, I find, out of place. It's like coffee merchants delivering their goods or the Gaulle's their warm barley ale whilst the customer is sipping his soup in the corner, very nearly feeling guilty because resting. It sends the client into second place like a profitable object and no longer like a welcome subject. Anyway. Mind you, I should have spotted this. When the outdoor blackboard with its dishes of the day spells out "lasagne" and "cassolette de St-Jacque" without the S, you gather that there aren't going to be many of these sea creatures in the dish! The lady takes my order! I go for the 12 € formula with dish of the day, dessert and ¼ of wine. And for pizza because I really fancy pizza. But even though I am the only person in sight, I

seem to have disorganised things! This has never happened to me before, but I am brought "pizza" and "cassolette de St-Jacques" at the same time! I may like to gobble, but that gives me a lot to get down in one go! Unless!.. The pizza is made by a sauce wizard! Whizz down the sauce! Do you wizz for more sauce? A bucket full! Inside: two shrimps which are as dry as creepers and two scallops which are as strings as rope. A dry mountain of courgette and aubergine rings, boiled and then hastily pushed through the oven. Typical hospital food. See what I mean? 8/20. "Tarte aux pommes" for dessert. Although it isn't homemade it's correct and has a slight taste of Calvados which helps to forget the Everest sized lump of whipped cream. I don't know what is happening to the snow in the Himalayan Mountains, but we must do summink about bottled whipped cream disappearing onto mediocre puds. 11/20. The coffee isn't very good but is a gift. And the pizza? At home! Come on! I'm taking it! In a special box! Not bad either! 13/20!

Chef : Who knows..

Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 11/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 9/20.

**1 rue du Docteur Mourre
83460 - Les Arcs Sur Argens
Phone : 04.94.73.30.14**

LORGUES

Cabazur



Although as short as a "haiku", the menu goes from "l'entrecôte" (steak) to "homard thermidor" (lobster thermidor, spelt without an H in the shop window, thermidor is the 11th month of the French revolutionary calendar). It takes all sorts to make a world. The restaurant is small, intimate. In the toilets, the towel has been around! You might as well dry your hands under the tap! It may well have seen as many damp hands as Chirac whilst shaking hands at the agriculture show! Anyway! I choose to go straight for a main course: "magret de canard et poires au vin" (duck breast and pears in wine). The dish is generous, but allows itself some daring interpretations. The sauce and garnishing which were planned have been replaced by a cream and morel mushroom sauce, potatoes and peas. Oh? Um? A little wine sauce on the potatoes? Two sauces on the plate! The more, the merrier! The duck breast that I salvage from under the sauce is over done (even pre-cooked). I give it 14/20 even so because I'm in a good mood. And 16 € isn't that bad in the end. Seeing the evidently "external to the enterprise" provenance of the sweets: tropézienne and black forest gâteau... Do you need me to draw a picture? The major problem will be the welcome, it is completely inexistent and totally conforms to the Var philosophy as soon as tourism shows its nose. The attendance remains to the strict minimum. On the other hand, there is fun going on in the kitchen where they're talking about a local football team on the national lunchtime news. Offside or not offside is the big question (goodness), they sure like soccer here. But as for the customer who leaves without any acknowledgement, it's no hair off their heads, although there are three of them. Due to the

penalty maybe?

Welcome = 5/20. Attendance = 6/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toilettes = 12/20.

**18 place d'Entrechaux
83510 - Lorgues
Phone : 04.94.73.97.98**

MEOUNES

La Bergerie De Meounes



Méounes village is in the Gapeau valley. Except that the restaurant is at the top, on an infinitely green plain, amidst trees that run around the forest and boars whose luscious green leaves grow back in the spring. Its charm can be said in two words: good, welcoming and modest. That makes three but then I can't help talking so fast. I even have some others I could say, descriptions. But anyway, I'm not going to bore you to death. All year round, whether wearing moccasins or high heels, customers regale to the limit. It has to be said that there is enough unpretentious, pleasing food going, dishes which remain simple and good and avoid the culinary-snobbism mistakes that must not exist in a place such as this. The chef's roots are in my starter! Watch out! I'm not talking about carrots or turnips! But the chef is from the Lyon area! My "quenelle de saumon gratinée maison, sauce belle-aurore" (pronounced q'nelle) (salmon quenelle) is great! Straight out of the oven, well risen, rather like Mauricette after a cassoulet eating contest! And what sauce! 15/20! What follows is just as generous: "épaule d'agneau farcie, sauce basilic" (Stuffed shoulder of lamb, basil sauce) garnished with gratin dauphinois and a real Provençal tomato out of the oven. The sauce is a little extravagant although well made, 14/20. The cheese tray makes a big effort, is worth it, the Chaource is delicious. The chef's "tarte au fraises" (strawberry tart) is very pro. Shortbread pastry, nice and neat, is surprising even. It is good, not over sugary. The industrial usually is, when the cook tries to mask the lack of flavour with an avalanche of glucose. 14,5/20. The attendance is all smiles, attentive as if Anne, the charming boss, wanted you to come back. What a weird idea? Restaurant owners who do their best to make you want to come back again! You see, it does happen! And don't forget to bring the kids and the rest of the family next time! There's room for everyone! Inside, outside and in my ladies chamber!

Chef : Alain Donat

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Situated about 1 kilometre from Méounes heading in the direction of Brignoles. Turn right. Then, follow the signs for 3 kilometres.

**Planesselve
83136 - Meounes
Phone : 04.94.33.94.12**

Hostellerie La Poêle D'or



Alleluia, brothers! Blow the oboe, let the accordion play! The Natalini's are back! Who are they? "La Bergerie", in Le Beausset in the late '90s! Mean anything to you? It's not that long ago really! Especially for Mauricette, our walking-talking historical monument! So! They have come back after having made some happy customers near Narbonne at the Château Lastour. They were even sadder to see them go again. We aren't complaining though! Because here my dear friends: "La poêle d'or" is an address that we like. A story, a soul, a fireplace, woodwork as if the chef were a cabinetmaker, colourful tablecloths as if Chantal Natalini, the mistress of the place, were a needlewoman. She is maternal and kind as if she were out to do well, which I enjoy because I'm the one that's here right now. Are you following? In the kitchen there is a duo. Michel Natalini and his son-in-law Christophe, neither of them are clumsy recipe makers. The menu: on order: lobster, crayfish of all sizes, and rock crab! Mouth-watering menus and dishes! Tankalizer! It's always a pleasure! Then starter "délice de gésiers confits poêlés aux senteurs des Landes et fricassée de champignons" (crystallized fried gizzard with a taste of the Landes, mushroom fricassée). A well worked starter, crisp in flaky pastry, generous, sauce made in Natalini. 15/20! A granita at half time. It's always a pleasure. Have I already said that? Oh! What next? I shall tell you straight: I have never seen lamb ribs like this in a menu at 25 € before! Never, Heather! "Feuilleté de côtes d'agneau grillé à la crème d'ail" (grilled lamb ribs with garlic cream). The cooking times are just right, classily presented; I dig in like a starving man, which is funny when you think of my daily labour. The sauce is lacking a little salt. But a big 14,5/20 even so. In not far from now, restaurants that have cheese on offer are going to be in the Guinness book of records! I appreciate mine, sober on its plate with leaves from the garden put together by a Roquebrussane herdsman, at the bottom of the valley... A historic address in the Gapeau valley, taken over by people with character, they bare off bad food makers just long enough for you to enjoy a quiet meal. Really good, and totally reassuring in this day and age.

Chef : Christophe Descharles et Michel Natalini

Welcome = 18/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20.

**41 route de Toulon
83136 - Meounes
Phone : 04.94.48.91.97**

NANS LES PINS

La Galabrette



When I get close it looks like a prehistoric grotto that I visited when I was in primary school. The closer you get, the darker it is. It wouldn't be so bad if it was warm inside. It is even colder than outside which is only just 4°C. Empty, the big fire place seems to be scouring in the background. There are heaters everywhere, two or three to Japanese petrol thingamajigs but on strike. I quickly think it through, I wanted to sit

near the heating, but as there is no heating, so I sit where I'm told. 11 € 17 € and 25 € And full menu, of course. I am alone in the restaurant. I choose the intermediate at 17 € After having chosen my dishes I wait, wait... I'm called, and I start seeing things. Instead of salt and pepper on the tables, I see gloves and woollen hats. Seeing the freezing atmosphere, it will be a hot starter! Anything just as long as it's hot! Great! It will be anything and hot! The "gratin de crabe et pétoncles à la ciboulette" (crab and scallops with chives) big like a crème brûlée, with egg and overcooked. Frozen is nearly normal that these scallops. 9/20. What follows is not very glorious with a "filet de rascasse à la crème de basilic" (scorpion fish fillet with basil cream). The dish is well applied. Its contents get cold very quickly, seeing as the ceramic is frozen. The fish is from of a plastic transparent bag which itself came out of the freezer, it looks like a stringy overcooked ball, low quality scorpion fish. Low range, low quality. The garnishing rice is oily, the grains are all chunky. The fish sauce, fortunately short, does what it can to save the dish 6/20. So 7/20. The dessert isn't too bad in the end. Normal because it's industrial made! A "tatin d'abricots" (apricot upside down cake). Over sugary and not "tatin" at all, if that isn't a profusion of base quality caramel. 11/20. Profusion of frozen food in the plate, the freezing atmosphere, dishes served with such pride the we don't dare say that it isn't good, a single tooth pick brought directly with the fingers by Madame. A little culinary lucidity and empathy towards the client would do no harm.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 8/20. Bread = 15/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

Traverse des Prés
83860 - Nans Les Pins
Phone : 04.94.78.62.05

PIERREFEU

La Grignotiere

ΨΨΨ

And then you have chefs such as Christophe Néri, who learnt his trade with the cooking galaxies best, the ones whose work is always regular, and never step out from the path that they have chosen. The ones who like work well done. There is nothing surprising with this native man, native village as well, he looks you straight in the eye, he has a frank smile and noisily shows his work philosophy: customers, customers, and customers again. We'll talk about me later, if there's enough room, there are more important things in life. As for we guinea pigs, we like chefs whose priority remains with the customer who was made the effort to visit the establishment. Good products, taste research, and dishes that could have been painted by Matisse. A surprisingly divine starter: "la charlotte de tourteau au coulis d'avocat, vinaigrette d'agrumes et cappuccino au lait de coco" (crab cake with avocado sauce, citrus vinaigrette and coconut milk cappuccino). Three flavours that all stand out but which are made compatible by this voluble chef! Textures and temperatures mixed together, a nice piece of work to be jotted down in an apprentice's book. 15,5/20. It is going to be hard for the main course to do as well. Challenge met by "le pavé de mérrou en croûte de noix,

ragoût de lentilles vertes et fricassée de cèpes" (grouper steak with a nut crust, green lentil stew and cepe fricassée). This native dish pushes as far as being made with fresh fish, something rare... and expensive. Can you taste the difference from the frozen, stringy stuff? Oh yes, my little green bunnies, this is grouper fish. 15/20. The cheese trolley is superb. Traditional and origin guaranteed. Desserts with which to finish off the meal, colourful, hot, cold, soft, hard.... And especially good! 15/20! The dining room staff is run by Pascal Canole, he sweeps you through the whole meal whilst aiming for your pleasure. An address which puts the word "restaurant" in to its true context, and does so with subtle style.

Chef : Christophe Néri
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

19 avenue des Poilus
83390 - Pierrefeu
Phone : fax. 04.94.28.27.93

PLAN D'AUPS

Les Cedres

Ψ

This is the big deception of the moment. I can't go too far with such temporal feelings, who knows what I'll be having tomorrow. I had heard so much about the place! And me! As naïve as a floating cloud, was rubbing my hands together in expectation! The fall is even harder as my fantasies were having a field day. Plan d'Aups is a pearl at the edge of the world, the Tibet of the Bouches-du Rhône County. Anyway. She can't really afford to do it seeing her age, but Mauricette has a tooth (or even several) against the place. At the end at around 2:30pm, the managers switch off the lights, obviously in a hurry to get rid of the customers that had made the effort to come so far for a bite to eat. Don't tell me that it is nothing to get my knickers in a twist about! But perfect for getting Mauricette to turn green! You feel like hiding in the carpet hairs in shame for the place! It all started off well enough, an Inn; trees, no parking meters to be seen, a pretty long un-extravagant room, slightly over looking the garden. Far away, greenery as if it was raining down. The only full menu costs 23 € which is quite a bit. Mauricette cleverly chooses a "terrinerie charcutière maison" which isn't badly put together, no need to add salt and pepper. Too cold but 14/20. I am left wondering before my "croustillant de chèvre et figatelli sur lit de verdure" (crisp goat's cheese and figatelli sausage on salad). Philo pastry folded like a sheet with cheese but no figatelli. Charcuterie with character yes, maybe even Corsican, but not figatelli. Unless it was presented like a slice of ham. No exciting sensations, 12/20 is well paid. My fat head with a green hairpiece has "tête de veau sauce gribiche" (calf's head with sauce) which is certainly generous but violently smothered with sauce as if there is somfink to hide! The sauce is boring, 12/20 again. I have to pay a supplement for my "sours d'agneau confite" (crystallized lamb ribs), some effort was made. Dry around the edges, covered over with oily peppers, an uncooked potato (hard). 11/20 and a total lack of

pleasure. Seeing what's happening, Mauricette abandons all idea of dessert whereas for me: "fraisier maison" (homemade strawberry cake). A small parallelepiped thing, both icy and hard, the mousseline cream doesn't like a freezing fridge. What happened to the cakes we used to have? 13/20. Alright, we may just as well leave as the lights have been switched off. We have fallen from a height, and we're at Plan d'Aups.

Welcome = 8/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

83640 - Plan D'aups
Phone : 04.42.04.50.03

RIANS

L'arc De Sedo

Ψ_{1/2}

What is common to both Corsica and Great-Britain? Don't search in the cookery world, we haven't got time. Both of them are islands! He is in the dining-room and is Corsican, he wonders casually from table to table with an unquestionable know-how, no need to draw you a picture. She, cooks. And is English. She doesn't do too badly at all. Her 12 € menu on a weekday lunchtime seems to please the 3 or 4 regulars. Very colourful place, bright and anti-grey. That's where the name of the place comes from: "the rainbow". Well, I suppose. Quite a bit of choice on the menu, I note "noix de St-Jacques gratinées sauce aux écrevisses" (St-Jacques shellfish with a crayfish sauce). The best bit is the garnishing. Especially the tasty fried vegetables with, I think, a little parmesan cheese. The problem with the dish comes from the product. To call these minute scallops with no coral that look like sliced salsify St-Jacques is completely abnormal. It is the retailer's fault, the industrial agro-food which tries to force us to believe anything, goes as far as changing the vocabulary by sliding semantics. The chef is only an accomplice, only repeats what is written on the packet. 13/20 and 16 € for the dish even so! The end is good with an "assiette de fromages corses" (plate of Corsican cheeses). There are two, Ewe's and goat's. Accompanied by three sorts of jam: fig, myrtle and citron marmelade. A nice moment which is ruined by the bread, cut too early, so dry. 14,5/20. I saw the yellow "Henri Blanc" coffee cups. The waiter informs me that they only serve "Lavazza", which is a good "Henri Blanc"... 12/20. Colourful family feeling, with no false pretence and with humanity. Doesn't make waves, hiding in the village streets as if not wanting to be found. If you have no ambition for finesse and have a thirst for original places, here's your man.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 12/20.

26 rue Gabriel Péri
83560 - Rians
Phone : 04.94.77.65.95

Restaurant De La Fontaine

0

This is set in a strange place although practical thanks to the village hall car park. The interior Deco is not lacking interest, it's probably recent, and makes use of every square metre. A sad looking waitress, unhappy customers, a loud, badly tuned television which plays musical clips, a dish of the day at 9 € called "escalope à la normande". All of the other propositions (more expensive) on a blackboard, King prawns, salmon steak and steak. I am brought an enormous dish with tagliatelle as if it was going out of fashion, and little oddly cut bits of poultry. At that price, I wasn't expecting veal. So "à la normande" means with "tinned button mushrooms and fresh cream" not exactly what I would call cuisine, it's a shame, and 12/20 even so for the effort in quantity. The dessert is appalling, and quite the opposite to patisserie. The cook (if he exists) cannot be cross: frozen, subcontract, made up with custard. It should be a "tarte au chocolat" (chocolate tart) according to its name and the colour, but any precision is useless. Because as far as taste is concerned, it's bad and hardly recognizable, one spoonful is ample enough to make my mind up. Certainly blasé, the waitress goes on as if she doesn't see that the dish has hardly been touched. But even at "only" 4 € (I have already been charged 6 € for the same awful thing elsewhere) here is the kind of product which would make any restaurant clientele flee, that is if they have any clientele. 5/20. In the end, the waitress comes out of her sulky autism (but why she was sulking, who knows) to say "don't put the name on the cheque", as a little notice is up saying that the house temporarily doesn't take credit cards. And then I have to ask for a decent bill, with the right address and everything. I assure you that it is sometimes very complicated to eat in a restaurant.

Welcome = 8/20. Attendance = 10/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 16/20.

**Avenue Franklin Roosevelt
83560 - Rians
Phone : 04.94.86.03.48**

SAINT RAPHAEL

La Table Du Boucher

ΨΨΨ

If you find recipes distilled in Hervé Deschamps restaurant in the articles consecrated to light eating in the ladies weekly supplement, the editor of the B&O will offer you a year's free subscription! I suspect the man set this place up in order to make the dishes he dreamt of! Our subconscious sometimes plays games! There must be a bit of that in this pugnacious, honest man. A restaurant dedicated to meat facing the sea, funnily enough gets me wondering. Mark you, if he is going to be original and make good food in this area of Saint-Raphaël which has been abandoned to opportunists, he may just as well push it as far as avoiding fish! No? But even so! A seaside starter to prove me wrong! "Tartare de St-Jacques" with homemade smoked salmon as a bonus! United they stand! For my pleasure! Pleasing and wisely adapted to start off with, 14,5/20. What follows is a generous (too) portion. "Magret de canard sauce paysanne" (duck breast with mushroom sauce), it is round with its mushroom and brandy sauce, potato

puree and ratatouille. Greedy and generous, frankly friendly. The cooking times are as demanded. 15/20. I had decided to opt out of dessert and so wiped the plate to the last drop, 15/20. The "nougat glacé" (iced nougat) is perfect. Homemade, round, in both senses, it saves the spoon by being supple. Just a little overwhelmed by whipped cream, 15/20 is well earned though. I will give the setting a miss; it is a real restaurant with all it takes. Including an attentive maitre d'hôtel, this is "Giuseppe"! So! Try it out of season especially if you take your summer holidays in November. It's just that without noise or streamers, this place has a reputation built of stone.

**Chef : Laurent Grzywa
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.**

**Port de Santa-Lucia
83700 - Saint Raphael
Phone : 04.94.95.96.11**

SAINT ZACHARIE

Pego

ΨΨ_{1/2}

A kind of happy house! With an enormous heart! The kind of place within which you would like to bump in to a friend! Or make some new ones! A place that smiles at you whilst whispering in your ear "have a nice time"! Have you ever visited a place that talks to you? I can tell you that this one has a lot to say! At lunchtime, the relaxed regulars who are ready to play "bowls" after the meal mingle with the tie necked escapees whether from their cars or their offices. In the dining room or on the terrace, there is a nice feeling. Pego... Anyone from Provence out there? What does it mean? Shoe maker in Provençal! Joël Lan's (who was born here) grandfather! The chef! 32 years old and a world tour in his pocket! 3 years in Corsica at Algajola, 2 years in New Caledonia at the "Mérédien" in Nouméa, 2 years in a "Relais-Château" in England. Such a trip makes your brain boggle with flavours. And avoids you pondering on your own belly button. Native cooking can be found world wide, but no need to pack your bags and try foreign restaurants, Joël Lan has brought it all here for you. His menu changes nearly every week, at the moment the examples are: "pave de boeuf à la Texane" (Texan steak), "magret sauce aigre-douce et ses nouilles" (sweet and sour duck breast with noodles), "loup à la provençal" (sea bass, Provence style), "tortillas con patatas" (potato tortilla), "poulet tandoori en beignet" (frittered chicken tandoori)...I say "let's go to Asia" to Mauricette who starts with an "encornet thaï mode" (Indonesian squid), with vegetables and pimento. She likes it and hands out her 14,5/20. My "rizotto aux légumes du soleil" (risotto with summer vegetables) is very generous and colourful for 14/20. A big split for the lady with the green hat despite her canonical age! She goes from "Thai" to... "andouillette à la dijonnaise" (chitterling sausage, Dijon style)! Which she admits to being perfect! Exemplary cooking (it's not so easy) and good presentation. 14,5/20. The same goes for my "filet de Baramundi fumé à la feuille de Bêthen" (smoked fillet of fish in

Bethany leaves). A fish from Thailand whose texture is rather like that of daurade. The leaf on top gives a slight smoked taste which reminds me of fresh water fish. Fun, and the rice with coconut milk isn't over the top. Another 14,5/20. Isn't that sweet? For all of the pots of disappointed and the decanter sour, open your ears as wide as you can: it comes from the Triennes vineyard! You don't mess with pleasure! The waitress is natural, smiling and looks you in the eye. A real change from the previous people (Urban Dubois) who have moved on. It takes all sorts to make a world, including with different types of cuisine. This is the point that Joël Lan is trying to stress in his dishes. A good man, who cooks well, and all for your own good.

**Chef : Joël Lan
Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.**

**RN 560 La Petite Foux
83640 - Saint Zacharie
Phone : 04.42.72.94.28**

La Flambee

ΨΨ

If we stick to conventional restaurant criteria, I think we're going to get loads of post. The formalist should turn his pen round several times before writing down his certitudes. Because the starving will find humanity here (and I mean the good and the bad) that are necessary to have a nice unpretentious lunch or to fill up at vile cost. Vile cost is when you have eaten and you're pleased. Which is commonly called quality/price report. So, a poor pizza is expensive. And when you enjoy it, the quality/price report is better still. The big pizza "4 fromages" on one side and "royale" on the other costs 12 € Mauricette fills her moustache with mozzarella cheese! 14,5/20! We both have dessert, without a doubt not very original because we don't even remember the names! Sorry, but I'm trying to catch up on my critics and I've lost my notes! Ah! This culinary critic job is something! I must get serious again! Let it slip! The boss is that friendly that he recognises you even when he's never seen you before, big hand shakes and long words, rather like a club med' animator. We understand the establishments' paradoxical success; correct cooking, rather friendly cordiality, noise and good words, terrace and car park. A simple concept, a successful pleasing mixture. Is part of the food world, and that's a good thing.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 12/20. Coffee = 14/20.

**Boulevard Gaston de Saporita
83640 - Saint Zacharie
Phone : 04.42.72.96.86**

SAINT-CYR-SUR-MER

Indochine

Ψ_{1/2}

In net progress since it was taken over about five years ago. Not enough to make you climb the

curtains, in any case, I didn't see any curtains. I was alone in the restaurant. Except for a couple of teenagers in love, I suppose they hadn't seen each other for a long time. She ate her boyfriend's mouth more often than the spring rolls on the table. He: laid back and giving in to it all as practically straddled by the girl. Here are two that won't need crystallized ginger for dessert! The music (for once) was not loud enough to cover them up; I was embarrassed to over-hear some of the things they said, some of them being hotter than sitting in the August sun without a parasol. I didn't fancy a menu, menus include dessert, the Asians rarely have much personality in their desserts. It will unfortunately be the case for my "assiette vapeur" (steamed dish) too, steamed ravioli in their tin. Three meat ones, not good, saved by an oxo sauce which plays at being Attila with the taste-buds. Three shrimp ones, too finely chopped and not totally honest. Nothing very costly, 6 € and 12/20. 12/20 will also be the mark given to the "Mi Xiao crevettes et légumes" (shrimp and vegetable stew) at 11 € No ginger, no coriander, but fresh vegetables and crisp shrimps. Better than nothing. So, 12/20. Is that all? Er yes, that's all. Oh no! Er... Sir? Do you have any ginger?

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 14/20.

**4 rue de la Chapelle
Les Lecques
83270 - Saint-cyr-sur-mer
Phone : 04.94.26.24.69**

SAINT-MANDRIER

Le Discus

0

In fact, this is a replacement for the "Beaufort". The restaurant is on the Pin Rolland port. On the blackboard today "sole meunière" with coffee at 9,50 € Good job I came! Sole at that price, you can't miss it! To give you an overall view: the customers are ill-assorted, boat repairers with polyester resin on their hands are next to tourists who themselves have a strong British accent for the main part. Office workers too. Quite a lot of people have hurried in to sit at paper clothed tables and the kleenex type paper napkins. Just before mine, the waitress takes the order from a couple who chronologically had arrived after me, but they're regulars. Which means that there are no daily suggestions left. The "sole meunière" slips through my fingers, a way of speaking of course, it is no longer more than a memory. What bothers me is that the management doesn't even replace the offer and the waitress boggles at me when I dare to ask "what is there instead of the sole?" in a slightly irritated fashion? Pretty eyes though, but even so. The blank is long, I'm the one who gives up slackly. As there is no replacement I opt for "espadon grillé" (grilled sword fish) from the menu. On my right, the table of five that arrived after me will be served before me as well. "Tartares" (raw minced meat) which look appetising. When that sort of thing happens twice in a row, you wonder about your mental health, it's that comical. Never mind. My fish finally arrives. The piece is thick, steak then. It smells slightly, a little elderly. I can guess that I am going to regret my sole for a while. The

ratatouille is fresh, but you need to have good teeth for the rice. Some grains are hard, not cooked. Or they have been fried violently. A clumsy dish that costs 14 € When you pay to not be happy, it's always expensive. 8/20. There is not much choice of dessert. The famous "tarte au citron meringué" (lemon meringue pie) (5 €) is in the balance. This is not a completely miserable industrial pud. But it pushes too hard on the glucose pedal, sickly sweet. The glass of water doesn't touch the sides after that. 10/20. The bread is absolutely appalling. The dining room is noisy. You have to pay at the counter. Oh yes. If on top they had to go to the customer's tables, well!

Welcome = 13/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 13/20. Bread = 2/20.

**Port de Pin Rolland
83430 - Saint-mandrier
Phone : 04.94.30.68.51**

Le Lamparo

ARevoir

The newcomers are sweetly swimming in their naivety. Slightly hesitant here, rather amateurish there... There is no good will lacking. Just a minimum of professionalism. Before opening a restaurant, people should have to pass something like a driving test, an authorisation to use the customer's credit card if he is pleased. But it doesn't exist. The elderly members of the food world who squat to wearing institutions wouldn't agree to that. According to them, it is the chefs themselves who decide whether they are good or not, not the customers. Spot the odd one out... But I'm wandering from the subject! The formula at 15 € with a drink is not a silly one. It enables you to re-centre your budget! "Gratinée de fruits de mer" (sea food gratin). Attracted by the gratin side of things, I had, never the less, few illusions as to the "packet" side of the sea food which in fact, is a guarantee to relative freshness. Except that I am brought a cream soup with sawdust on top, it had been nowhere near the oven. Is it difficult to put a dish through the wood oven when it is opening its arms to you? 11/20! The same wood oven in which the place cooks its pizzas, including the one imposed on me in my formula, "pizza royale". It offers the particularity of having anchovies on top, and I don't like anchovies on pizza, especially when they aren't planned. The title "royale" is thus a subject for interpretation. On the other hand, the crunchy cinders from the oven aren't planned in any recipe. Hey! Sweep the oven! I bite the pastry and chomp sand. Without mentioning that the cubes of ham aren't ham, that the pastry is hard, mainly around the edges. But the mushrooms are fresh... Let's go for 10/20... The people that have taken over the place have cleaned it out. It's clean, without a doubt disinfected. I had lunch with a strong smell of mothballs that was coming from goodness knows where. I shall stop here. I eventually must try again because there is lots of good will... and when the place takes on a chef worth his title. Even in a pizzeria, it's not such a bad idea.

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 12/20.

**21 avenue Estienne d'Orves
83430 - Saint-mandrier
Phone : 04.94.63.53.54**

SANARY

Le Cabanon

ΨΨΨ 1/2

An unexpected return for "le Cabanon" in Port-Issol into the pages of the BâO! You will quickly notice that the new management has taken on the skill of an outstanding chef. Or otherwise you're as deaf as a door post. As the young chef duo have solid arguments. These seagull eggs were 26 and 22 years old at the last count! Mauricette doesn't loose one of her nasty habits: with the tip of her knife she pinched one of my "noix de St-Jacques rôties au café, roquette poivrée et vinaigre amère" (St-Jacques shellfish roasted in coffee, peppered rocket salad and sour vinegar). Beautiful and fresh, admirably cooked. Coated with ground coffee and the result is tasty. The rocket and vinegar bring in a little acidity which is a useful contrast. The exercise is even more risky, as the shellfish often suffice on their own. 15,5/20, just like that to start with, without warning. Sitting on the patio about two metres from the water, the lady with the green hat goes for fish, and here comes her "pavé de loup cuit croustillant à la peau, morilles et asperges vertes, jus de persil plat" (sea perch with crisp skin, morilles mushrooms and green asparagus, flat parsley sauce). The starter was not just a lucky shot: an ace in the kitchen, the chef! With Mauricette, you can always talk about good products, weekly courses with grand chefs, the "gomillo" and the "miche" on CV's, she always gives the same assessment: a cook is an ace when the cooking times are right. She hands out 15,5/20. I go as far as 16/20 with my "gambas au jus de fraises, risotto crémeux aux truffes d'été, jeunes légumes glacés" (king prawns in strawberry juice, creamy risotto with summer truffles, cold young vegetables). Golly it's good! And cheeky! Let yourself go! Play the game! It's so good! Everything is precise, coherent... I'm going to say it again 16/20! Times two, that gives you 32/40! A light and refined conclusion with: "la nage de fraises à la verveine et thym citronné, sorbet citron" (strawberries with verbena and lemon thyme, lemon sorbet) and a big 15/20. The chef? Ducasse's Louis XV at 20, Westermann in Alsace and Guérard in the Landes. That puts a lot of eggs in the basket. From the Savoie, the Plesant couple have swapped their mountain view for a sea view. The un-moveable Patrick Lubrano is still in the house, and quite frankly it's a good thing. What fun to have such a grand restaurant which is so serious, it makes a change on this darn coast. We clap both of our hands... with a full mouth! And goodness: what a panorama!

**Chef : Nicolas Schmitz
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 17/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toiletttes = 17/20.**

**Plage de Port Issol
83110 - Sanary
Phone : 04.94.74.64.17**

San Lazzaro

ΨΨ_{1/2}

An array of medals, badges, clubs, and guide stickers on the shop-front. Gantié, the Michelin guide... You would have to be blind not to see them, and in case you hadn't quite got the message, there is a second load inside. On a table near the entrance there are several tourist guides and other newspaper cuttings. The welcoming has know-how, warm, nothing to say. It's the boss! The dad! He takes his time to describe the menu to us proudly. Friendly but slightly pathetic especially when he pushes on the pride pedal and says that it is his son who does this creative, inventive cooking... And blah blah blah. Good. Mauricette and I think that this lad is going to have to be good, dad's words mustn't be better than the son's dishes. We go for the intermediate menu at 42 € It isn't a giveaway, but it all depends what's in it. After some friendly "amuse bouche", the Lady with the green hat truly regales with her "pomme de terre, crème et lamelles de truffes" (potato, cream and slices of truffle). It is delicate, really not sickly, and tasty: 15/20. I can't say the same for my "foie gras mi-cuit tomates séchées, pain à la châtaigne de Collobrières" (half cooked foie gras with dried tomatoes, bread made with horse chestnuts from Collobrières). Nothing scandalous, far from it, but the presentation is over done, and it is bland. Stupidly bland. 12/20. With what follows we fall into the ordinary, despite the quality of certain products and the wish to do well. So, for me, it is "risotto, lamelles de truffes" (risotto slices of truffle), nice but no more than that, 14/20, whereas Mauricette stuffs herself with "Cavanelli, pâtes fraîches, aux légumes du maraîcher, concassé de tomates mijotées" (fresh pasta with fresh vegetables, and simmered chopped tomatoes), well made, good, but nothing to write home about 14/20. On the other hand the dessert is delicious, "le juste cuit chocolat noir Cluizel"; Michel Cluizel is a famous chocolate maker. A moment of pure happiness which is sanctified with 16/20. This address is deserving, but is cruelly missing simplicity. On the opposite to over doing things, and an avalanche of blah blah blah... It is often the same thing for those who would like to gain the honours of guides, and in particular the Michelin guide. They have to overdo it, insist into the customer's ear to make themselves understood. Which means that the consumer isn't capable of thinking by himself, of judging? Just capable of paying 42 € for a menu which is far from making me sing and dance. Nice yes, but "good products" does not mean talent! Otherwise everybody would be a super chef!

Chef : Anthony Lazzaro

Welcome = 15/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toiletttes = 15/20.

10 place Albert Cavet

83110 - Sanary

Phone : 04.94.88.41.60

O Sud

O

A small address that has been taken over recently but which pushes on the folklore pedal, and falls illico-presto into the comico. They have been inspired by Oriental cooking. You mustn't suffer from claustrophobia or have anything private to

say to your tablemate: you could talk to your neighbour by mistake! The tables are all stuck together and the tablecloths, yes there are tablecloths, rub up to one another. There are glasses with limestone marks. The man who is going back and forth from dining room to kitchen is full of smiles and taps on the shoulder. Whilst with a smile on her lips and dishes galore in her hands, the sweet waitress slaloms between tables, and does an involuntary belly dance. What are we having? I choose "tajine aubergine agneau" (tajine with aubergine and lamb). This one is my favourite. Well: usually. The lamb knuckle is of a good size. But the preparation resembles a thick, very salted syrup with courgette, a little aubergine (at last) clumsily dosed spices, bland, no interest at all. The semolina (middle sized) which is served on the side is alright. 9/20 for 14,50 € I was hoping to catch up on the patisseries. I'm not offered any. Perhaps that the management has a sense of protection? Mint tea is what I ask for. I'm brought a teapot which is put onto my table. This is where the folklore gets kicked in the shins: not only am I not served the first glass, which is how it is usually done, but it happens to be a sachet of Lipton green and mint tea: I can see the label. But even with real mint leaves, this resembles cynicism. In any case, this is not a restaurant to recommend. A shame, a correct kind of address wouldn't have done any harm in this area.

Chef : Who knows..!

Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 15/20.

18 avenue Gallieni

83110 - Sanary

Phone : 04.94.88.06.29

SANARY-SUR-MER

Le Mas De La Frigoulette

"chez Bernard"

ΨΨ_{1/2}

The Plessiet family is a perfect example to follow in the art of welcoming customers and boosting their morals whilst dancing the Vienna waltz or the Argentinean tango, it doesn't depend on me(al). Grand art! Between sky and sea on their flowery island two steps away from the centre of Sanary, only one dogma: please the customers who make the effort to come. The first time and the following, of course. With Mauricette, we had a lovely little meal. A good toast master, Nicolas Plessiet seems very at ease in the matter. The attendance and the contact with the clients, he loves it. Cooking and putting on a toque, he knows too. When a not so absurd idea catches hold of him, he brings out a "gâteau d'aubergine" tasty all round and under the tongue. Which for the lady with the green hat is not only complicated to say, but also to do seeing as it is round, the cake. 14,5/20. My "moules gratinées" (mussels), hold up no resistance, 14/20. Unrepentant meat eater, Mauricette opts for a "souris d'agneau" and leaves nothing but the bone, although it was generous. And beautifully cooked. 14,5/20. I have one vice and I assume the costs: when I read "tête de veau sauce

gribiche" (calf's head) on a menu, my left eyelid begins to tremble and the right eyebrow goes up. The dish is as it should be, not too fatty and served with steamed potato. Served very hot, it is essential. 14,5/20. I stopped my feast here along with the ferocious fork fighting lady with the green hat. We glided into the afternoon with coffee. I suspect that Mauricette even did a lightening siesta. I can't prove it, I was asleep myself. I'm joking! Anyway! A beautiful house run rigorously and seriously, which is not incompatible with a joyful spirit. As proved by Nicolas Plessiet and his parents, Bernard and Michèle. These people even managed to put Mauricette in a good mood! It just goes to show!

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 18/20. Bread = 15/20. Toiletttes = 16/20.

130 avenue des Mimosas

83110 - Sanary-sur-mer

Phone : 04.94.74.13.46

SIX-FOURS

Les Jardins D'anglise

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

This place is rather like the little house on the prairie but on the coast of the Var. A magnificent two hundred year old country house with bedrooms, plane trees and wisteria, joyful cicadas and noisy sparrows. A breath of life in the heart of an over-excited suburb. An all year round postcard. The Chiaradia couple, Anglise and Bruno, are behind the wheel. This fine chef once worked at Dutournier in the capital, le Trou Gascon. A new menu at 24 € on offer on weekday lunchtimes. There is a different approach this time, with even more simple products but with the same perfectionism. Ah! Let me tell you! Mauricette is treating us today! Birthday! She loves her birthdays! You don't count when you love something! It's just as well!.. So the lady with the green hat and full purse (I've been paying for so long) modestly opts for the menu at 24 € with choice. Starter, "carpaccio de magret fume au poivre de Séchouan" (smoked duck breast with Séchouan pepper) which is a bit short but refined and well presented at 14,5/20. She follows with "mignon de porc jus aux 5 épices" (pork and gravy with five spices) straight, supple, generous and elegant, all three captain! Sorry! That makes four! The garnishing is delicious, potato puree with chanterelle and oyster mushrooms finely adjusted with truffle oil. 15,5/20! As for me: "a la carte"! And why not! "Escalope de foie gras de canard extra, cuit épais, figue rôtie et jus aux épices" (thick foie gras steak, roasted fig and spicy gravy). Nothing overdone, this is classical, 15/20. What a pleasure: "en tronçon épais à la plancha, écume de citronnelle, épeautre du pays de Sault à la truffe" (Plancha style steak, lemon, cereal from Sault with truffles). This is true Chiaradia style! The central product is simple, the garnishing is studied! Really lovely! 16/20. No dessert for me, but the lady with the green hat opts for the "croquant de nougatine aux framboises, mousse Diplomate" (crisp almond nougat with raspberries, Diplomatic mousse) from her menu. She concludes with a 15,5/20 followed by "it's really very refined" said with a ridiculous British accent. The attendance alternates between frankly implied and rather

detached, depending on whom. The wine menu is good, and the prices are reasonable. One of the rare places in town which aims towards exigency and high quality. Against all hopes in a rather sad gastronomic picture, but with our total greedy blessing!

Chef : Bruno Chiaradia

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 18/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

945 avenue du Maréchal Juin

83140 - Six-fours

Phone : 04.94.98.19.70 - Fax : 04.94.88.09.06

Le Mont Salva

ΨΨ_{1/2}

A corner of Six-Fours under the pine trees called "Le Brusc", attentive to your lungs and perfect for the claustrophobic. The forest has dolled itself up. The big house has been redone by... by... how many are there in there? In any case: for only a couple of years! All of the surroundings are beautiful! And all is good in the dishes! A chef who isn't postulating for the "chef of the century" award, but who has managed to bring in customers who enjoy this particular atmosphere which is emitted by this corner of Six-Fours called "Le Mont Salva", in Le Brusc, as I have already mentioned. Anyway! Mauricette's eyes looked dull this morning. It's always the same when she spends her whole night watching the entire series of Inspector Morse on DVD. So she plucked up her courage with her fat sausage like fingers and thus it is with a lady who is older than age itself, we went to the "Mont Salva" to have a feast with the squirrels, the sparrows, some seagulls and especially Céline Céleau in the dining room, as sweet and attentive as a long lost friend. After a glass of red wine as a primary start before all negotiations, she who fills up like a vase enjoyed a "flan de légumes, mozzarella" (vegetable flan with mozzarella cheese), it was well made for 14,5/20. I make the most of the end of season with a "velouté de potiron au foie gras" (smooth pumpkin soup with foie gras) which isn't really good for a diet, but is tasty to the last drop. The "véritable andouillette artisanale du pays basque" (Basque country chitterling sausage) is cooked in the fire place, I recommend it to you. Well, another one because I finished mine. 14,5/20. Dessert for me only, a light chocolate cake, of which I have forgotten the name, it was correct but not more than that at 13,5/20. Unless you aren't hungry and don't like good wine menus, you adore tarmac and exhaust pipes, hate big fireplaces which crackle in the winter and pretty shady terraces in the cicada filled summer, I can see no reason for not coming to this big charming house which is waiting for you, just up there.

Chef : Thierry Hilaire

Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Chemin du Mont Salva

LE BRUSC

83140 - Six-fours

Phone : 04.94.34.03.93

Nuit De Hong Kong

Ψ

This is an example of an insipid restaurant, neither the staff, nor even the food could give you a minimum of bliss. The over blasé management carries along under the customers nose to an antipathetic rhythm of routine. Nothing scandalous though, but less than average all along except for the welcome: freezing. Along with Mauricette at times like this, we have the feeling that our credit card number is printed on our foreheads. Mind you, that's not quite true; the boss-waiter doesn't look at us once. He sits us down, without even a hint of a smile. The lady with the green hat leans over to me and whispers "do you think we're bothering?" it explains the atmosphere. Seeing the context, we choose a menu at 9 € all will be well. As for us, why should we make an effort? And then at 9 € it is not all the tea in China. Here come some nice looking "Nem" that are worth 13/20 in the end. When hungry, we always like to start off with Nem. To follow a: "poulet au caramel" (caramel chicken) which is totally lacking in personality, distressingly ordinary, no character. 11/20. Our "beignets de bananes" (banana fritter) are good, but yet again the ordinary flavours dominate, we eat, that's all, neither with pleasure, nor distaste, everyone has to carry their cross. 12/20. A terrible feeling of emptiness, a setting with no soul and the cold boss don't even manage to make us feel ill at ease, the atmosphere of the place anesthetises all notion of feeling or resentment. Two coffees. As a formality we are offered a digestive alcohol "pittoresque" (picturesque). We politely refuse, the bill and we leave. Even in cultures that are different to ours, restaurants still have their share of blasé cooks.

Welcome = 5/20. Attendance = 9/20. Setting = 11/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 13/20.

100 avenue de la Mer

83140 - Six-fours

Phone : 04.94.25.71.49

La Brise Plage

ΨΨΨ

Photo of the coast: you have the seasonal establishments without welcome, without chef, without attendance, without structure, doubtful hygiene and a camp site gas bottle instead of a kitchen. And then you have the good, the ones who urge to please their clients. Sometimes you come across a pearl, but rarely. "La Brise Plage" is there on the ... beach along the side of the Coudoulière port. All you have to do is park your yacht and put on your flip-flops. The blackboard talks to Mauricette's chronic greediness: foie gras marinated in salt from Guérande, small Thailand porc samossa, fried gambas in breadcrumbs with sesame seeds, veal with pine kernel and octopus marinated in cinnamon... It smells of research and runs away from common. You can't judge a dish by its name, the lady with the green hat is permanently wary and chooses the daily formula at 16,90 € With a "bavette aux chanterelles" (sirloin with mushroom sauce). Lovely dish! Mushrooms, a few asparagus points, a short sauce and in the middle, a purée "crushed with a fork" with thyme. On top, a generous piece of meat, just

pink. The 15/20 is fully deserved. I was attracted to the "magret de canard rôti aux figues et foie gras" (roasted duck breast with figs and foie gras). The meat is sliced, and centred on a generous bed of mushrooms, a fine sauce with slivers of foie gras, fresh figs. And more bits too, colourful. Another 15/20. We looked at the sea and hesitated about having dessert. When you're very pleased with the dishes, it can be risky to have sweets. She jumped in though and had a "crumble aux poires, miel et lavande" (pear crumble, honey and lavender) included in her formula. A third 15/20. No! A fourth! Because this was one of the best "poire au vin rouge" (pears cooked in red wine) that I have ever tasted! Crystallised, the spices well balanced (cinnamon, badiane, Jamaican pepper): super. The wine menu will seduce both the amateur and someone who wants to try something different. Two young cuisine professionals and children from here took over this place, which was struggling, in the middle of 2007. Alexis Arnoux: l'institut Vatel in Nîmes, grand places in Switzerland. Julien Déou: Switzerland (too), big hotels in St Tropez. The only bad point: if you don't like the sea, cross the road.

Chef : Julien Déou

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 14,5/20.

Port de la Coudoulière

83140 - Six-fours

Phone : 04.94.34.61.27

L'ideal

ΨΨ

This little restaurant in the centre of town has been taken over by a charming couple who specialise in dishes from the north of France. Well done, it will give us a break from the day-to-day Mediterranean. Anyway. Goody! The chef (ess) is a great sauce maker! No doubt about that! My "poulet au Maroilles" (chicken in a Maroilles cheese sauce) is well prepared, succulent, diced bacon, mushrooms, parsley... Super! Except that the chicken has been torn apart and clever is he, the one who can tell me which piece of chicken it was to start off with. I bet it was a leg thanks to the bone. The young waiter offers me the alternative between "potatoes" or "chips". I answer "chips if they are homemade", of which I am assured "cross my heart"! Three times! By the boss! By the lady boss too who has just come out of the kitchen! "Homemade" I am told! I swear your honour! They are in fact vulgar McCain, no doubt about that either. I have nothing against McCain chips but I do have something against lies. What is the point in lying? I would have come back here! McCain or not! Are they nice people? Why tell a cock and bull story to customers? When people provoke you, you search for things that are wrong as a reflex. It is even so worth 14,5/20 thanks to the good sauce. The price? 14,90 € a dish. Bang. The dessert baptised "fondant au chocolat" (sticky chocolate cake) is simply a flan, certainly very chocolaty, with unnecessary custard and coconut sprinkling, yes, both unnecessary. 4 € and 12/20. A missed rendez-vous, in a way.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting

=14,5/20. Bread = 14/20.

16 rue de la République
83140 - Six-fours
Phone : 04.94.88.79.38 et 06.24.32.83.64

Le Leone



I was expecting the worst, it didn't happen. The girl attending me is full of smiles and high heels. The young man: quite the opposite! Dull and wearing flip-flops. And he's no electrician: three times both customers and management had to put up with an electricity failure even though this is a recent establishment. What are we having? Starter with "fricassée de seiches et poulpes" (cuttlefish and octopus fricassée) presented in two parts. A bowl for the object and another for the green salad. Warm, slightly bland but cooked with olive oil and lemon. A sort of steamed fricassée, which is quite frankly original. Not enough to make the pleasure barometer tremble, 12/20. As dish of the day "bouchée à la reine forestière" (chicken and mushroom vol-au-vent). An enormous plate with (again) a green salad and not one but... two vol-au-vents! Generosity that is an honour to the house! Except that the filling only contains chicken! Loads! Two slices of button mushroom and a mountain of chicken breast! Over cooked what's more! The lady who invented the recipe, Louis the XVth's wife, would be disappointed! Me too! Especially as the pastry case is burnt on the bottom! So, a second 12/20! The coffee is good. The exuberant waitress is miles away, forgets what she is told within 10 seconds, but gets away with it by smiling what ever happens. The young man just gets on with the job. The spirit and deco are both a little fashionable (lounge) but it is quite bearable. Like the cooking. Have to make do.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

398 boulevard des Ecoles
83140 - Six-fours
Phone : 04.94.25.15.21

Blues Beach



What if the beach-restaurant concept was born in Normandy? With Fabienne and Laurent Dale? What? Fine. We'll not push the issue so as not to vex anyone... We'd enjoy it though! You already know that though if you are a B&O regular! But let's get to the point! The successor to "Chris'to Café" offers a big split! Mussels- chips and bruschetta on one side, well, you do have to earn a living and just as long as it's well made... And then, the other surprising facet of this vaguely sandy vaguely wavy country more adapted to sunbathers and coke-chips! A chef adept to good little dishes! I promise you! Oooh, nothing to threaten Gagnaire or Robuchon of course! But well thought of and my little finger tells me that here is a great sauce maker! Accompanied by the lady with the green hat who is for once in a good mood (the Mistral has stopped blowing), we plunged our big noses into the "soupe de poisson maison" (homemade fish soup). Oh yes my little

green bunnies! Homemade! Cross my heart, as the boss said! Wonderful Laurent Dale! We happily believe him thanks to this pleasurable moment! But beware! Not a typical Provence soup! A Normandy version! Normandy which rhymes with greedy, well nearly! And a spot of exotic as a bonus! Intriguing eh? You'll love it! As a single man, Mauricette and I headed for 14,5/20! I followed the fishing line with "dos de loup en croûte d'olive et parmesan, risotto" (sea bass with olive and parmesan cheese crust, risotto). The sauce is delicious "beurre blanc, échalotte, vin blanc" (white butter, shallot, white wine) style, the fish is slightly over cooked but pleasure is on line! 14,5/20. She goes straight to the sweets: an enoormous rum and raisin ice-cream, but mostly rum if you see what I mean. 14/20. Wines? A blackboard full! Well drunk! Well done! Vacqueyras, Morgon... The staff sticks to its mission, which adds to the fun and the sea-side situation, facing the water with the sound of flip-flops in your ears. On one side is a lounge with concerts on a big screen or live (acoustic) on certain evenings: Laurent Dale has run some serious places in Paris and his telephone book is frankly impressive... Oh yes! The midday lunchtime formulas make a nice change from the ordinary every day type! 12 € As good as a restaurant, and as friendly as a pub where you can make friends whilst sipping a glass of something. If at first you do succeed, try, try again!

Chef : Tony Dufresne
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

330 promenade du Général de Gaulle
83140 - Six-fours
Phone : 04.94.15.10.10

SOLLIES-PONT

Le Vatel



When thinking about the address before Bruno Hernandez arrived, you get shivers down your spine, but now you feel warm inside! Of course he has surrounded himself with skills: his brother is now working in the kitchen, whereas the gentle Aurore is still doing as well in the dining room. Rather stubborn, this young man went through the "Da Silva, Loubet, Chariol and Michel Royer" kitchens. But to bet a single penny that this place would be successful was quite frankly daring! The customer came, ate and gave his best smile, came back, and spread the word... which in French we call "by mouth to ear", it is an essential thing in places that are not helped out by tourism, but today is in full swing! At 24 € it will be full menu, I thought of inviting Mauricette. No, it's not true: she imposed herself! As per usual! Our starters: "millefeuille de pomme de terre, noix de St-Jacques et oeuf de lump" (potato millefeuille, St-Jacques shell fish and lumpfish roe) and "feuilleté de St Marcellin aux pommes de terre et lardons" (St Marcellin cheese in flaky pastry with potatoes and diced bacon) adapt themselves to the cold winter by being generous and finely worked, 15/20. The Lady in the green hat's "magret de canard au miel épice" (duck breast with spiced honey) was perfect, it was the least it could do to please her,

15,5/20. The same goes for my "côte de veau servie avec son os à moelle sauce aux cèpes" (veal rib served with marrow bone and a mushroom sauce) which will please the gourmets, especially if they are adepts to the marrow bone religion as I am. 15/20. The desserts don't escape the rule: the plates are pretty, well thought out, calculated so as to seduce both eye and taste buds. So! Desserts! The "fondant au chocolat" (sticky chocolate cake) is truly sticky, I hurriedly insist for the addicts... who are sometimes the same ones as the marrow bone lovers! 15/20. The very fresh and smut Mauricette chose the "gratin de fruits frais en sabayon" (grilled fresh fruit zabaglione) which she sanctified with a 15,5/20. Quite a cheap (or nearly) table for its capacity to be serious and to please. And which also confirms, that the hardest part is often to make things last.

Chef : Bruno Hernandez
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

117 rue de la République
83210 - Solliès-pont
Phone : 04.94.58.82.94 et 06.17.40.00.41

La Galette



They are adorable, these northerners who have taken over "La Galette". When they welcome you, they don't look down, the smile is not in their pocket. Even if they are in the heart of Solliès-Pont, their emplacement is not ideal. Outside, the weather is awful, it is spitting hard, the ladies are holding an umbrella in the left-hand and the bottom of their coat in the other. The men are taking bigger steps and the tops of their ears only just stick out of the neck of their jackets. Weather that could be qualified Brittany type, not so bad then. Sadly I have to say my dear brethren that the "crêpes repas au sarrasin" (buckwheat pancakes) are far from extraordinary! The one who could be a perfect Brittany character if she exchanged her ineradicable hat for a lacy headdress: Mauricette, got out her chubby biceps to attack a "Popeye" at 5,80 € Egg, Frankfurt sausage, cheese and of course... spinach! She slid me and annoyed "so?" followed by a 12/20. My research for frank pleasure will be just as unfruitful with a "Guéménée", worked "andouillette" (chitterling sausage), fresh cream and mustard. 12/20 and 5,80 € The Lady from Corrèze refuses to be beaten and attacks an "Aveyronnaise" (minced meat, Roquefort cheese, fresh cream) which knocks me out for the day whilst it executes her morale. 6 € and 11/20. Neither good nor bad. The one thing that can be said is that you can't improvise being a pancake maker from one day to the next. Otherwise, there would only be good ones on the market, which evidently is not the case here.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

46 rue de la République
83210 - Solliès-pont
Phone : 04.94.28.97.61

SOLLIES-TOUCAS

Auberge La Gazelle

00

If the untidy patio with its piles of leaves and hose pipe that runs straight through are anything to go by, You would think that this place had been abandoned. You quickly realise that it can't have been thanks to the decibels that are being thrown at each other on the inside. Jerky-rhythmic African music, the low pitched notes vibrate, beating hard on the ear-drum. I love this music, I've got some at home. But after having spent a while in the car, you generally need a nice calm atmosphere. The charming manager who is after all keen to listen (which is a performance in itself thanks to the noise) puts the volume down when I ask. The setting is African, well a little. Sad: only one customer, me. A menu at 23 € and the full menu to keep me company. Full menu with "salade Gazelle" at 9,50 € An assortment of 3 sambas (meat, crab and fish) greasy and uniform. Two acras that would acra-vate many seeing that they are soggy and impersonal. And a pastel, the best, fish stuffed fritter, the nicest part of the dish. Green salad for the volume: soaking a little too much in the vinaigrette sauce. Tomato and cucumber for colour. 10/20 for the look of the plate. To follow, I am served the worst bit of chicken in a long time. With my "poulet Yassa" at 10 € The best bit is the rice spread with an onion, ginger, lemon juice and mustard preparation. But next to it, the chicken leg is whole, simply grilled and slightly smelly. When a chef allows himself to present something in such a simple fashion, the product has to be absolutely right and impeccable either to the eye or nose. And unfortunately the tongue: disgusting. Not only is this chicken from a "fowl-yard", but it has also been pre-cooked for some time. And so as dry as the whip of a stick. It was an assured 2/20 without the rice that brings the mark up to 7/20. The coffee is excellent. Apparently the house offers a rum mixture to all of its customers. I mustn't have been considered as a customer. Apparently the "Gomillo" has been talking about the place in its yellow pages for 3 years. Apparently the Mickey is being taken out of a few too many restaurant consumers, but that's not new either.

Welcome = 8/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 12/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

1019 RD554
83210 - Solliès-toucas
Phone : 04.94.23.35.27

TAVERNES

Le Saint-cassien

ΨΨ_{1/2}

Don't go and get lost near Fayence! The lake that carries the same name could lead you astray! This "Saint-Cassien" is North of Brignoles and Barjols to be precise. Mind you I could have said "for goodness sake"! Today's goodness, is Marylise and Guy Bailly's table! At Tavernes. A recent take over of the address by a couple who

are polyvalent both in capability and clever know-how. Previously a butcher in particular and a lover of good things in general, the man only does things through sheer desire, he doesn't force himself. Easy to say, but complicated to do. But then the world is complicated. But this couple does their utmost to make life simple and good. As for example at lunchtime with Mauricette, she who came back empty handed from a mushroom hunt. She didn't find one. So she was dreaming of the smell of her "filet de veau aux giroles" (veal fillet with mushroom sauce). The meat is gently cooked, no violence. Delicately grilled on the top, supple and pink on the inside. And the sauce my little lambkins, is a clever mixture of subtlety and finesse. A 15/20 that pleases the lady in the green hat, which is not easily done! As for my: "rognons de veau au porto" (veal kidney in port wine), they are conform to the recipe, just slightly over cooked for my liking. The 14,5/20 is well deserved though. When she saw our young neighbour's dishes, Mauricette asked for chips. Just to try you understand: they're homemade, delicious. And the beef burger prepared on the spot from an entrecôte. I had to add that. Anyway! Our desserts? A classic for me: "tiramisu" which is homemade and enchanting, 14,5/20. Back in her childhood, thanks to the chips, she confirms with a "banana split". "Let it all hang out" she said! 14,5/20. Proper napkins and tablecloths, well presented and judiciously tasty dishes, nice light attendance but maternal even so. A small quiet place that deserves to become known, unless you absolutely want to see the sea and have the matching prices. Here, it is quite the contrary with the proprietor's gentle discretion into the bargain. An ideal table to BâO criteria.

Chef : Guy Bailly
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

84 Grand' Rue
83670 - Tavernes
Phone : 04.94.72.31.18

TOULON

Au Petit Caporal

Ψ

A foot soldier in Toulon, home to the navy, it's comical? But a warm welcoming on the port is even more unusual! He's original, this "petit caporal"! The boutique has been redone by the new proprietors, who are not lacking in friendliness. Mauricette who loves small places with big hearts soon learns that the plates too, are big and well garnished. Mauricette requests an already forgotten bottle of promised water. Then she digs in to a generous "entrecôte sauce Roquefort" (steak with Roquefort sauce), made with real Roquefort cheese and not the prefab kind that we come across so often. And big Mc Cain chips, really not good... 13,50 € and 14/20 she says with no joy, a little resigned. Whereas I am having the daily formula at 11,90 € and its whopping great "escalope de poulet forestière, spaghetti" (chicken escalope with mushroom sauce, spaghetti). I have never seen chicken like it. Best not meet it in the street! One slash of its spur and it will slice you up! A smacking great fillet, the beast must have been enormous! I can't

complain though as it is well cooked, not dry, supple flesh, sauce with mushrooms and onions. A 14,5/20 is imposed. My formula includes dessert but I would rather have been refused this. A crisp "tiramisu". It's crisp because not quite defrosted, smothered in custard and whipped cream, the lethal step out of line. Now that it's done... 9/20. I notice on neighbouring tables that a "spéculos" (cinnamon biscuit) is given with coffee. I start to rub my hands. I am finally to have real pudding. Just my luck, instead of my longed for sweetmeat I am given a traumatised chocolate, ghostly after having been stocked in the fridge, nearly frozen in its red and black paper. After the tiramisu, the chocolate and coffee... well. The chef is implied because he goes round the alternate tables with the proprietors, just so as to slip in a word. It's good. Shame that the tiramisu was such a miserable dessert! The rest wasn't so bad! You either get Mauricette's blessing or you don't! But the lady in the green hat is incapable of lying, even for a dessert! You can't blame her!

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 13/20.

101 quai Cronstadt
83000 - Toulon
Phone : 04.94.62.57.79

Sy Bé

ΨΨΨ

Passion-cookery according to Saint-Sylvain! Sylvain Parodi! Ah! He hides it though! In rue Pré des Pêcheurs in Le Mourillon, two steps away from salty water. Our young chef only chooses top quality products! This is a philosophical question as far as his work is concerned! This pleases Mauricette, our Schopenhauer with a green hat. At around 7:30pm, she is usually in her pyjamas and slippers in front of one of her Morse DVDs. I was expecting the worst but she must have been in a good mood because as soon as she goes in she says "this waiter is good". The attendance is carried out by smart Michael Rucker who has an eye on everything and a friendly smile. Compliments will be said throughout the meal. The menu at 21 € is at a moderate cost for such a well presented and generous dish. The "petit tartare de crevettes et ses petits légumes" (shrimp tartar and small vegetables) is colourful and crisp. 14,5/20. Our meat addict handles the "pave de boeuf aux chanterelles fraîches" (thick beef steak with fresh morel mushrooms) without any hesitation. A very tender (the meat) and fine (the sauce) moment. And full of advantages such as the fork crushed puree and crisp beans. A true 15/20! She ends her feast with a "fondant au chocolat" served like a piece of cake and with a hint of Cointreau. 14,5/20. The carte prices are convincing when compared to the menus' cost! Delicious "assiette de petites seiches au safran" (small cuttlefish with saffron) where crisp and soft mingle, 15/2. The "filets de loup rôtis et poêlée de chanterelles" (roasted bass filets and morel mushrooms) are great! The fish really goes well with the short sauce and mushrooms! And fresh ones! It's the season! It all goes together beautifully! 15,5/20! I wasn't banking on dessert but must remain professional at all times. So I forced myself. I had a remarkable "crème brûlée aux pistaches", the kind that could reconcile the disappointed "crème brûlée" critic

that I am. Perfectly creamy, an easy 15/20. All of the cooking is homemade and looks you straight in the eye, nothing over sophisticated or something that ordinary mortals could miscomprehend. Customers in the know from Toulon and its whereabouts are right and are the ones who avoid the many traps that this town withholds.

Chef : Sylvain Parodi

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

**9 avenue du pré des pêcheurs (50 m face Lido)
83000 - Toulon
Phone : 04.94.57.64.55**

Le Richardi

Ψ_{1/2}

We knew that this pretty "historical" address in Toulon had been taken over. The previous proprietor had done well with the town hall in managing to get the "boulevard Dugommier" re-done, it goes straight past. It doesn't stop the place from lacking in customers... but not in good-will! A lunchtime daily formula at 13,50 € In the full menu, simplicity appears to be the creed, avoiding the boring fashion, the places choice. We can but congratulate! I dive into a "carré d'agneau rôti, pomme au four, crème de ciboulette" (roasted lamb ribs, oven potato, chive cream) with real ribs (it is so rare!) that are pink, but not roasted enough on the outside. The half-cooked potato wrapped in kitchen foil is slightly pathetic, enough to make mash for two, 19 € and 14/20. As a dessert, option "tarte maison" (homemade tart), the waitress happily informs me that for the "mi-cuit au chocolat, needs to be cooked for 17 minutes". It must look lovely coming out of the oven, this thing! So! An apple tart with fresh cream and slices of apple. It is evident that the tart did not appreciate the micro-wave, the pastry is soggy and too hot. 5 € and 13/20. The bill... then the new proprietors make the most of questioning me about the meal. Not just in the polite, detached fashion. No: they're really interested! Remarkable professional conscience that makes a nice change from the usual restaurant cynic, who once you have punched in your credit card code, turns to something else. But anyway. I learn that the "Richardi" has been open for only... three days. It would certainly explain certain imprecise dishes and approximate attendance, I suppose. They have to quickly re-centre themselves; the customers always await hot-headed new comers round the corner.

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 13/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

**25 bis rue de la Comédie
83000 - Toulon**

Phone : 04.94.64.66.39 - Fax : 04.94.46.22.91

La Lampa

1/2

We are freezing, have to eat wearing a quilted raincoat. With me at 12:30, is only one table for two that's looked paralysed, they have every

reason to. The staff is noisy, they are at least seven working in here. But it is not noisy because of the amount of people or work, but because of certain people on the team who are completely offhand and talking as loudly as they can. It is tiring, they are also carried along by the Bee Gees from the end of the 1970s who are squealing out of the loudspeakers. The menu shows an avalanche of salads, tapas and a nice load of meats, there is even a Carnivor bag (cheap meat super market) hanging from a coat hook. After a quarter of an hour when the excited waiter has stopped talking loudly with the chef, he finally comes to take my order." So. Right... sea bream flamed with cognac please!- Er, all gone!- Never mind... er... perch then!- Er, none of that either!- And a duck breast, you do have "magret au miel" (duck breast with honey)?- Of course Sir!" After about three quarters of an hour all in all (which is long when it's cold), the dish that should have been with rice comes with chips. Nice big frozen chips that in this event are not greasy. A slice of tomato, a little tie-staining salad... The duck breast is whole, generous, not fatty. 13,90 € is not absurd at all. It is difficult to have an opinion on pleasure when you eat completely wrapped up and are only hoping for one thing: that the staff could talk more quietly and less aggressively to each other! Let's say 12/20 because of the chips and the cold plate. No desert, I would probably be offered ice cream... The individual bread is remarkable! Who is the baker? What next? A hot coffee! Yes! A Malongo! Well done! The bill please! And the toothpick! Forgotten the toothpick! But not the bill! The young lady smiles for the first time during her shift!

Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 6/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 16/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

**117 quai de la sinse
83000 - Toulon
Phone : 04.94.03.06.09**

La Tarentelle

Ψ

This is not Ducasse, nor Gagnaire. Here is a reflection of the world in which we are not playing the tourist. We didn't know it existed, we lived without it and will live without it again without any problem. A small neighbourhood restaurant which is great for the lunchtime starving from thereabouts. The interior decoration woken up with leftover Christmas decorations and small pots of artificial flowers, tablecloths, yes material ones and pretty material table mats to match. A few of the sticky letters from the word "restaurant" stuck on the window have not escaped the attacks from the U.Vs. Mind you, I'm not sure that the sun hits the window. Anyway. What will we eat? A menu at 11 € which is trundling along happily. "Harengs à l'huile, pommes de terre" (herrings in oil with potatoes). Little bits of everything. Including tomatoes, and salad... 13/20. My "steak purée d'échalote" (steak with crushed shallots) is either fried or grilled. An alternative that you don't come across very often, bravo. Very thin meat, too thin, but the ratatouille is homemade and chips made from real potatoes. Real chips. 14/20. The "crêpe au chocolat" is not good. Neither the pancake, nor the chocolate. The

topping is unbearable to taste and... is not chocolate in any case! 10/20. St Jean du Var is not an easy neighbourhood for business as one would say without wanting to upset anyone. One can't pretend to know hexagonal restoration if one ignores this kind of family place with no pretence, but full of humanity all the way through its imperfections.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 12/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 9/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

**621 boulevard Maréchal Joffre
83100 - Toulon
Phone : 04.94.03.68.41**

Le Tajine

ΨΨ_{1/2}

They have left their tiny address in Solliès-Pont. Who's they? Fatima and Boumediene! Don't worry! They have been careful enough to take along the spirit that has made their success: the same woman's cooking, the same smiling capacities in the dining room... except that now, you can come along with your bridge club, your rugby team or the St Paul's Cathedral choir, mind you, we shall have to count. If you are aiming for a "tête à tête", a sea view from the patio is possible. This couple could have gone to La Valette, Marseille, Saint-Etienne de Baïgorry or even Monaco! Well no! Toulon it will be! Gosh! That was close! As for me, I didn't escape from Mauricette. Good cooking, she can smell before anyone else even miles away, like a sixth sense. She opted for and original tajine, I mean "uncommon". "Tajine agneau poire, figues et amandes grillées" (lamb pear tajine, figs and grilled almonds). The sweets tastes mix together all for the pleasure of our Lady with the green hat. Often sceptical in front of daring mixtures she took me all the way to the local bookstore to buy a book with photos of "tajine"! That will do for Christmas. And be a holiday for me! Well! 15/20 to start. The view from a different angle with my "couscous deux viandes au choix" (couscous with choice of two meats). I chose mutton and a lamb kebab. Prettily presented, well aired semolina, gravy with character without being violent, tasty vegetables and meats (one boiled the other grilled) are scrumptious. 14,5/20. The Maghreb cooking register often forgets its talents when it is dessert time because of abusive industrial made stuff. Except that Fatima does everything. From A to Z. A hyperactive food maker. She even finds the time to make all of her sweets! Corne de Gazelle, baklava, griouche, makroud, rocher 'Fati style' (Mauricette had two) and sometimes stuffed dates! An avalanche of 15/20 or even 15,5/20! The possibility of being a tea salon in the afternoon or take-away... it's always complicated, when you change addresses. One can't help comparing, talking about before and after, one can't escape the never-ending "it was better before" as if we were trying to re-sure ourselves. Well here, at Fati and Boumediene's place, don't search. You have to live in the present, take it as it comes: with open arms and a frank smile!

Chef : Fatima Hadjazi

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

Corniche du Mourillon
83000 - Toulon
Phone : 04.94.57.08.21

Le Carre Du Port

ΨΨ

A "very delicate" situation according to the usual norms for shopkeepers. On the "avenue de la République", parallel to the port. Positively tested as soon as it opened some time ago. And lounge-bar spirit (yet another!), perfect staff who endeavour to please, and don't force you to over do it. I ask for an "entrée et un plat" (starter and main course) from the full menu. Very shortly after the order has been taken, the waitress comes back from the kitchens and gently says that the two (starter and main course) will be "a lot". So much honesty is suspect. I ignore whether the thought comes from the heart or simply the chef couldn't be bothered to put my starter together. Certain chefs sometimes have whims. Unless it is that the product for the ordered starter is simply missing, it was a "frito-misto". Who knows... So directly my "risotto gambas et vodka" (prawn and vodka risotto) arrives. This is a happy union, maybe because it is raining? No! The chef knows his job. The pepper is certainly useful. 15/20 and 14 € even so. Desert with a "crème brûlée à la pistache de Sicile" (crème brûlée with Sicilian pistachio nuts). The cream is over jellified, apple green. Someone has pushed too hard on the colouring pedal. The only interest is the well applied presentation. As for the rest... 12/20 and 5 € "Luca Peirano, who is well known to the people from St Tropez, invested the kitchens of this restaurant just a year ago" according to the words of praise from the weekly "Express" on the 10th of January 2008. Aaaaah! St Tropez... and when is he going to build up speed, the chef?

Chef : Luca Peirano
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.

219 avenue de la République
83000 - Toulon
Phone : 04.94.05.28.90

Muck-in

ΨΨ

A strange impression on the floor of this newcomer to the rue Muiron in Le Mourillon: we are walking on sand! For original, this is original! The youngsters who are running the place have fallen into sweet fashionable conformism with a colourful setting and light vintage 1980's atmosphere. Very good. The cooking does a great split in some of the recipes such as foie gras and Thai sauces... after beating about the bush for some time in front of an appetising blackboard, I opt for the "terrine de foie gras" (foie gras terrine) with I don't know what kind of chutney, and "gnocchi Bombay" (Bombay gnocchi). I am served the gnocchi straight away. What about my foie gras? The waiter-boss misunderstood me! Too bad, I'll have pudding! It's good, but the gnocchi's sauce is a little flat for an Indian preparation. Although coconut and curry. 14/20 even so and especially

13 € Dessert at 6 € and "bonbons au chocolat" (chocolate sweets)! The chef plays his card with well presented dishes, he is right, they look good. But taste has reasons that colours ignore. The sweets (5) are fun but the bottom of the plate is drowning in an exotic fruit sauce or something of the kind. Pretty but over sugary. With a ball of ice cream. And a slice of lime which acts as a lifebelt. A nice idea for a dessert but it isn't mastered. 13/20. The sweets that go with the coffee are marshmallows. All of the customers ask for a glass of wine, although the choice is very limited. They even serve rosé with ice cubes in some very good glassware. We shall have to come again, and in the mean time wait for an evolution which without a doubt will be positive.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 13/20.

110 rue Muiron
83000 - Toulon
Phone : 04.94.08.25.17

La Casbah Des Couscous

0

The setting is sumptuous, 700 m2 of Oriental design declined in different dining rooms, from modern with plasma screens to classic with hand-sewn cushions. Impressive, especially in the heart of Toulon. Mauricette, who knows a lot about Moroccan cooking amongst the Maghreb styles will be left with banal deception. Banal because here, we come across nearly all of the faults of the financial restaurant, made for business. Such an establishment, what a waste... An ordinary lunchtime with a menu each at 15 € Which doesn't seem too expensive. But when it isn't good, it's always expensive. The lady with the green hat put too much hope in her "tajine figues poulet" (fig and chicken tajine): it was flat. She even found it hard discerning the figs from the chicken; that says it all. 11/20 even so. I was even less lucky with my "couscous poulet, boulette et merguez" (chicken couscous, meatballs and merguez sausages) over spiced with raz-el-hanout, which when used brutally plays Attila with the taste buds. Served on one side, the chicken leg was the best bit of the dish whereas usually, it's the worst. 8/20. And original "thé gourmand" (greedy tea) with correct patisseries (14/20), the tea was as bad as if it wanted us to regret not having been served coffee. The waitress was not very subtle when picking up the telephone during the sitting and saying a "yeah?" that made everybody at the surrounding tables stare. And then she showed us a second range of her infinite grace whilst taking our order, when a man came into the restaurant. Taking the airs and graces of a laid back hostess, she finely commented his arrival with "what does he want?". Very classy. Fortunately the young man saved the sauce as far as the attendance was concerned. And as for the sauce, it will be good if it learned to cook too. Just in case.

Chef : Who knows..
Welcome = 11/20. Attendance = 6/20. Setting = 18/20. Toiletttes = 15/20.

4 rue Chabanne (Place de la Liberté)
83000 - Toulon
Phone : 04.94.92.68.57

Le Ludo

ΨΨ

There has been a change of proprietor here, you are ostentatiously reminded on the menu just in case you hadn't got the message. Congratulations: even at lunchtime, the performance is cared for and the prices haven't joined the war that is going on in the neighbourhood. It is all thanks to the new proprietors. It doesn't mean that the lunchtime menu at 15 € will make you belly dance, or writhe with pleasure, nor make you play Tarzan hanging from the curtains. "Brick de chèvre" (goat's cheese in philo pastry) as a starter, folded like a sheet with crystallized vegetables inside (good) and melted cheese (not so good). It is just about worth 13,5/20. And 14,5/20 for my "suprême de volaille, purée de brocoli" (poultry supreme, broccoli puree). This dish is not at all salted! It's a shame because you rarely come across "supemes" as well prepared and as good as this one! Cross Mauricette's heart! The dessert of which I have forgotten the name is a little strange, "meringue maison avec un sorbet" (home-made meringue with sorbet) with raspberry sauce and even bits of fruit. Nothing really... well anyway good... 13/20. The apprentice-waiter likes his job, seems completely taken in by his mission. The day will come when he will step out of the purely mechanical state he is in, "he's going to hurt" as they say. Great, there should be more of them... and youngsters who are desperate to learn! Despite having recently taken over the establishment, the lady boss looks blasé. She can be optimistic, but she ought to learn a few lessons from her apprentice! A place that could do better but is fine up till now!

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 15,5/20. Bread = 14,5/20.

45 boulevard Bazeilles
le Mourillon
83000 - Toulon
Phone : 04.94.31.80.93

Maitre Kanter

000

At about 10 pm, Mauricette and I were idly wandering around the centre of Toulon. One restaurant refused us, then a second... One of the rare places to play the game was "la taverne de Maître Kanter". It's a shame, but if I had known, I wouldn't have been. The staff in the dining room made efforts galore, sweating away with circles under their eyes, especially seeing as the plates that we are brought are sad enough to cry over. And the prices are unbearable. For a first shot here is a "flamme-kuche au chèvre" (goat's cheese tart). To charge 10 € for this uncooked thing with onions, fresh cream and 4 slices of low quality goat's cheese thrown artistically on top is totally exaggerated. 11/20 even so: we're hungry! The titles are meant to excite you, bring water to your mouth. We get caught, that's what is supposed to happen. Mauricette was fantasizing about a "jarret de petit cochon braisé, pommes

sautées à la peau" (braised pork knuckle, potatoes sauté in their skin). Sounds good eh? Supple meat, acceptable. The rest is scandalous: a big re-reheated potato with thick skin cut in two lengthways and like the nearby meat, plastered with a shameful jellified, peppery sauce. The bitter lady with the green hat will have heart burn for the next 12 hours. 6/20 for 16 € yes, even so. Seeing the amount of shellfish that I ate out of my "noix de St-Jacques flambées, tagliatelles au safran" (flambé St-Jacques shellfish, tagliatelle with saffron), I wasn't likely to suffer from the same thing; heartburn. Except for those linked to the price: 23 € for the dish. I'll let you work that one out in francs. It is never the less well presented. The pasta (warm) is laid out lengthways on a rectangular plate. On top are 7 or 8 miserable scallops. Evidently de-frosted and over cooked! That the proprietor should offer this kind of thing is his business! We don't have to enjoy it! But to talk about St-Jacques shellfish is abnormal. Even if legislation authorizes sea food processing dealers to baptize these scrawny things with such a name! It's even more contemptible! This means that with one single title (St-Jacques), you can be given anything; and it's authorized. So. What? 6/20 for the cost of a very correct menu or better in one of the restaurants referenced in the BâO! Under the cover of a respectable luxury "brasserie", the address dishes up any old thing dressed in Sunday clothes, just so that it can seduce any old happy go lucky idiot. That wasn't our case.

Chef : Who knows..!

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 11/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

31 place de la Liberté

83000 - Toulon

Phone : 04.94.05.27.27 - Fax : 04.94.09.43.46

Desirata



I heard that the adorable people who founded this place full of human and culinary charm had gone back to where they came from: far off islands. The young couple who have taken over have obviously been to lengths to keep the place going. Well done to this enterprising couple. But to charge so much for this culinary show, we're not far from a catastrophe. Goodwill isn't enough! The menu at 16 € is fair enough! But 22 € no! After having been caught out, the waiter admits that a third of the dishes are missing! We have already chosen our menus! If they get away with it, they'll be laughing! Too bad! Mauricette is a specialist! She always points to what is missing! She has a wonderful sense of contradiction! So she ends up having a "salade niçoise" with all of the ingredients, more or less. Because the kitchens forgot... the vinaigrette! Dry! Sorry to the tips of his toes, the waiter repairs the mistake. 12/20. Of the two possible starters for my menu at 22 €, only one is left. This time it's the cook who comes to offer me something else; A "tian Désirata" with two slices of hard aubergine, a thick tomato ring and Roquefort cheese. A violently micro-wave re-heated sandwich, which deserves 11/20. Mauricette opts for an "escalope sauce Roquefort" which is correct. It doesn't actually say that it's poultry, but the waiter confirms. It is garnished with a steamed potato which has been

cut into four and re-heated, Vichy type carrots, tasteless and as hard as stone, basically raw. 11/20. The fig sauce is good, but it practically smothers my duck breast. I have to say that the five skinny slices are stingy. Even the snob nosed gastronomic places would hesitate in doing such a small portion! At 22 € a menu, it's about time they stopped taking me for a ride! I'm cross now! The garnishing is the same as Mauricette too! Why make an effort? I wonder! So here you are! 11/20! We were expecting the worst for dessert: it doesn't come! Half of the desserts are missing but we dig into the last "crème brûlée" noted 14/20 by the lady with the green hat even if it isn't homemade, and I happily have a "salade de fruits", which is dry, no juice. 14/20. For once it is the desserts that save the day. It is more often the contrary. The young couple come to us at the end of the meal to say sorry, to explain that "we had lots of custom" "the oven has broken down" and blab, bla, bla. And they even knock the price down. What always tickles me is: professionalism would be to anticipate this sort of problem rather than patching up later.

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 13/20. Bread = 12/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

61 boulevard Clémenceau

83000 - Toulon

Phone : 04.94.15.20.68

La B Des Cochons



The management hasn't changed as we had been led to believe! But now, Yves Meinier is the manager-activity organiser in this small restaurant at the bottom of the Mayol shopping centre. This man is not twit of the year as far as restaurants are concerned. He could give evening lessons in good humour to the rest of the coasts' blasé restaurant owners, his talent is going to be bought by the Club Méd'. Unless he himself buys the Club Méd itself! It's funny, but this kind of man can even allow himself to go too far, he can get away with it. So! The cooking is interesting, well thought out. A colourful blackboard with half a dozen starters, and about ten dishes. Tablecloths, a bright dining room, thanks to the windows, a South-African deco. I didn't do any analysing, I just let myself get influenced by the shop name! And just after that, by this enticing title: "noix de St-Jacques poêlées, reduction de Champagne et mafaldines" (fried St-Jacques shellfish, reduced sauce with Champagne and pasta). Five delicately cooked shellfish, each with their own short sauce placed in a white ceramic spoon. It's good, but you mustn't tremble when slicing through as it tips over. The mafaldines, are a variety of... sorry... sort of pasta like lasagne cut lengthwise and they're good. But the strong sauce (garlic, basil) doesn't really go with the delicate St-Jacques. I still hand out 14,5/20 without hesitating. Dessert? Let's see Betsy! A "croustillant de pommes au miel" (crisp apples and honey) the dish is generous, nice. With a little imagination and hard work, you can stand out from the crowd. 14,5/20. No daily formulas on Saturdays, it would be nice to know before going into the place. If you are tempted by wandering round the area, I can only suggest that you head away from the port and its' approximations: all you have to do is cross over to have a lovely meal! And pig yourself!

Chef : Nicolas David

Welcome = 17/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Coffee = 15,5/20.

503 avenue de la République

83000 - Toulon

Phone : 04.94.03.04.75

La Feuille De Chou



It's 50/50 with the attendance. Either you get the sulky one, or you get an angel. I got the angel. It's the taller of the two and she seems to take her job to heart. A model of professional goodwill, reincarnated gayety and friendliness at 360°. The propositions on the blackboard change every three weeks according to management. A "clafoutis de St-Jacques à la coppa du marché d'Ajaccio" (St-Jacques shellfish cake with coppa from the Ajaccio market). It is written out clearly, this is what it says. 13 € for a dish that is barely convincing. A green salad with balsamic vinegar and the main object: an individual gratin that leaks when you put a fork in. I don't know whether you have already tried to cut water with a fork or not, but it isn't easy. The best thing to do is pick out the over-cooked scallops with the prongs and wipe up the egg based liquid with bread. 11/20. The dessert which heads more towards cheese than a true sweet is fine. A "bruccio au miel, petit verre d'alcool et canistrello". It's a shame that the chef doesn't try the Corsican bit more, by using horse-chestnut honey for example, or myrtle spirits instead of William pear, it would be great. But for 5 € you frankly applaud with both hands and notice that it is generous and a good idea. 14,5/20. The towel to dry your hands in the lavatory is as heavy as a floor cloth. Only fair: it's soaking. As Mauricette would say: "it's the club towel". On one of the old Toulon squares which are being renovated, I nearly had a nice meal. From the worst (soaking towel) to the best (adorable waitress) and passing through the kitchens that really ought to try to remain simple.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 13/20. Bread = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 12/20.

15 rue de la Glacière

Place Baboulène

83000 - Toulon

Phone : 04.94.62.09.26

Le Saint Louis



Alleluia my dear brothers! Ah! The cortege of blasé meal dealers who daren't look their customers in the eye have gone! Mind you if they did look them in the eye it would avoid the poor devils having to look at what on their plate! Anyway! The welcome and attendance seen to here by the management are a model of light class and convivial partaking. Mauricette pushes the point that this is probably one of her most charming experiences as a guinea pig in Toulon, with sea view as a bonus. We have to give justice to Saint Louis for having achieved to please the lady with the green hats' senses. At her age, no such opportunity should be given the slip. This

well known address has just been taken over by the Rolland family who arrive straight from l'Argentière-La-Bessée (05) where they ran the Hôtel-Restaurant de la Gare until the end of 2007. Even the chef followed the band wagon to Toulon, it just goes to show! Proper tablecloths and napkins... Trust settles in, the lady with the green hat opts for the menu at 25 € and a "tartare de dorade sauce vierge" which is extremely fresh and generous at 14,5/20. Without a doubt influenced by the panorama, she follows the sea-side with a "pave de saumon au pistou, pommes de terre safranées" (salmon steak with garlic and basil sauce, potatoes with saffron) which is perfectly done, and I mean "on one side" that even Troigros would be proud of. 15/20 she says. My "formule du jour" at 14 € is well thought out, off the usual track and is of good standard. The "duo de chèvre chaud sur toast" (hot goats' cheese on toast) with ham and green salad is super, the quality cheese has something to do with it. Not the ordinary log type, oh no, real individual cheeses grilled in the oven. 14,5/20. Daily suggestion: hold tight! "demi magret de canard, sauce aux cèpes" (half duck breast with cep mushroom sauce)! Green beans and homemade fries (if the chef has time to make them)! The cooking times are just right, the sauce is tasty: 14,5/20! My millstone with the red hat delightedly stuffs herself with "profiteroles maison" again! It is becoming a habit! And real melted chocolate too, not the pre-packed tube stuff! And real whipped cream! Oh! Heavens! A miracle! 15/20! Real homemade cooking! Truly! There is also a Brittany side to the Saint Louis with crepes and pancakes made with buckwheat flour! The Rolland family! The Rolland song! Denise, René and their daughter Emilie! On the corniche, did you hear me?

Chef : Michel Passalacqua

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

391 littoral Frédéric Mistral

83000 - Toulon

Phone : 04.94.42.08.05

TOURTOUR

La Table

ΨΨΨΨ

The Guyon couple's place has been going for some time! These two have made themselves become adopted just like all kinds of greed's! Or the opposite! It's the same really! People come from afar to have a nice time at Méia and Laurent Guyon's table! Because rubbing up to dishes made by this escapee from Vergé and Switzerland is a real pleasure! He even dived into the West Indies, but that's enough. My monomania of privileging the basics (the cooking) nearly made me forget to notice the advantageous changes made to this house and shady patio! Things have been re-thought; wine cellar with a glass door, the staircase has been redone, Italian stucco on the walls... Don't worry about the kitchen! I can see the regulars beginning to tremble and sweat heavily! Calm down! The chef's cuisine is still one of the most brilliant we have ever known, classical pierced by Pacific influences! And the prices are still as gentle as retiring to... Tourtour! Ah! What a

cook! His dishes are limpid, take us where they want to go, are evident. After a clever tantalizer "crème brûlée aux asperges" (asparagus crème brûlée), look at the "charlotte d'écrevisses aux asperges et sa vinaigrette aux fruits de la passion" (crayfish charlotte with asparagus and passion fruit vinaigrette). It takes a bull by the horns! Or more likely: a crayfish by the pincers! It looks good, is entertaining in the mouth (crisp and soft), plays classic and then bang! The vinaigrette finely stands out! A sweet at 16/20! Get up and applaud the "filets de thon roti aux asperges et morilles et pommes grenaille, sauce à l'ail d'ours" (roasted tuna fish fillets with asparagus and morel mushrooms and granulated potato, garlic sauce). Skilled cooking, the tuna is supple and the seasonal vegetables would make any Carpathian butcher turn vegetarian, and the short sauce that follows, like the dot on an "I". 16/20. "L'assortiment de fromages de chèvre et d'ailleurs" (goat's cheese and from abroad cheese assortment) is in all of the menus, a good initiative. I'm going to annoy Mauricette. She adores both rhubarb and red wine... When I tell her that I had a "financier à la rhubarbe et vin rouge, glace au calisson" (Calisson are an almond speciality from Aix-en-Provence, here it is ice-cream) at 15,5/20, she's going to loath me. My green hated accountant would happily have forgotten the "financier" (word game meaning both financial and sponge finger) side: she hates to be under concurrence! So! The wine menu is well thought of and pushes the cork far abroad: in to other regions. A place you can do without until you have been there, but impossible to forget once you have.

Chef : Laurent Guyon

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 16,5/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 16/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

1 traverse du Jas

Les Ribas

83690 - Tourtour

Phone : 04.94.70.55.95

Les Chenes Verts

ΨΨΨΨΨ

It has been about thirty years since Paul Bajade started serving in what has become a sort of temple honouring gourmet customers. I say that because I have been watching the restaurant world for some time now and even if they are doing well, most chefs set up restaurants to honour themselves, for their own belly button. So! Here pureness reigns alone, sober and the absent unnecessary, work together to create pure class. William Dourlens, the maître d'hotel, has been present for nearly always in "l'Aigle de Tourtour". Discretion, humour, elegance. Mauricette who is a real chatter box, has said nearly nothing since we got here. I should do this every week. Shhh... the lights are going down... it's going to start... "Foie gras de canard aux grains de raisin, pain d'épices croustillant, brunoise de mangues, pomme verte" (foie gras with grapes, crisp gingerbread, mango salad, green apple). Fantasy slips in, the smooth and fruity do their job: 16/20. To follow is a fairly simple but marvellous invention: "lasagnes fraîches aux légumes, jus d'orties, jaune d'oeuf poché, crème de truffes, copeaux de parmesan" (fresh vegetable lasagna, nettle juice, poached

egg yolk, truffle cream, slivers of parmesan cheese). Delicious, full of striking creativity that somehow seems evident (it's a trap), perfect unions. Grand alchemy. We're nearly taken over by our emotion. 18/20, just shows our ecstasy! That is relative value which is admirable but human nature likes to compete. Less marked by the level of originality, we piously start "un dos de cabillaud sur fondant de courgettes et de tomates, rattes écrasées à l'huile de pays safranée, fenouil croquant et mousses d'eau de mer" (cod back on melting courgette and tomatoes, crushed potatoes with saffron flavoured oil, crisp fennel and frothy sea water) at 16/20. When Mauricette saw her "filet d'agneau grillé, croquette de pieds, chiffonades de mesclun à l'ail des ours, pomme fondante à la crème de cèpes" (grilled lamb fillet, pork leg nuggets, mixed salad with her sausage like fingers, I had started my "risotto de Camargue forestière, poulet label en petite brochette, vert de blette, gelée chaude de volaille" (mushroom risotto, chicken kebab, green Bette, hot poultry gravy). Both of our completely different dishes deserve the same punishment: 17/20. After such a good time what could be better? The "petite brousse fraîche en aspic, miel nouveau, feuilleté au sucre doux" (aspic of cottage cheese, honey, flaky sugar pastry) gets us ready for the finale. A plate of desserts from another planet, Paul Bajade's planet! Get your imagination going and dribble with: "le citron avocat verveine, golden caramélisée, pêche au vin rosé, tuile aux fruits rouges sur crème d'amandes, moelleux à la vanille et abricots séchés, glace au miel de lavandes, cristalline de menthe et confiture d'olives" (lemon verveine avocado, caramelised golden apple, peach in rosé wine, red fruit biscuit on almond cream, vanilla cake with dried apricot, lavender honey ice-cream, crystallized mint and olive jam). We relish smuggly, searching for the divine and looking towards heaven. 17/20. A really grand moment of direct talent, unique sensations. Oh yes: 35 € the menu. Thanks who?

Chef : Paul Bajade

Welcome = 18/20. Attendance = 18/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 16/20. Coffee = 17/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

(entrée du village en venant de Villecroze)

83690 - Tourtour

Phone : 04.94.70.55.06

VIDAUBAN

Vidau Etape

ΨΨ

About a year ago, this table was already tested. Not brilliant. My little finger said that I had come on the wrong day, it sometimes happens, but don't say that this is general. The address has become more professional. How did the miracle happen? I saw it all! Easy! The pizza-man has come back to make the pizzas! He has pushed out the well organised pretty lady who made them before! She is now in the dining room! Which means, that she too pushed out the mixed up lady who forgot both my newspaper and tooth pick

last time I came! This lady now finds herself behind the till with a smile which also means that the man who was there before, is no longer! A real game of dominoes! You push one, the others follow! What's more, the regulars seem to be satisfied with the dishes, which wasn't the case the first time. I feel like pizza! A "calzone" for me! 10,50 € I don't hesitate in giving out of 14/20 for this pizza turnover which made me very happy. A little dessert? Of course my dear! A "tiramisu" which is very good and perfectly home made! 6 € Second a nice surprise and second good Mark! 14,5/20! Thanks to my little finger! Call the fire brigade: the fire is out!

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 12/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 14,5/20.

RN7
4540 Quartier Le Plan
83550 - Vidauban
Phone : 04.94.73.03.82

VILLECROZE

Le Rocher

ΨΨ_{1/2}

To climb up this rock, you can wear your stiletto heels if it tickles you! Something very good has happened to the village: Serge Aza-Vallina has been running the shop since the end of 2007. This calm wanderer (in both senses of the word) and native to this area became infatuated with the "Rocher". A paintbrush face lift and pickaxe later, here is an adorable address put together only for you, your mother-in-law, the kids and everyone else. A nice time in perspective, comfortably in the hands of the friendly and cheeky master of the house. Nothing sad or drab about him. Anyway! Sit down! The menu is greedy, makes your mouth water, especially thanks to the exclusive presence of dishes from the South-West. A smile at the corner of his lips, Serge takes my order, "duck" for starter and dish. As he noticed that I was reading my weekly Wednesday satirical newspaper (called the chained duck), he quietly says "that settles it! The whole meal is duck!" Well said! A starter called "trilogie de canard, salade maraîchère" (duck trilogy, market gardener salad". Crumbled, crystallised duck, well worked gizzard and smoked breast)... homemade! It is rare folks! The same goes for the salmon! Here the chef cooks the same way as he breathes! Second nature! He likes others! And I like him to like me! Don't you? Anyway! 14,5/20! What follows my dear blue little rabbits, is a "cassolette de canard confit et sa mijotée" (crystallised duck and simmered garnishing). I'm telling you, there's not a quack-quack around! Home-made crystallised duck obviously! It's becoming a habit! It's going to put conserve makers out of work! 14,5/20! Both dishes were generous: so no desert. Mind you, if it's going to be duck, there is always "foie gras crème brûlée"... but that's a starter! The wine menu plays local, might as well make the most of the local vineyards. Bordeaux and Bourgogne too. Serge Aza-Vallina has the capacity to mix conversation and humour. Which makes him stand out from the usual restaurant convention. And gives us a change from the boss of a delicatessen who patiently waits for customers hiding behind his till. I raise my hat to you Sir!

Chef : Hervé Poli

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

510 route d'Aups
83690 - Villecroze
Phone : 04.94.67.73.61

VINON SUR VERDON

La Table Ronde

ΨΨ_{1/2}

What do I bet you're going to miss Véronique Chauvins' Inn? If you're coming from Aix, it's at the start of the village on the right. From the opposite direction, you can work it out. Even your sat-nav will warn you too late. I'll bet Mauricettes' last polo mint! And that would be a shame. To deprive her of her last treat certainly, but to miss "la table ronde"; definitely! Especially if like ourselves you are keen native amateurs. We are in an Inn; it says so on the sign board. The genuine thing. The big fireplace at the back keeps the atmosphere going. The cuisine is classic but doesn't hesitate in playing with a few modern ideas. Thus; the kitchens dare to offer a "terrone de foie gras aux figues" in a menu at 23 € Crack. Just to confirm that you did the right thing in coming in. 14/20. In the same menu are "pieds et parquets à la marseillaise" (pigs legs) served in a fondue pot. My thick legged green hat leaves just a few bones in exchange with a 14,5/20. If you would prefer to start the meal with something from Provence the carte suggests a singing and dancing "croquant de brandade de morue à l'huile d'olive" (crisp salt cod puree with olive oil)! Go on! Sing! Only the cicadas could do better! 14/20. Let's push our investigations a little further: "dos de sandre rôti à la cassonade, déglacé à la bière sur sa potée d'endives" (roasted pikeperch with brown sugar, glazed with beer and mashed chicory). Northern influence? Chicory and beer, you have to like bitter tastes! But it works, the fish is well cooked, the chef is gaining marks. 15/20. Back to something classic with "millefeuille aux framboises, crème légère au coulis de framboises" (raspberry millefeuille, cream with raspberry sauce) at 14,5/20, and "croustillant aux abricots et nougatine" (crisp biscuit with apricots and almonds) at 14/20. But these are only examples of desserts. In nice weather, a shady patio protects you from being bothered by traffic and adds to customers' pleasure, and golly they take advantage of it. But beware: listen carefully! It's best to book because the place is getting a name for itself! Including with B&O readers. Are you surprised?

Chef : Anthony Abbura

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

877 avenue de la République (à l'entrée du village en venant d'Aix)
83560 - Vinon Sur Verdon
Phone - Fax : 04.92.78.92.58

Vaucluse

APT

Les Delices De Lea

ΨΨ

Here I am dawdling on a pedestrian street in Apt. I'm searching for something good. Just like every other day in the walking guinea pig job. Except that to be more precise, I am searching for "Les Délices de Léa". I've found it! On the shop-front and solidly attached, two sweet angels welcome me! I hesitate for an instant, is this a restaurant or a esoteric shop? Anyway hop: in I go! Good atmosphere, good humour: it is immediately reassuring! I am lucky, there is only one free table left! What a success! At ease, I accept the proposition of a complete menu of the day priced at 16 € If it's good, it's reasonable. The customers seem satisfied. The starter tries to be original, "glace au foie gras" (foie gras ice cream). I am presented with two ramekins served on a tiny tray! One with a little green salad, a few tomato cubes! The other with a foie gras ice cream garnished with crystallised onions. Something fresh to be rediscovered in the summer: 14/20. The chef has fun with the dish of the day! "Filet mignon d'agneau sauce au foie gras" (small lamb fillet steak with a foie gras sauce). The same principle of ramekins: leek, potato, green beans and lamb fillets with their foie gras sauce! At this moment, I heard two angels clapped their hands. 14/20! Dessert! Classic maybe but certainly delicious "tarte tatin" (upside down Apple pie). It is the last delight from Léa. 14/20. Who is Léa? The young lady chef Sandrine's grandmother. Which just goes to show that value doesn't need a necessary number of years, at least in Apt. The two angels in the window say goodbye. And we surely want to come back!

Chef : Sandrine

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

87 rue de la République
84400 - Apt
Phone : 04.90.74.32.77

AVIGNON

L'oie Et Le Grill

0000

What a pretty name! The Périgord or the Gers in the Vaucluse? Don't dream! It started out all right! An enormous car park with a few rather nice cars! An inviting patio that filled me with confidence! And a blackboard menu that read: 13,50 €! Here is where the fall started! No welcome! The boss took the order. Followed a few minutes later by Madame, who did it again! It's not Louis XVth's organisation! No way will I eat here twice! I loose my first illusion with the "taboulé"! Greasy! Very greasy! It didn't stand a chance, poor thing! A little salad, tired, drowning in oil! And not olive! No risk of chapped skin! We'll come back this winter! A 4/20 seems fair! Second lost illusion: a "langue de boeuf sauce piquante" (beef tongue and spicy sauce). Spicy? Where? No flavour! A boiled flavourless chunk! No recognisable texture! It dares to be served

with vegetable moose, cabbage and carrots. And to say that I have to taste this thing! I force myself, be assured. To be avoided: 5/20. "9 poissons suivant arrivage" (9 fish depending on arrival) the menu says! I swear! "Very good, I can guaranty!" he said, the boss! Problem! Out of the 9 announced fish, the tuna was the only one on the boat! On the slave ship I would say! So terrified that the others deserted! Mauricette, who has rarely been the same colour as her green hat, invents a new shade to add to the collection, "fools green". It's a green that you catch when you have been tricked by a (very) mediocre dish. There's hope still with the only potato served: well cooked! Nicely browned. But the tuna that is with it awakens the nightmare! The thing is learning to swim in a bath of oil! It must have been rowing a long time; it has gone black from exhaustion. It's trying in vain to hide behind a bit of salad, also worn out! Inedible and thus uneaten. This is Mauricettes' "fools green". World record at 1/20, never seen before in the BâO. To escape a new ordeal, I like a coward opt for a lemon and pear sorbet. In contrast, it could have been a tyre or telephone directory sorbet, I would have been satisfied. 12/20. Mauricette who since Napoléon has been through many wars is reckless enough to order a "tarte aux abricots". It looks rather like a kiddies tea set. It's shiny. But it's not good at all! Stupidly, I put my finger on it: it's hard, dry as a bone, the apricots and their cream resist the pressure of my touch! The lady with the green hat takes one bite and stops, without chewing except for these words: foul and 2/20. No ice for us. Only one plastic pot of mustard for the whole patio! Ah listen? This must be the first time that the BâO has recommended a restaurant for its' car park.

Chef : Who knows..?

Welcome = 9/20. Attendance = 7/20. Setting

=12/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 12/20.

Menu at 13,50 €. Full menu.

Route de Tarascon

Pont de Rognonas

84000 - Avignon

Phone : 04.90.88.54.06

BONNIEUX

L'arome

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

Mauricette loves old stones and vaulted ceilings. Maybe because of her own age! No need to draw a picture: she fits into the setting alright! And thanks to the setting, pleasure settles in long before the dishes arrive. The Pagès couple have really found their marks in this superb restaurant. Clara has an eye on everything: the deco, welcome, attendance. She misses nothing. Jean-Michel prefers the kitchen. He can be seen by all behind a big window with his team. Nothing hidden! We have known for some time that this chef who worked in Solivérès in Gordes has the know-how to make you relish. So hop! Menu at 38 €! It's party time! The ancestor with her size 47 stilettos chooses a "brochette de gambas en habit de canard" (king prawn kebab with duck). This original association of prawns/duck works wonders and is perfectly balanced. She tastes. She thinks, she likes it! She screeches out: 16/20! Fish to follow with "filets de rougets poêlés, écume de leur fumet, Parmentier aux olives noires" (red mullet filets,

sauce and potato pie with black olives). Good presentation, good fish, good idea. 15,5/20 without a doubt. For me now! I can't resist it, I have to have "foie gras de canard de la ferme, confiture de griottes et pain grillé" (farm duck foie gras, Morello cherry jam and toast). It's one of my weak spots. Very weak because I even allow myself a glass of excellent Sauternes wine. 15,5/20! Then "canon d'agneau en deux cuissons, son jus réduit à l'ail" (lamb and garlic gravy). It's great! The lamb is first steamed to stay pink and then roasted. The strong gravy isn't just there for show. You can wipe it up. 16/20. We join up for cheese, and then it's dessert time. "Soupe de fraise et crème glacée vanille" (strawberry soup and vanilla ice-cream) for Mauricette who is full! A rare thing! And for me: "pain perdu aux pommes caramélisées et crème glacée" (bread and butter pudding with caramelised apples and ice-cream) as I've still got room! Two 15,5/20. A faultless trip from beginning to end. At the back of the building is a superb cave dug into the rock which in itself is worth a visit. You now know that the dishes are good! After your meal, why not wander round the fortified village?

Chef : Jean-Michel Pagès

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 17/20. Setting =18/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

2 rue Lucien Blanc

84480 - Bonnieux

Phone : 04.90.75.88.62

Le Pont Julien

ΨΨ

For those who know the place, it's easy! Oh yes? For the others, follow the Cavaillon Apt Road! On your right you will see a Roman bridge: Le Pont Julien. The restaurant has borrowed its name! It's easy for visitors! Because it really is isolated! The dining room is classic. In any case there is no trace of Romans, not even any centurions hidden under the table! Discreet music and a frankly smiling welcome! I decline the menu of the day at 15 €! With its leek quiche and coq au vin! Goodness knows that I like it though! I choose the intermediate menu at 22 €! The "brochette panée d'escargots" (bread-crumbed snail kebab) served with an immense mixed salad. The snails are rolled in raw ham! Then bread-crumbed! Original eh? 14/20. The "cuisse de canard confite et sa choucroute au cidre" (crystallised duck leg and cider choucroute) is the dish of the day! A nice sized "homemade" leg which is excellent for my taste buds and is nicely firm. The choucroute and potatoes compensate largely the taste of fritter. A good 14/20. The choice of homemade dessert allows me to opt for a "crème caramel au thé à la bergamote" (cream caramel earl grey tea). This tea has virtues; it gives extra colour and flavour. Another 14/20. In the end it seems that it's nice with these modern Romans. They even sell homemade preserves (terrines, conserve) for the Road.

Chef : Michel D'Isoard

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting =14/20. Bread = 12/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 13/20.

RN 100

84480 - Bonnieux

Phone : 04.90.74.48.44 - Fax : 04.90.74.60.13

BUOUX

Auberge Des Seguins

ΨΨ

On the lane leading to the Inn, Mauricette squeezes my arm and worries: "do you think they've got electricity at the end?". At last in the car park, she wonders "you'd think we were in the grand canyon!". You could say that she has no sense of measure. Mind you! She is right about the last point! The place is idyllic. Paradise for nature lovers, rambblers, walkers and wanderers of all sorts. The welcome at the Inn is in unison. Cool, laid back, friendly, so, no flimflams. Just as is Joelle's attendance. She lets us choose our table. Then announces that with the summer heat there is neither carte nor menu. Simply "plateaux de crudités" (raw vegetable trays). It suddenly goes cold... very cold! Mauricette and I look at each other in surprise! Err... is that all? No, you can have cheese and dessert afterwards if you're still hungry! Ah? Good! So, raw veg it will be. A few agonising minutes go by. Then the trays arrive. Big, beautiful, varied and generous. Imagine: anchovy sauce with fresh vegetables, hot goat's cheese on toast, grilled mussels, eggs with black olive paste, olive cake, a small lentil salad, a mushroom one, etc. Accompanied by a plate with a slice of pork with olive paste, cold too, and mouth wateringly soft. Only good stuff! 14/20 without hesitating for 15 €! And after that? Dessert? The staff was right, we're no longer hungry. But nevertheless we'll let ourselves be tempted by the "millefeuille de pain d'épices et glace vanille" (gingerbread millefeuille with vanilla ice-cream) and that will do! Original and sprinkled with cinnamon biscuit crumbs. Good idea. 14/20 for 4 €. In the end, a meal in the country as relaxing as a pick-nick. But better sat, better served and just better all round!

Chef : Nathalie Giraud

Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting =15/20. Bread = 14/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

84480 - Buoux

Phone : 04.90.74.18.89

CABRIERES D AVIGNON

La Claire Fontaine

Ψ

The address was marked down by our services some time ago! I wasn't eager. But Mauricette wanted to dunk her moustache into the new version of "claire fontaine"! It reminded her of a song in her long lost childhood. Anyway. I was right in the end. Here's why. Snubbing the pretty terrace we prefer to go inside. Not much effort has been made to decorate the big dining room, but it's alright. For a reason that we still haven't fathomed for the moment, there is still only a small blackboard as a menu. Salads, pasta, and few dishes. Mauricette falls back on a "salade

claire fontaine", which is pretty but costs 14 € even so. A bit of diced bacon, smoked duck breast, bits of gizzard. 12/20. A bad choice for me: "thon au sésames" (tuna with sesame), one of the rare prepared dishes. "What with?" I ask. "Usually rice". In fact tagliatelles. And why not, with the amount of pasta on the menu, why make rice as well? Why bother? It even ends up being tagliatelles and ratatouille, a runny pepper juice ratatouille. Ok! But I have kept the best for last. The tuna, which is entirely covered in sesame, is completely frozen in the middle. I can understand that the chef wouldn't want to overcook such nice meat, but even so! The sesame seeds haven't even gone gold coloured from the frying pan. Just shoved quickly through the oven, and even then, I'm not sure that it was on! In any case not worth more than 10/20. And that's for the pasta. The bread is excellent though, the greedy green hat has a correct "assiette de fromages". And not a stingy one either! Three nice pieces: marinated goats' cheese, Maroilles, Saint-something! I know because we are shown the packets! 14,5/20. "Tarte tatin" (upside down apple pie) for me. I'm scared, but no, it's hot! And not bad. 13/20. With two coffees the bill goes up to 45,50 € which isn't a give-away. This is a Luberon classic: the prices aren't proportional to the pleasure gained. On our way out I can hear Mauricette singing: "A la claire fontaine, our lunch we had to eat, on the way out again my taste buds were all but beat!". She's going to wear that droopy face all day, but then when does she do anything different.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

**Route de Gordes
Hameau de Coustellet
84220 - Cabrières D'avignon
Phone : 04.90.74.35.97**

CAVAILLON

La Colline

ΨΨΨ

"She told me to go and eat up there on the hill, she never came, dy-dy-dy-dy!" Personnel interpretation of a famous song by Joe Dassin! So I went! With her! With Mauricette! She wouldn't have missed it for all the gold in the world! Or maybe for a rendezvous with George Clooney! Isn't that flattering for Laurent Renards' cooking? Classed n° 2 after the American actor according to my desperate housewife with the green hat! So! We repeat a visit to our softy in Cavaillon which is run by a couple who know some good things about the restaurant career! Some of which I invite you to indulge in, unless because of your religion. Ours is one that makes us give out the good word or the bad. Mauricette appreciates her "salade de caille marinée au Cognac" (quail salad marinated in brandy). "Not enough brandy" she says. Evidently... 15/20! A fresh and elegant "carpaccio de St-Jacques au balsamique" (St-Jacques shellfish carpaccio with balsamic vinegar) for me noted 15/20. The dishes that follow would be worth a bike-ride up here, they're that good! Her: "carré d'agneau rôti au romarin" (roast lamb chops with rosemary), real ones with precise and scented cooking! 15,5/20

is what the lady with the green hat hands out! And as for me it's 15/20 that I give to a revisited recipe, or should I say dish: "la moussaka d'agneau au Parmesan" (lamb moussaka with Parmesan cheese). I doubt you would eat as a better one in Athenas itself! Ah! You regalas! What am I talking about? Mauricette has heard about my dessert since last year. The fruit changes but the pleasure remains intense with the "duo de mousse de fromage blanc à la vanille Bourbon, compote de fraises" (fromage blanc mousse with vanilla, strawberry compote). She's still got some stuck in the hairs of her nose! 15/20! Proper tablecloths even on the terrace, greenery, a friendly team as if you owned your own napkin ring here, and which respects proprieties. An art impulse by Bernadette! Who? Laurent's wife! The chef! Are you following? After having visited the planet for other establishments and gone through other kitchens pockets, he has been here for quite a while now on top of this hill... and his only ambition is to be happy. Ah! I think we've caught it too!

**Chef : Laurent Renard
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16,5/20. Bread = 15,5/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.**

**Hermitage St Jacques
84300 - Cavaillon
Phone : 04.90.71.44.99**

La Licorne

ΨΨ 1/2

This famous address (previously "la table à fromages") had been paddling in food without a soul for some time. Today in the lovely falsely New Orleans looking establishment, thanks to the white painted mezzanine, four, yes four people are eager to please the customers. So many restaurant kitchens are lacking any kind of professionalism due to the fact that there are too few real chefs around (read the BâO), I thought it would be fun to tell you that "La Licorne" has four people to mingle recipes and tickle sauces. Two in the dining room and two in the kitchen. Thus my dear brothers, it is with much courage that I shall have a sweet meal put together by a female duo, both as complementary as applied. Together they manage to get "Taillevent" in Paris and "Le Bistrot Italien" in Saint-Rémy into their CV. But the difference of genre is no problem as I merrily delight in a "salade de gésiers confits aux lardons"! The gizzard and diced bacon have had the advantage of being fried before served on a dish dressed up in Sundays' clothes. It is infinitely better than being micro-waved I promise you! 14,5/20! What follows is quality too with "cuisse de canard confite à l'orange" (crystallized duck leg with orange). Grilled and crystallized in a pan (again and always!) and a flavoursome gravy-sauce which gives a new angle to the classic recipe, here is a second well deserved 14,5/20. A last clap with a slice of the famous "tiramisu", it is academic and purely traditional: not a "soup", more a "supple" gâteau. Well only a few extra letters! Well done! 15/20! This little enterprise full of humanity wouldn't exist without a lot of good will from Eddy Ouahabi, the "Licornes" young boss who has flung both his will and capability into his business. It makes a change from the food world blasé because the team is

evidently enjoying itself! A change of habit... to be kept!

**Chef : Sarah Texier.
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.**

**242 Cours Gambetta
84300 - Cavaillon
Phone : 04.90.78.30.16**

CHATEAUNEUF-DU PAPE

La Mule Du Pape

Ψ 1/2

Who's the luckiest? France who gets all of the tourists? Or the tourists that come to France? Both probably! Otherwise it wouldn't work out! So! Here we are (as tourists...) in this magnificent country side and its unrivalled vineyards! The hardest thing, in Châteauneuf-du-pape, is to find somewhere to put the mule! And then you walk... walk under the sun... At last! The shade from the two patios and their coolness hold their arms out to me! What a crowd! Accents from afar that bump into each other! Ideal for the multi lingual chatter box! You would think we were on holiday at home! The welcome is friendly, the wicker work chairs are comfortable! Mauricette chooses the "plat du jour" and its "aubergines farcies" (stuffed aubergine) garnished with carbonara style rice (cream, lardon, onions)! It doesn't make the sauce very light but Mauricette hands out a 13/20. I prefer the daily formula with its "assiette provençale" and a glass of wine here! The aubergine is served hot. The green salad and chopped red peppers are delicately seasoned, olive oil and Provence herbs. The wine is not just a stand in, it's a treat. All this earns 13/20. A small dessert? I ask for a "faisselle à la crème de marron" (soft cheese with creamed chestnuts) and the game is won! 13/20. This is more like a tourist "brasserie" than a proper restaurant: salads, pasta, grilled meats, pizzas... New proprietors! Young people at work and a will to do well! This is no stubborn mule!

**Chef : M. Esposito
Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 13/20. Bread = 13/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toilettes = 13/20.**

**2 rue de la République
84230 - Chateauneuf-du-pape
- Fax : 04.90.83.79.32**

CHEVAL BLANC

L'escale Blanche

ΨΨ

L'Escale Blanche! A white horse! Only the white is missing! I mean snow of course! For them to be three! There is as much white as wooden chalets! Here it is rather a flat country, apart from the Luberon! So, what is this Escale Blanche (white stop over)? It's an idea, the concept. The Lady boss seems to be prolonging a holiday in

the mountains! In the Puy de Dôme to be precise! She has come back from there with her pockets full of specialities! At least in the winter! The summer is already booked for barbecues! There is nevertheless a pretty dining room with chatting regulars. Although the atmosphere points towards altitude, the welcome is warm! The attendance is lively! Nothing to bother you! Menu at 12 € with as a starter "fromage de tête" (brawn) and a small salad, seasoned with old-fashioned mustard! Simple and good, it works. 14/20! To follow: "pieds paquets" (pigs legs). Simple and a success! 14/20! "Flanc vanille" (vanilla flan), homemade dessert, 13/20! That's what explains the regulars presence. They must also appreciate the musical atmosphere! And something comes into my mind: why complicate things when you can make them easy! Neither the deco, the attendance, or the ambition can say the contrary! Except maybe, that two Fridays a month, you can invite yourself to a Latin evening with an exotic menu. Why not? Oh! I nearly forgot: aioli on the first Friday of every month.

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 14,5/20. Setting = 13/20. Bread = 13/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 13/20.

551 La Canebière
84460 - Cheval Blanc
- Fax : 04.90.71.00.65

COURTHEZON

La Table Des Princes



Imagination is a dangerous weapon. Either sublime, or destructive! The Princes table! The shop sign is, let's say... equal to the task! I am therefore expecting something pompous, some opulence inside. Armour here, a wall tapestry from the middle ages there... and attendance in full costume! You have to understand: Courthezon is full of history! For example, the 12th century ramparts! If you please! Nothing less! And these Princes then! Where are they? Without a doubt there is some historical reference! Other than that I am only faced with functional, sober and modern! Nothing transcendent or anything to take me out of my element in this common deco. The counter-bar doesn't argue with this! The welcome compensates for the lack of dream, quick and smiling. Agreeable and useful in stopping my imagination! Lunchtime formula at 13 €! The regulars rush in, and the town mayor seems to be amongst them. I am quickly brought, as if I was in a hurry my "encornets flambées au pastis et son flan de poivron" (squid flambéed in Pastis with a pepper flan). Devilishly I regale, the salad and the flan add to the pleasure. A 14/20 straight off! The "parmentier de boeuf" (shepherds pie) is conform to what I expected. A layer of meat! A layer of potato purée with fine herbs! A few breadcrumbs on top! No risks, it works, and 13,5/20. What can I say about my "aumônière de pêche et son chocolat noir coulant" (peach in thin pastry and chocolate sauce)? Good will all round for another 13,5/20. The menu is at the image of the young chef who learned his trade at the "Château des Fines Roches" and at "l'Oustalet": an interesting potential but that needs to bloom. And despite a gentle price approach, we will

come back!

Chef : Yannick Carnera

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 13/20. Bread = 13/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

32 boulevard de la République

84350 - Courthezon

Phone : 04.90.30.89.84 - Fax : 04.90.30.93.74

GORGES

La Remise



Our very late arrival doesn't stop Corinne welcoming us with pleasure and kindness! Phew! Corinne is the chefs' wife! We learn that later! Shady, flowery patio! We can see that straight away! Typical provence tables with cloths that match the setting. We will not be overcome with laziness! Stay aware! And get into the deep of the subject! With a "caillette chaude"! Small salad, a few slices of tomato, a drop of olive oil! Little gherkins too! Here is a starter at 14/20! "Gambas flambées au whisky" (king prawns)! And shelled if you please! In a neat circle around a bowl of rice, they put up no fight with their creamy sauce. Mauricette who has not known of such pleasure in donkeys' years, enjoys herself! Proof is the 14,5/20! For me, mousse will do! Oh no! Not a beer! A "mousse de poissons aux petits légumes" (fish mousse with vegetables)! Peas, carrots, green beans... and a smooth sauce. Sweet little steamed potatoes. Sliced vegetables, chased by a drop of olive oil. A pretty picture, really! Bang! Yes siir! It's good! Must say! 14,5/20! We can't stop now! I come across a magnificent "nougat aux fruits confits" in light custard (14/20). And surprise! The chef comes to greet the anonymous Mauricette! Just to see how things are going and serve a "coupe de fromage blanc dans son coulis de fruits rouges" (cheese rather like yoghurt with a red fruit sauce). Two strawberries as a bonus! 14/20. The couple display a very calm attitude in their work, and one could say their will to do it well. Not really traditional, nor gastronomical, but cuisine with a lot of personality!

Chef : M. Lomède

Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 14/20. Bread = 13/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

Menu of the day at 11 €, Menus at 16 € and 27 €. Children's menu. Closed Tuesday evening and Wednesday.

Le village - Les Beaumettes

84220 - Gordes

Tel - Fax : 04.90.72.23.05

Le Bouquet De Basilic



Gordes, mediatised village where all writers that regularly go to mundane cocktail parties, dream of owning a house with a swimming pool. And where any restaurant owner, even if completely average, stands a chance. In this magnificent village, is a "Bouquet de Basilic" (bouquet of basil). Statistic established by Mauricette: with this kind of name, it's either a "pure Provence",

or a "pure tourist trap". Let's see. The welcome is slightly mechanical. I decline the patio in favour of the dining room. Pretty setting! The menu: a few salads, little meat, few desserts. But a speciality even so! Bruschetta declined in 8 versions. I refuse the suggestions of the day which are a salad at 16 € or a provençal braised beef served with pasta at 16 €! When the suggestions of the day cost that much, it's no longer a bouquet of basil! But a bouquet of bamboo! Ouch! Not on the head! So, option "bruschetta à la Parme". Nothing to write home about! A slice of special bread! A layer of cheese! Cold when served! Raw ham! No Parme ham! A dribble of olive oil with herbs for the folklore! And a leaf of basil! Not bad, but it's always a bit sad to feel that you could eat the same thing at home. Hot and cheaper: 11,50 € (more than 75 francs) and 12/20. I'm a bit wary of the desserts! I go far a "café gourmand" (greedy coffee) at 8 € (...52 francs)! Good coffee served in a glass! But the "gourmandises" are frankly average: baba au rum, chocolat flan, brownie and apricot tart. The little plate is busy, but there's no revolution. 10/20! The prices are justified neither by the quantity nor the quality! The credit card and till cult! They count on the tourists! They don't usually complain and they pay! And I'm telling you: I didn't see anyone smiling at table. Worse: not even the boss-waiters! When you're pleased, you smile don't you? Something original: the chef works with gloves on! A bouquet of basil! What a waste of a pretty name! It's a shame for the image of Provence and the Luberon in particular!

Chef : Avec des gants

Welcome = 12/20. Attendance = 12/20. Setting = 13/20. Bread = 12/20. Coffee = 13/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

Route de Murs

84220 - Gordes

Phone : 04.90.72.06.98

GOULT

Le Garage



The "hameau de Lumières", for those who need a sat nav, is more or less in between Apt and Coustellet! For goodness sake don't break down here! "Le Garage" isn't a real one! It's a restaurant! Cheeky Mauricette is no doubt going to ask for a "tyre millefeuille", I'm getting to know her. No, no doubt: in case of a break down, the best thing is to pray to Our Lady of Lumières! Opposite! The church! It isn't Lourdes but even so! Talking of miracles, Lucas Mézard, the hot headed chef is lucky! The luck of being a famous decorator's son, Edith Mézard. Well known to the media. This helps to get the custom they deserve: an article by Pierre Psaltis from the Provence paper, a remarkable toque rubber upper for anything mentioned by the Mich, and friend to any chef who sends his article! Another article in the Express! There is no small profit! He would be silly not to use the publicity, our young Mézard! Especially as he's not lacking talent! The setting: coloured tables and chairs straight from "happy days"! A few old petrol pumps and miniature cars! Red, orange, grey! A few oil cans turned in to flower pots! Some nice

photo frames from the same period! With a Marilyn! A real show! Well a famous mother and a nice décor don't do it all, we're not from the Lady magazine! We have to eat! Elodie, the chefs charming partner, leads us to a nice patio shaded by an old horse-chestnut tree. Greedily, the lady in the green hat with her provençal reflexes beats me to it and orders a "petit farci au chèvre et tapenade" (goat's cheese stuffed vegetables and tapenade). Satisfaction, and 15/20. Reassured, she continues with a "roulé de sole"! Covered with olive tapenade: another well deserved 15/20! As for me? "Saltimbocco"! This transalpine speciality usually composed of veal is here made with pork, like a veal olive. The rice is smooth, rather like risotto with cream of sage! And parmesan cheese! Very good! 15/20! The sweet time now. A pretty "pêche tranchée, jus de caramel et verveine" (sliced peach, caramel sauce and verveine) 15/20. Mauricette refreshed her moustache with a "soupe de pastèque" (watermelon soup)! Lightly sprinkled with green tea and fresh mint! 14,5/20. Maybe the start in life is easier for some than for others. But when you can tell the good will, this advantage is capitalised and remains a chance for the customer.

Chef : Lucas Mézard
Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

RN100 Hameau Lumières
84220 - Goults
Phone : 04.32.50.19.57

ISLE-SUR-SORGUE

La Voute

ΨΨ_{1/2}

It's always difficult to find a name for a restaurant. Poetic, humorous, philosophical or culinary inspiration... and others! The proprietor here preferred architectural. No possible error! The vault is vaulted! The stone is an inheritance from the old age stone cutters! No faults! Beauty with wrought iron, minimally decorated! Stone in all of its splendour! Fresh in the summer, warm in the winter! A good balance! Lots of charm, I settle in. There are prices to match every budget. It isn't just false publicity! Here's proof: a formula at 13 €! What on earth can a chef offer you for that? A well composed "salade fraîcheur", remarkable seasoning, and an effort in the presentation. 14/20 for a salad! Bizarre, did you say bizarre? So let's continue with the bizarre and a "pièce de boeuf" (thick beef steak) grilled just to my taste! My taste, I don't know if it is good, but it's mine and I like it! A bunch of cooked cherry tomatoes, potato biscuits, courgette flan with gingerbread crust! 14,5/20. Simply curious, more to confirm than by sheer hunger I order a dessert! "Tatin aux pommes et aux figues" (apple and fig upside down tart)! Made especially for me! The chef doesn't pull faces! The attendance neither! Served with a drop of honey and some bits of dried fruits 15/20! This chef shuts me up! I shall go away! With satisfaction! Better than the rolling stones! Bizarre! Did you say bizarre? The formula is completed with a glass of wine and a coffee! Bizarre? Maybe, but surely surprising in a town where trapping restaurant clients is a winning

game!

Chef : Denis Magalon
Welcome = 14/20. Attendance = 14/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

8 rue Michelet
84000 - Isle-sur-sorgue
Phone : 04.90.21.56.43

LAURIS

L'argelas

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

Everything here is doted with pleasure thanks to the Bush couple! Golly! Here is sacred craftsman-restaurant work! You could qualify it as "old-fashioned" if... if that didn't mean much! Let's say that we take the best of the term and throw away the worst. What's left?... Well "L'Argelas" of course! Good, are you following or not? The Bush's are thriving. Still frantic with recipes, the chef capitalizes know-how acquired at Prévôt and Passédat. Such a nice CV Lourmarin being so close makes the address a hymn to modest discretion. The Bush's hate photo posing and belly dancing in front of their customers. The essential is to make their work appreciated which is our fun: restaurants. A menu reduced to market shopping, one menu-carte which costs 24 €! Starter "ris de veau panés aux amandes, salade mêlée" (veal sweetbread coated in almonds, mixed salad). I have to warn the classic veal sweetbread amateurs that they will be astonished, destabilized! This is a recipe with soft candies as sweet as Turkish delight that you enjoy quietly, with your fingers, and why not. Amusing, 14,5/20. Something very serious here "dos de loup fumé, brandade de morue et pointes d'asperges" (smoked sea-bass, salt cod puree and asparagus tips). The delicate deco isn't over done and flavours are united beautifully. A temperate and dangerously efficient cookery lesson, satisfaction for the gluttonous, 15,5/20. Ah! Only once a year here! Bet you thought that I was not going to avoid the "assortiment de desserts" (sweet assortment)! For a modest supplement, you can choose from the palette of desserts on the menu, a guided tour of the sweet question. At the moment: homemade iced nougat, kernel crusty chocolate-caramel with and emulsion with liquorice, aspic with pineapple fromage blanc mango sauce, rum sponge cake and grapes. There you are. I write everything as I remember it! Clever hey? But no! I noted everything! I took 16/20 out of my sea urchin filled pocket to applaud with both hands! Rare are the pure cooks who are capable of producing desserts with such a faculty to satisfy. The wine menu is really good, intelligently far from being trivial. The dining room is charming, elegantly Provencal. A pretty shaded court at the bottom, on sunny days, golden stones and forged iron. I mustn't forget to tell you to book: no more than twenty table settings! Otherwise, that's your problem!

Chef : Régis Buisson
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 17/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

39 avenue Joseph Garnier
84360 - Lauris
Phone : 04.90.08.42.03

LOURMARIN

Hostellerie Le Paradou

bamboo Thai

ΨΨΨ

Completing things seems to be a habit with Eric Bouyer. His professional circuit is non-standard on this planet, he continues his adventure in his non-standard establishment, in a non-standard village: Lourmarin in the Luberon. "L'Hostellerie Le Paradou", taken over in 2007. A "Hôtel de charme" with character in the middle of refreshing greenery, elegant terraces and lots of lovely things but the BâO is not "Home and Country" magazine, so stop. But if you will allow me to, I shall say a few words, and some good ones, about the cooking. As the name of the place mentions, this place does Thai specialties. Authentic Thailand cookery. Not diversified Chinese, or a clever cook who has opened an exotic self-service place. No, I assure you, Thai cooking such as the kind that you rarely find. The menu is far from ambiguous. Systematically! A reflex! I always choose "Tom yam khung". Mean anything to you? A Royal Chinese soup with prawns, lemon, galanga and pimentos. Is that better? I prudently advise the cook to be light handed in my dish as far as pimento is concerned. Subtle, cooked in the true way and conform to what I was expecting. Here is 14,5/20. What follows too: "keng kiew wane", chicken with green curry and coconut milk. The "khaw nia" (sticky rice) is an immense pleasure, even the chicken which is so often hurriedly prepared is just right. An excellent perfumed dish which makes me hand out 15/20 without any hesitation. The same goes for the sweet. Oh really? Sweets in Thailand? Oh yes, Jess. I thought that the country was void of sweet culinary specialties! "Khanome koo" coconut islands with pandanus, aromatic tropical leaf. Don't wait for it to go cold, it gets hard, but the boss will warn you. Something curious that I sanctify with 15/20. We like surprises at the BâO. Another? The wine. The list doesn't play with competence. If Eric Bouyer leaves the cooking to his Thai wife Meena, he himself looks after the wine cellar, it's really something. A vivifying mixture of cultures which don't try to over do it; completely attractive. Magnificent bedrooms in case the pimentos get you in a huff. Or the wine for that matter.

Chef : Meena Bouyer
Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 15/20. Setting = 17/20. Coffee = 15/20. Toilettes = 17/20.

Route d'Apt
84160 - Lourmarin
Phone : 04.90.68.88.15

MALAUCENE

La Chevalerie

ΨΨΨΨ

A stone staircase, its steps as used as old buttons! Two paths that divide a small forest! Trees, bushes, flowers, nature... naturally! No armour nor swords to greet you, but a smile: the best arm ever! When you're at ease, you want to be carried along. But you have to choose your dishes. The chef is not lacking in propositions, or, should I say temptations, all as inviting as the next! So I set my heart on the menu at 19 € I did say 19 €! At that price the sceptical guinea pig rubs his chin! "Tomate en terrine servie avec coeur d'artichaut et câpres confits" (tomato terrine served with artichoke hearts and crystallized capers). The décor is set for the whole meal: pure, elegant. If I was opposite myself, I would look myself in the eye. A flamboyant 16/20! What's next? "Rognons de veau, purée de pomme de terre pressée à l'huile d'olive" (Veal kidneys, potato purée with olive oil)! A piece of courgette with a dominating aubergine stuffing! The sweet and sour sauce brings it all together for a second 16/20. And all this fluidity... The dessert will have to swear its oath: the one that says it's up to standard! No running away now! Straight out of the oven, served straight away! "Figue rôtie sur feuilleté, miel, sirop de fruit et glace" (roasted fig on flaky pastry, honey, fruit syrup and ice cream". Angelic simplicity, magic. A 16/20, another one! Honestly, do you know many menus at 19 € that are declined in such a brilliant gastronomic partition? Our chef sometimes likes to leave his stoves to serve his creations himself. A word for each table, no flourish nor belly dance! Like the dishes! A man who likes his county and its history, who talks about it, the tunnels, the Orange princes, the ramparts... Here is no armour nor sword! The pompous have gone to live elsewhere in mediocre company, it has become a speciality in some "snobby" towns in the Vaucluse. The essential is somewhere else! And virtuosity at the foot of the Mont Ventoux, in Philippe Galas' dishes, who I shall say in passing was revealed at "Banzo" in Aix. For pleasure, only for pleasure!

Chef : Philippe Galas
Welcome = 15,5/20. Attendance = 16,5/20.
Setting = 16/20. Coffee = 15,5/20. Toilettes = 15,5/20.

Rue des Remparts
84340 - Malaucene
Tel : 04.90.65.11.19 - Fax : 04.90.12.69.22

MAZAN

L'oulo

ΨΨ_{1/2}

It is often the country restaurants that we like! There is always a car park handy! And then a new view is sometimes given to amazed eyes, quite unique! I'm cheating here on my snowy Ventoux Mountain! It is truly unique! The welcome is serious. The staff is friendly and smiles during the attendance. We are far from the town's slaves, and the stressed suburbs! Whether big or small, in towns, it's always the same! So! The big modern dining room has blond wooden beams, and dividing walls. The decoration is reduced to the strict minimum! Green plants to dress it up a bit and hide the less pleasant corners. There is a light musical atmosphere. I ask myself if I would like the simple formula at 14 € I don't want to

bother anybody! Here is a "terrine de campagne"! And it smells good! With a small green salad, red cabbage, sliced carrots! Well presented! What's more! 14,5/20! The "boudin aux pommes" (blood sausage with apples) isn't bad either! Potato purée, spinach, and the sausage is covered with a few slices of apple "sticking upwards"! A wine sauce, mustard and bread! As light as tasty! Rural of course, but good. Here is another 14,5/20. And a "crêpe" (pancake), interested? Stuffed with fig jam, enough to end this meal on a nice sweet note and 14/20! In fact, the formula is good! I push luxury as far as a glass of wine at 1,50 € And surprise, the head of the stoves comes into the dining room! Shakes customer's hands, at every table! And says a little word, evidently. I hear that the vegetables come from his vegetable garden, which to me looks like a good argument for publicity. And obviously, the menu has to change with every season. When I told you! These country restaurants (in principle) hide some nice surprises!

Chef : Richard Bagnol
Welcome = 14,5/20. Attendance = 14,5/20.
Setting = 14,5/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 14,5/20. Toilettes = 16/20.

500 La Venue de Mormoiron
84380 - Mazan
Phone : 04.90.69.87.64

PERTUIS

Le Benares

ΨΨΨ

Mauricette didn't get it! When I say Indian, I don't mean western! The Indies, spices, Shiva, Bollywood, I mean India! I'm at Pertuis: opposite the "Le Luberon" cinema! I have discovered an Indian restaurant, a real one! Not in Avignon, nor Cavaillon, nor Orange, nor Aix! I said Pertuis! Rare yes, Indian yes! Got it? I shall be repeating the word Indian today! Too bad! Indian décor guaranteed! A statuette of Shiva! Of Ganesh, the elephant god of wisdom and knowledge! Of Natrat! Of Larhsmi, Sidhartha's 5 disciples, and Sidhartha (Buddha) himself. Our host Mian Shakil tells me that all of the deco is hand sculpted! Bewitching Indian music takes you on its magic carpet! The welcome "knows how" as one would say. It's impossible to taste everything, so I let myself be advised the Tandoori! Well known to the BâO, this is a grill meal! Served in a hot dish with onions and fried peppers! All of the meats are grilled with spices in the famous tandoori oven. Chicken drumsticks, pieces of lamb, chicken breasts, king prawns, and minced meat in the form of sausages with herbs! Three sauces! One spicy, one sweet and one savoury! Garnished with white basmati rice, small crystallised vegetables! Served in a sweet little cast-iron pot! And the Indian Nan bread! To be discovered by the layman... and eaten hot! Conclusion: I was well advised! Mian Shakil will tell you all about tandoori! Biryani! Lassi (drinks based on yoghurt prepared with rose petal nectar)! He doesn't forget the desserts (mithai) or the gulab (sweet fritter marinated in a cardamome and rose nectar)! End the meal with cardamome, rose or paan liquor! Why not? A suggestion to get a general idea of this cuisine: go with a few friends to taste it all!

Chef : Miam Shakil
Welcome = 16/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 15/20. Bread = 15/20. Coffee = 14/20. Toilettes = 14/20.

26 rue Giraud
84120 - Pertuis
Phone : 04.90.07.57.70

Grain De Sel

Ψ_{1/2}

An impression of amateurism! Why? Who knows. The attendance? The welcome? The choice? Who knows. And first of all you have to cross the covered patio, a future "smokers only" room without a doubt! Push as far as the counter after crossing the dining room. That is where you are welcomed. It truly happens! I wonder which posture to choose! The lady boss does it all! Welcome, attendance and cooking! She explains the principal to me! Total freedom of choice. The dish of the day: "pintade marinée au Champagne et son accompagnement de légumes" (guinea fowl marinated in Champagne and garnished with vegetables). Wow! Not bad! With the dish of the day, you can order a starter and a dessert! Or the full menu complete with starter, dish of the day, choice of dessert, wine or drink, coffee (17 €). I've got it! In fact I haven't! The lady even serves you a glass of water when you can do it yourself! And don't forget cutlery, bread, salt and... paper napkin. Cold starters, cold deserts, cold drinks! All in a refrigerated counter! Don't forget anything otherwise it's just too bad. Dish of the day (the guinea fowl from earlier) with on my right: cabbage marinated in vinegar and also on my right: a baked potato! Did you say family cooking? A nice sort of "just like at home" feeling, although it's a bit messy. You rapidly come to your taste limit, 12/20. I could have chosen beef carpaccio or tartare and its garnishing. Still from the homemade option, my dessert: "crumble pomme et canelle" (Apple and cinnamon crumble) is nice 14/20. Right! If you don't accept the self-service principal, you shouldn't come! Otherwise the place is really authentic and the cooking is fine. In any case it is better than the neighbourhood fast food! Follow my eyes! What's more is the attendance is assured non-stop from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.! A big welcome then to the late comers and the shift-workers.

Welcome = 13/20. Attendance = 13/20. Setting = 13/20. Bread = 13/20. Toilettes = 13/20.

594, route d'Aix
84120 - Pertuis
Phone : 04.90.68.06.33

RUSTREL

Auberge Du Rustreou

000

Join up! Join up they said! You'll see the world and blow-out! The Mont du Vaucluse! An Inn! A reassuring eye catching "gomillo 2007" sticker in the window! Looks good! A pretty patio and even a tractor on show, a sort of recent antique, rather like Mauricette. Flowers on top! No, not

on Mauricette, on the tractor! It's the green hat that is on Mauricette! An enormous Virginia creeper shadows the place! Some beginnings are worse! Such as the hazard welcome we got! I had booked, the waitress is surprised! I must say that it mustn't happen often! I have to wait. I shall finally become one of the fifteen customers who have lunch to the rhythm of civil lorries or the foreign legion military engineers who trundle past! Wind! Dust! Table cloths that fly away! I ask a waitress to deal with it! The lass throws me a look that means "I'm busy, do it yourself"! Lovely atmosphere! Along with the other customers, I look down as if about to be clipped around the ear any minute now! I order! The dishes arrive! When you have to go, you have to go! "Les foies de volaille aux sucs de porto" (poultry liver in Port). A pompous name for what it's worth! Served in a simple glass dish! Such as the ones used to serve fruit salad at the school canteen! Gosh, the cutlery too! Sauce underneath, salad on top! A few sliced radishes! And the livers! Not salty enough! No salt cellar! I borrow one from a neighbouring table, companions in misfortune! The lid to the salt cellar is rusty! Advanced rust! Well! No taste: the Port was gone too soon! It didn't even get there! Out of stock or pure stingy? 9/20! To follow, I dare try a "daube à l'ancienne" (old fashioned stew). Plate including an enormous salad leaf! To avoid: salad leaves in this situation! On top: the meat and the sauce! Cold and slimy! Not woken up after a stay in the fridge! The meat is hard and soggy, the lean (30%) and the fat (70%)! Inedible! Like the gratin de courgette that goes with it! Insipid! No reaction from the waitress when she takes away a half-full plate! Not concerned at all! 5/20! All accompanied by industrial bread 3/20! You can tell the quality of the products! How about dessert! "Gâteau de semoule aux fruits confits" (semolina with crystallised fruit). Sliced! Served with whipped cream and custard! Not really bad, not really good! At this point, anything will please: 12/20. Coffee? Warmed up after a long stay in the pot, reminds me of what I was given in the army. 2/20, thanks to the sugar. 17 € the menu, who's being taken for a ride? Riddle: how can this Inn have been noticed by the gomillo? The answer is given to me by the waitress: "through the post". It's practical eating through the post.

Chef : Who knows..!

Welcome = 8/20. Attendance = 10/20. Setting = 13/20. Bread = 3/20. Toilettes = 13/20.

3 place de la Fête

84400 - Rustrel

Phone : 04.90.04.90.90 - Fax : 04.90.04.98.06

SAINT MARTIN DE CASTILLON

Lou Caleu

ΨΨΨ_{1/2}

A house, Inn, and charming place! Big trees with leaves, a swimming pool with water and even a tennis court with a net. Surrounded by greenery, marvellous rooms are camouflaged behind stones which appear all over the place as if they were raining down. For sure: "Lou Caleu" was not hiding at the back when "made in Luberon"

charm was handed out: everything to make you happy, even with a pan-bagnat sandwich in hand! You would think that this place was on the rails of a routinely "savoir faire", nothing could happen, neither good nor bad. Then you don't know the managers very well! They are surrounded by high level collaborators! Asking the right questions at the right time is a big quality! The cooks have asked the right ones; listen to what a good time I had. It is still Gérard Rondard's ambition to open his table to as many as possible with a first menu at 17 € But the "salade de queues d'écrevisses aux agrumes" (crayfish salad with citrus fruit) from the menu at 25 € tempted me. Anyway: the name! A simply "assembled" dish? Better than that! A subtle association, thanks to a pertinent reduced citrus fruit sauce. What's more is the products are plotting to be pretty, and very pretty. 15.5/20 to start with. A "sorbet et son alcool" (sorbet and alcohol) punctuates already. It's always nice and I must say, even if I have never been here with Mauricette, I always think of her whilst savouring my pear-vodka sorbet. Here is something big: "poêlée de St-Jacques au coulis de crevettes et saumon fumé" (fried St-Jacques shellfish with shrimp and smoked salmon sauce). The dish arrives under a bell, beautifully presented in a ring with the colourful garnishing in the centre, including excellent fresh spinach. The shell-fish are round and precise, the aroma of the salmon, and the finesse of the shrimp sauce. 16/20 is obligatory unless you have no sense of smell or taste. "Assiette de fromages" (cheese tray) then a choice of dessert à la carte: "tarte fine aux fruits de saison" (seasonal fruit tart). Apples in fact. As simple as it comes, except for being flambé with Calvados! Well done and 15/20. A five course meal... no six! I forgot the tantalizer! For 25 € you have to admit that it is worth the trip! Where is it? Oh, read the address underneath and make your own way there! And do what I did: I slept here that evening! It makes the pleasure last!

Chef : Thierry Brasseur

Welcome = 15/20. Attendance = 16/20. Setting = 16/20. Bread = 14/20. Coffee = 14.5/20. Toilettes = 15/20.

RN 100 (à 10km d'Apt direction Manosque)

84750 - Saint Martin De Castillon

Phone : 04.90.75.28.88

SAULT

Le Provençal

1/2

Welcomed by three excited waiters who look after me, I feel like the goddess Shiva and her multiple arms are all over the place! I am quickly settled into the dining room, along with the bottle of water! Mustn't waste time now, as if they were in a hurry to see me go! "Le Provençal" alright but I search in vain for any typical signs of our dear Provence! The table cloths are sort of yellow inside and white outside! There are definitely tourists full of smiles, gobbling down faster than each other! There are also a few photos of the village of Sault under blankets of snow hung on the walls, as if the setting needed to be colder! And hop: it's ready! I believe that very briefly with the "toast de chèvre chaud" (hot goats cheese on toast) on sweet bread. But, simply put

through the oven instead of grilled, the cheese is melted, just hot! This won't get them very far! 10/20! As quickly as one dish goes, another appears, burning hot! Slapped down! Landed would translate that better! A quarter "pintade rôtie et sa sauce pruneau" (guinea fowl and prune sauce)! The prune was only introduced to the winged creature. Mark you, if it was only a quarter of a bird then maybe it was also a quarter of a prune. Seems logical. As a bonus: a few feather roots under the skin! Garnished with two bits of over cooked broccoli! A far too little portion of "gratin dauphinois"! The same goes for the ratatouille! Curiously everything is the same temperature and is tasteless! Eureka! I've got it! We've come across a micro wave specialist! 8/20! Still in a hurry, lands "l'assiette de Fromage"! The forgotten cutlery arrives a bit later on, no doubt they couldn't catch up! Three! Tiny weenie! I didn't know that there was a pipette that handed out droplets of cheese! My "tarte aux poires" was nearly thrown in my direction! Not enough to time to warm it up after its stay in the fridge! Sad, perfectly average at 11/20. The coffee is brought with a piece of nougat, made by a neighbourhood supplier! The thought is nice though! All here is done too fast, with little care or delicacy. Only the result counts! Have to keep up with the micro wave. It feels rather like a tourist trap, no?

Welcome = 11/20. Attendance = 11/20. Bread = 12/20. Coffee = 12/20. Toilettes = 13/20.

Rue des portes des Aires

84390 - Sault

Phone : 04.90.64.09.09