
Jan Norris: Food and Florida



EatBeat: Paris in Town Le Bistro Now Open in Downtown at the Gardens

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Diane and Beni Himmich, owners of the Paris in Town Le Cafe in North Palm Beach on U.S. 1, have opened **Paris in Town Le Bistro**, an expanded version of their French eatery, in Downtown at the Gardens.

Ironically, it's in the same spot as the former French cafe, Paul. So what makes them think theirs will do well?

“Here’s the distinction,” Diane said. “It’s a different dining concept. Paul was a French bakery-cafe – similar to our Paris in Town Cafe. It’s going to be a challenge opening with our same name but doing a French bistro.”

“But we’ll have a whole world of offerings we don’t have at the cafe. With the equipment and size of kitchen, dinners just wouldn’t work at the cafe. Diners will be able to get steak au poivre, fresh mussels and dinners like fresh red snapper or steak tartare.”

Sandwiches, salads and other favorites like the passion fruit tea also will be on the menu at the Downtown bistro. “People can come in for lunch and order their favorites, still.”



REVITALIZATION OF DOWNTOWN HELPING

The couple is encouraged by what they see as a renewal of the Downtown at the Gardens complex. “The fact that the place has changed so much since Paul was there, with the carousel and the bubble machine right outside – it’s magical. We have seating under the awning on the side of the restaurant, too. You’ll have a breeze coming through there even on hot days.”

The decor is 1920’s Parisian bistros. “The learning for me was about the 1920’s Paris when bistros opened in every neighborhood. They were a place to get a homecooked meal outside of the home. The typical style was red banquettes, dark woods, pendant lights. We had fun decorating it,” she said. They consulted with interior designer [Margi Vorder Bruegge](#), who typically designs homes, not restaurants for some of the touches around the restaurant.

She said it was her spouse’s idea to open a second location. “Downtown was a good fit. The Bermans (owners) from Downtown approached my husband and he met with them. We had been approached by others – Lake Park, Northwood Village and some others. Some of them were wanting us to open another cafe. But my husband’s idea was to do a bistro.”

NEITHER FROM PARIS

The couple, who met in Paris 16 years ago (she’s from Washington, D.C. and he’s from Casablanca), bought Paris in Town and the franchise name four years ago during a visit to her mom in Palm Beach Gardens. Another Paris in Town on Okeechobee Boulevard, not affiliated with the Himmich’s, closed a few months later.

They reworked the cafe on U.S.1. “We changed the service from just counter service to sit-down and worked on a few things; we added crepes to the menu. There was a widespread panic when people heard Paris in Town was moving to Downtown at the Gardens – people thought we were closing the cafe – we’re not!”

Paris in Town Bistro

- **Carousel courtyard, Downtown at the Gardens**
- **11701 Victoria Gardens Ave., Palm Beach Gardens**

- 561-622-1616; <http://www.parisintownbistro.com/>
- Open daily: 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 11 a.m. to midnight Friday-Saturday; 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Sunday