

Paris in Town Le Bistro: new arrival as good as the original?

- By [Nancy Munro](#), Jupiter Food Examiner July 2, 2011

In a tough economy, you have to question the reasoning and perhaps even the sanity of anyone opening a restaurant. Granted, the recession appears to be improving, and people are eating out again, especially in South Florida now that the tourists are gone and the dining scene belongs to the locals once again. But what about the reasoning/sanity of a successful restaurant expanding to a second location?

Sounds more than a little crazy, no?

But Paris in Town, a charming country French bistro on U.S. 1 at PGA Boulevard has done just that. They've decided to expand operations into Downtown at the Gardens, once the great shopping hope of Palm Beach Gardens that has fallen on [difficult times](#) in recent years. The space once occupied by another bistro has been turned into a sleek, citified version of the country cafe cousin on U.S. 1. There's lots of dark wood, mirrors, sconce lighting, wine nooks and sharply-dressed waitstaff. The pastry case that was up front is gone, replaced by a bar and barstools. It's rather elegant; a fine dining look with a bistro bill of fare.

The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner, with a lot of old-school French favorites on both menus. Onion soup, escargot, *merguez* (a spicy Middle-Eastern lamb sausage flavored with *harissa*, a hot chili sauce), steak au poivre, steak Tartare, beef Bourguignon, sole Meuniere, coq au vin, *Croque Monsieur* (the toasted ham and cheese sandwich; or *Madame*, the same sandwich topped with a poached egg) and duck breast a l'orange. Of course, there are quiches (including Lorraine, seafood and an onion tart), salads, and even a late breakfast menu with croissants, pain au chocolat, and eggs.

Prices are good, given the surroundings, the location and the pre-established reputation. Lunch prices range from \$7 to \$15 for appetizers, quiches, salads and breakfast items. Sandwiches and entrees are priced from \$10-\$17. Dinner prices for appetizers and salads are slightly higher, and entree prices range from \$13 to \$26. There are daily specials, including bouillabaise, lamb and *riz de veau* (calf's sweetbreads, or what some folks would call "innards;" definitely an acquired taste).

What could be the saving grace of Paris In Town Le Bistro, and keep it flourishing in Downtown at the Gardens is brand familiarity. Unlike its predecessor in this space, which has a 120-year history and a *worldwide* reputation, the original Paris in Town already has a strong *local* following, thanks to simple French fare, good prices and an intimate, if strange setting. It can only help revitalize Downtown at The Gardens if places like Le Bistro are invited onto the premises and not merely survive, but thrive.

Paris in Town Le Bistro, 11701 Victoria Gardens Dr., Palm Beach Gardens, FL. Phone (561) 622-1616, FAX (561) 622-1815. Hours: Monday through Tuesday 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. to midnight and Sunday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Reservations are accepted by phone and on their website.