

# Societi Bistro's tour through France



By [Lauren Hartzenberg](#)

21 Jul 2015

As temperatures drop and seasonal depression sets in, many of us dwelling in the SA foodie capital city of Cape Town take comfort in gorging ourselves on the city's finest gastronomic offerings. The annual launch of Societi Bistro's Culinary Tour Through France this past Saturday provided just the opportunity.

The culinary tour is a series of ten regionally inspired menus over ten weeks, in conjunction with ten exceptional local wines. Executive chef, Stéfán Marais has thoughtfully composed the French menus around what is seasonal and available in the markets locally and adapted the traditional recipes accordingly. Expect slow-cooked classics such as Cassoulet and Boeuf à la Bourguignon as well as lighter dishes as we move into Spring. Each Wednesday will see the launch of a new three-course menu, paired with an exceptional local wine inspired by the respective French region.



Those of us lucky enough to attend this year's launch event got the chance to sample some of the French fare. Walking into the restaurant it was clear I was under-dressed, disappearing into a crowd of berets and cravats. The restaurant, a restored 200-year-old Georgian-style home, was set up to allow attendees to travel through the restaurant exploring each of the ten regions in succession. We visited each room, admiring the dark wooden floors, exposed brick walls, towering wine racks and inviting fireplaces.

Each table represented a region, from Île de France to Normandy, the French Alps, Burgundy and Corsica to name but a few. At each region, we were warmly greeted by a representative from the featured wine estate and offered a swig or two of their produce. Featured wine estates included Mulderbosch, Saronsberg, Rupert & Rothschild, Beaumont and the popular Delaire Graff Estate. Each of the wines was paired with an appetiser off the Societi menu for the respective region.



The star dish, in my eyes, was the Salade Niçoise from the region of Provence - the most melt-in-your-mouth portion of lightly seared tuna resting atop a fresh assortment of olives, capers, anchovies and greens. Another favourite was the Moules au Cidre from the Normandy region - this comprised of West Coast mussels steamed with apple cider. This dish was delightfully simple and allowed the taste of the seafood to take centre stage, a refreshing change to the overly creamy mussel dishes found in most establishments.

Other highlights were Richard Bosman's locally sourced charcuterie selection and the Quiche Lorraine. That being said, I felt hard-pressed choosing my favourites as every dish displayed the level of love and craftsmanship one comes to expect when dining at a restaurant with a reputation preceding Societi Bistro.



Midway through the launch we were gathered for the announcement of the Best Dressed winners, hence the berets and cravats. Each winner received a designer chair from local furniture design and manufacturing company, Woodbender. Then came the goodiebags - party packs for adults, if you will. Each guest received a Woodbender wine holder, locally farmed olives, Glamour and GQ magazines, pear cider and vouchers for a number of the local wine farms on display. Ten delicious wines and dishes later, I side-stepped out of there with the full knowledge that I will return soon.

It is well known that learning a country's cuisine is integral to understanding its culture. With the current exchange rate, hopes and dreams of escaping to the French countryside someday can grow dim. So while my savings plan matures, the opportunity to savour French cuisine and experience the nuances in flavour that each region provides is an idea to be appreciated.

[Click here](#) to view the full menu.

## ABOUT LAUREN HARTZENBERG

Managing editor and retail editor at Bizcommunity.com. Cape Town apologist. Dog mom. Get in touch: [lauren@bizcommunity.com](mailto:lauren@bizcommunity.com)

- Discover the delights of Paarl: 4 must-visit attractions - 9 Jun 2023
- Talking beauty standards and the business of content creation with Ofentse Lekwane - 4 Nov 2021
- Samara: a charming safari destination for discerning travellers - 2 Oct 2019
- Indochine's new menu is an Afro-Asian epicurean feast - 21 Dec 2018
- Park Inn Newlands welcomes summer with Aperol Fridays - 22 Nov 2018

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>