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# Taste a stirring bistro experience

► **PARIS**  
Continued from Page M1

neighborhood. Then it died," says Gwenaëlle Auboyneau, who with her husband, Bertrand, runs Bistrot Paul Bert and the neighboring l'Écaille du Bistrot. "The street became known for its restaurants and then the boutiques started showing up, and people found their neighborhood again."

"It brought the street back to life," echoes Paul Bert chef Thierry Laurent.

**COMPLIMENT THE CHEF**  
Let Joe Ray take you to dinner (you can dream) on Rue Paul Bert at boston.com/travel.

In the kitchen, Laurent demonstrates why the bistro is the reference point for the area. Cracking jokes and sautéing six dishes at once in the middle of the lunch rush, he tosses a half-brick-sized hunk of red tuna into a pan causing the fish to seize like a fist as it hits the screaming hot oil. With



PHOTOS BY JOE RAY/FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

In three years, Sylvain Sendra, the inventive chef-owner of Le Temps au Temps, and his wife, Sarah, have made a reservation at their restaurant a coveted thing.

flames that lick upward around the rim of every pan, how Laurent has any hair left on his forearms is a mystery.

In his six years at the Paul Bert, Laurent slowly has brought the food up to its current, revered status. He branches out a bit on dishes like the tuna, which he serves with a caponata, but pushes mainly to perfect bistro classics like an entrecôte and fries. (An aside for lovers of well-done meat: Though the three-course prix-fixe menu changes frequently, one constant is a notice on the menu board that reads, "Red meat is served blue, bloody or poorly cooked.")

Another classic is the Paris-Brest dessert, which is a bit like a doughnut made in heaven, halved, then stuffed with a hazelnut mousse that tastes like love and comfort.

If the Bistrot Paul Bert is the neighborhood's rock, Café Titon is the lube that keeps it moving.

"People come here because they can count on us," says Joël Blein, who co-owns the café.

Throughout the day, the restaurant hosts the people who make up the neighborhood, everyone from construction workers to yuppies, office workers and funky graphic artists, grandmothers and what Blein calls "free electrons" — French slang for freelance artists, actors, and their ilk.

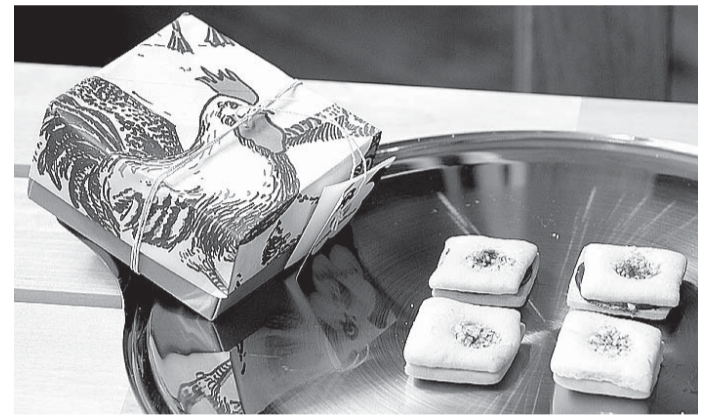
"We had looked at 110 places over the course of a year and a half before we bought," Blein says. "We made a database to help us make our choice."

I look at him like he's a bit strange and he laughs.

"We used to be computer geeks, but when we found this space, we pounced," Blein says. "Now, we've become a reference point for the neighborhood."

Café Titon doesn't serve the food that people travel to France to eat, but rather the meat and pota-

## If you go . . .



La Cocotte serves Argentinian biscuits called coquetines.

### Where to stay

**Hotel Beaumarchais**  
3 rue Oberkampf, Paris  
011-33-1-53-36-86-86  
hotelbeaumarchais.com  
A small, trendy hotel in a great neighborhood at the very bottom of rue Oberkampf. Doubles \$123-\$180, depending on season. Try to negotiate a better price.

### Where to eat

**Bistrot Paul Bert**  
18 rue Paul Bert  
011-33-1-43-72-24-01  
Lunch and dinner prix fixe about \$43. Noon-2 and 7:30-11. Closed Sunday and Monday. Call ahead to reserve.  
**Café Titon**  
34 rue Titon  
011-33-8-73-17-94-10  
The neighborhood meeting point, where locals often stop for a good, cheap lunch (around \$12), then check in for an after-work drink. Daily 8 a.m.-midnight.

### Le Temps au Temps

13 rue Paul Bert  
011-33-1-43-79-63-40  
tempautemps.com  
Prix fixe lunch (about \$20) and dinner (about \$40). Noon-2 and 8-10:30. Closed Sunday and Monday. Call ahead to reserve.

### Where to shop

**La Cocotte**  
5 rue Paul Bert  
011-33-1-43-73-04-02  
lacocotte.net (in French)  
A beautiful food-focused bookstore ranging from artistic offerings to nuts and bolts recipe books. Tuesday, Wednesday 10:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m., Thursday-Saturday till 9.  
**Crus et Découvertes**  
7 rue Paul Bert  
011-33-1-43-71-56-79  
Frequent tastings with producers on Friday afternoons; call ahead to confirm. Monday-Wednesday, Saturday 4-8:30 p.m., Thursday, Friday 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and 4-8:30.

toes of the working Parisian's lunch — daily specials, steaks, salads — all served quickly and for under \$10. On Sundays, the café

breaks the mold and offers a tasty Sri Lankan brunch. It has nothing to do with the menu for the rest of

Continued on next page

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