

# French Accent

*The Magazine of Learn French at Home*

The Bilingual and Audio Online Magazine for Expatriates in France, French Students and Francophiles

## French Gastronomy

How to Choose a Good Restaurant, Regions,  
Guides and Stars, Vocabulary...



**Audio Vocabulary, Role Plays, French Grammar...**

**French Politics:  
Who's in Charge?**

**Direct, Indirect  
and Tonic Pronouns**

## From the Editors

When asked what he missed most about France, our interviewee, Sébastien Babolat, said: “I miss France a lot, but mostly for the everyday little things: a good croissant..., a real baguette, food in general (which tastes very different)...” (see pages 10-12). It is fitting, as well as very revealing, that his comments focused on food, since our feature dossier in this issue deals with French cooking. In fact, the French feel so strongly about *la cuisine française* and are so proud of its traditions, that French expatriates the world over experience that same longing for a good croissant and a real baguette, and, unfortunately, some French tourists even deprive themselves of the enriching experience of savouring local delicacies when they travel to other countries because they are so enamoured of their own cuisine. France truly enjoys a universal reputation for being a country of gifted chefs, exquisite restaurants and of wonderful food that is prized not just for its quality and taste, but also for how it is presented. In this issue’s dossier, Annick Stevenson treats us to a short historical survey of culinary excellence in France from the Gauls to the present era via the French Revolution. You will also find helpful tips on finding a good restaurant, a scenario with accompanying audio files dealing with the vocabulary of ordering in a restaurant, a selective list of regional specialities and much, much more. Even the *coin des branchés* is based on idiomatic expressions dealing with gastronomy.

One thing we don’t touch on in this issue is how the French eat on a daily basis at home. If, as Annick points out, the so-called “traditional” restaurants in France are not always up to the task, are the many social and cultural forces that tend to shape our daily lives having a deleterious effect on how people eat at their own table? While the open-air markets still thrive in France as a place where one can buy fresh fruits and vegetables of varying quality with which to make healthy and wholesome meals, a quick look at the check-out stands in any supermarket will make it painfully obvious that the French are increasingly purchasing packaged, processed foods, ready-made meals in a can or a box, and a growing array of brightly packaged snacks and goodies that are loaded with chemical preservatives and artificial colouring and flavouring. An interesting topic for a future issue.

As you “feast” on this issue’s articles, we hope that you will be able to take the time to listen to the audio recordings of the vocabulary lists and scenarios, that you will compare the bi-lingual articles in order to understand more fully how things are said in both languages and that you try and assimilate the grammar points with – a first for the magazine – the accompanying exercises you can do. We continue to try and remain true to our dual focus with *French Accent*: to provide you not only with information about living in France and how to cope with life in this fascinating and often perplexing country, but also with fun and helpful language activities.

Bon appétit!

## French Accent Magazine

**E-magazine, published every two months.  
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**Editorial team:** Céline and Vincent Anthonioz, Annick and Roger Stevenson.

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*Cover photo: The kitchen of the Restaurant La Tour d'Argent, in Paris.  
All photos of La Tour d'Argent used in this issue, including the portrait of chef Stéphane Haissant page 3, are courtesy of the restaurant.*

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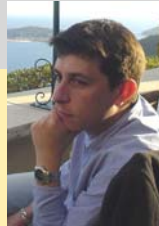
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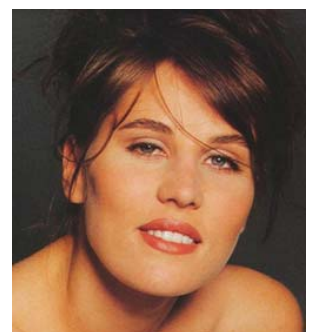


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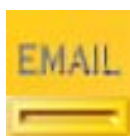
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LANGUAGE & CULTURE



## Letters to the Editor

### Chinese edition?

I am interested to your magazine so much, and I want to know if this magazine would think about the Chinese market and do the Chinese/Mandarine Edition. Because China is a getting growing, so it will means something and helpful to your business if the magazine has different language, at least on the website.

Hanli, Beijing, China

### Hard Copy?

Congratulations on your latest issue! But... my wife keeps moaning that you don't offer a hard-copy alternative, for which she would be happy to pay any (?) price. She concedes

that we can, of course, print the magazine, but when you consider the time and cost involved in doing so, we would much prefer to pay you for it. How about it? Great magazine anyway - keep up the good work!

Derek S., Yonne, France

We received several requests for paper versions of French Accent. We really appreciate the fact that it is often easier to read a magazine such as ours while sitting in a comfortable chair. However, there are several factors involved in our original decision to limit French Accent to an online publication. The cost of printing and mailing would be exorbitant, plus in keeping with our pro-environmental stands we didn't

want to contribute to any more deforestation. Another important factor is that embedded links to other websites as well as the audio files are only functional on the online version. And there is already a user friendly printable version for each article that allows readers to print the text only of the articles, pdf format.

The Editors

### Baja California

I am a regular student of French language at the Alliance Française in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. I have enjoyed your magazine since November 2006 up to this day, and want to continue.

Fausto G., Mexico

## Cancer touches one out of three lives

Cancer Support France (CSF) – formerly Cancer Support in the Poitou Charentes – was founded in 2002. It developed following our president's own experience of diagnosis and treatment of cancer in France when there was no English-language support available.

The name changed in 2006, and the national centre was inaugurated in the Charente region because requests for help came from all over France. CSF aims to support English-speaking residents affected by cancer, whatever their nationality or beliefs. Practical and emotional support, information and translation services are offered. 'Active Listener' volunteers receive appropriate training and are supported by CSF throughout their membership.

We receive no statutory funding apart from rooms donated by the local council. All our staff are volunteers. We work closely with the French medical and allied professions which, with our central policies and training programmes, ensures an excellent level of on-going support for our clients, wherever in France they may be.

2007 has seen tremendous growth with two branches now in place in Deux-Sèvres and Mayenne, and two more registering in Dordogne. We aim to develop groups in all departments inhabited by significant numbers of Anglophones. Therefore, we are actively seeking more volunteers to take on a wide variety of roles including active listening and fundraising.

If you would like to help in any way either by sharing your time, or you'd like to make a donation, please contact us and we'll put you in touch with a local representative, if we have one. Thank you.

**E-mail:** [cancersupportfrance@orange.fr](mailto:cancersupportfrance@orange.fr)  
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# Interactive French — Scenarios



## Direct, Indirect and Tonic Pronouns - Which One Should I use?

**R**eplacing nouns with pronouns makes our use of the language much more fluid and economical. In both English and French, the choice of which pronoun to use is determined by its role in the sentence, i.e. subject, direct object or indirect object, etc. In French the choice is made even a bit more complicated because of the existence of the so-called disjunctive, or tonic, pronouns. Leaving subject pronouns aside, lets look at how you can make the correct choice of whether to use “lui”, “la” or “elle” when you want to say “her” or between “lui” or “le” when referring to “him”.

Study the following explanations about the difference between the three types of pronouns and then practice them through the following role play exercises.

### Direct Object Pronouns

The **direct object** is the person or thing that receives the action of the verb in a sentence. To determine the direct object in a sentence, ask yourself the question: Who? or What? **Direct object pronouns** take the place of the direct object nouns. While a noun that is the direct object follows the verb, the pronoun is instead placed in front of it, for example: *Tu prends l'avion* (You take the plane), *Tu le prends* (You take it).

#### Examples:

*Est-ce que tu regardes la télé ?* = Do you watch TV?  
*Oui, je la regarde* = Yes, I watch it.

*Est-ce que tu aimes le professeur ?* = Do you like the teacher?  
*Oui je l'aime bien* = Yes, I like him.  
*Est-ce que tu m'amènes chez Rose ?* = Are you taking me to Rose's?  
*Non, je t'amène chez Karine* = No, I'm taking you to Karine's!

#### The French direct object pronouns are as follows:

- Me/m'* = me
- Te/t'* = you
- Le/l'* = him, it (masc)
- La/l'* = her, it (fem)
- Nous* = us
- Vous* = you
- Les* = them

**Note:** *Me, te,* and *le/la* change to *m', t',* and *l'* in front of a vowel or mute h.

### Indirect Object Pronouns

**Indirect objects** can only be used for persons and are those people in a sentence to **whom**

**the action** of the verb occurs. You can determine the indirect object by asking yourself the question, “To whom” or sometimes “for whom”. Many of the verbs of communication (*parler, écrire, dire, répondre, demander, téléphoner*) take an indirect object.

I'm talking to **Caroline** = *Je parle à Caroline.*

**To whom** am I talking? to **Caroline.**

#### The French indirect object pronouns are as follows:

- Me/m'* = me
- Te/t'* = you
- Lui* = him, her
- Nous* = us
- Vous* = you
- Leur* = them

**Note** that it is only in the third person singular and plural where there is any difference between the actual form of direct and indirect object pronouns. It is also important to remember that the indirect

object pronoun “*lui*” can mean either “to him” or “to her”.

Like the direct object pronouns, the indirect object pronouns are placed **in front of the verb.**

#### Examples:

*Est-ce que tu parles à ta voisine ?* = Do you speak to your (female) neighbour?  
*Oui, je lui parle !* = Yes, I speak to her!



*Est-ce que vous écrivez un email aux étudiants ?* = Are you writing an email to the students?

*Oui je leur écris des directives* = Yes I'm writing some directions to them.

**Note:** When deciding between direct and indirect objects, the general rule is

SUMMARY TABLE OF SUBJECT/DIRECT/INDIRECT AND TONIC PRONOUNS			
Subject	Direct Object	Indirect Object	Tonic
je	me	me	moi
tu	te	te	toi
il elle on	le la	lui	lui elle soi
nous	nous	nous	nous
vous	vous	vous	vous
ils elles	les	leur	eux elles

## Pronouns (cont'd)

that if the person is preceded by the preposition “à”, that person is an indirect object.

### Tonic Pronouns

**Tonic pronouns** are used for emphasis and in some special situations. They always refer to a **person**.

They are used mainly:

- after prepositions such as: *sans* (without), *pour* (for), *dans* (inside), *après* (after), *chez* (at someone's place), *avec* (with), *devant* (in front), etc...
- when you have a double sub-

ject (*Paul et moi allons au cinéma ce soir* = Paul and I are going to the cinema this evening.)

- after the preposition “à” in many expressions (*être à* indicating possession, *faire attention à*, *penser à* – *Ce stylo est à moi* = This pen is mine, *C'est très gentil de penser à nous* = That's very nice to think about us)

- alone in answer to a question or for emphasis (*Qui est là ? Moi !* = Who's there ? *Me ! Lui, il est vraiment con !* = He is really stupid)

- together with “-même” (*moi-même* = myself, *lui-même* = himself)

- after *c'est* and *ce sont*: (*Ce*

*sont eux qui sont venus ici* = They are the ones who came here.)

- with the negative adverb *ne... que* and conjunction *ne... ni*: (*Je ne prends qu'elle dans mon équipe !* = I'm only taking her in my team!)

The tonic pronouns are as follows:

*Moi* = me

*Toi* = you

*Lui* = him

*Elle* = her

*Soi* = one

*Nous* = us

*Vous* = you

*Eux* = them (masc)

*Elles* = them (fem.)

**Note** that with the tonic pronouns, you must distinguish between masculine and feminine in the third person singular and plural

### Examples:

*Tu viens chez moi ?* = You're coming to my place?

*Non, je vais chez elle !* = No, I'm going to her place!

*J'achète ce livre pour toi !* = I'm buying this book for you !

*Attention ! Devant toi, il y a une voiture !* = Careful! In front of you there is a car!

*Je suis vraiment bête, moi !* = I'm really stupid!

*Cette voiture est à vous, monsieur ?* = Is this your car, sir ?

Céline Anthonioz

## 1st Role Play—Beginner Level

Une maman parle de son fils à la maîtresse d'école.

**La maman** : Bonjour, je voudrais vous poser quelques questions sur Jérôme.

**La maîtresse** : Allez-y, je vous en prie.

**La maman** : Est-ce que Jérôme vous écoute bien en classe ?

**La maîtresse** : Non, il ne m'écoute pas toujours très bien. Il préfère parler avec ses amis en classe.

**La maman** : Ah bon ! Il parle beaucoup avec eux ?

**La maîtresse** : Oui, lui et deux autres enfants !

**La maman** : Est-ce que vous lui dites quelque chose ?

**La maîtresse** : Oui, bien sûr ! De temps en temps, je lui donne une petite punition.

**La maman** : Ah, je comprends ! Je vais lui parler aussi.

**La maîtresse** : C'est une bonne idée. Mais je suis contente car son niveau de français est meilleur. Est-ce que vous l'aidez à la maison ?

**La maman** : Oh oui, beaucoup ! Avec mon mari, nous passons beaucoup de temps avec lui à parler en français.

**La maîtresse** : C'est très bien ! Est-ce qu'il regarde la télé française ?

**La maman** : Oui, il la regarde !

**La maîtresse** : Est-ce qu'il écoute les chansons françaises pour enfants ?

**La maman** : Oui, il les écoute !

**La maîtresse** : Est-ce qu'il lit les bandes dessinées françaises ?

**La maman** : Oh oui, il les aime bien !

**La maîtresse** : Très bien, continuez à l'encourager...

**La maman** : Ah merci, je suis rassurée pour son français !

A Mom is speaking about her son to the school teacher.

**The mom**: Hello, I would like to ask a few questions about Jérôme.

**The school teacher**: Go ahead, please.

**The mom**: Does Jérôme listen to you well?

**The school teacher**: No, he doesn't always listen well. He prefers to speak with his friends in class.

**The mom**: Oh really! He speaks a lot with them?

**The school teacher**: Yes, he and two other children.

**The mom**: Do you say anything to him?

**The school teacher**: Yes, of course! From time to time, I give him a small punishment.

**The mom**: Ah, I understand! I'm going to speak to him also.

**The school teacher**: That's a good idea. But I am happy because his level of French is better. Do you help him at home?

**The mom**: Oh yes, a lot! With my husband, we spend a lot of time with him practicing French.

**The school teacher**: Very well! Does he watch French TV?

**The mom**: Yes, he watches it.

**The school teacher**: Does he listen to French songs for children?

**The mom**: Yes, he listens to them.

**The school teacher**: Does he read French comic strips?

**The mom**: Yes, he likes them a lot!

**The school teacher**: Very well, continue to encourage him...

**The mom**: Ah thank you! I am reassured for his French.





## 2nd Role Play—Intermediate Level

George va partir deux semaines en vacances et sa voisine va s'occuper de sa maison et de ses animaux. Il lui explique la liste des choses à faire.



George is going to leave for two weeks on holiday and his neighbour is going to take care of his house and his animals. He explains to her the things that need to be done.

**George** : Salut voisine !

**La voisine** : Salut George! Alors tu es prêt pour ton voyage ?

**George** : Oh oui ! Et comment! J'ai besoin de me changer les idées. Avec ma femme, on te remercie beaucoup de t'occuper des animaux et de la maison !

**La voisine** : Pas de problème ! Alors dis-moi, pour ta chatte – je lui donne quoi à manger ?

**George** : Tu peux lui donner quelques croquettes. Ce bol-là est à elle !

**La voisine** : Et je les lui donne quand ?

**George** : Elle a l'habitude de les manger le matin.

**La voisine** : D'accord, et qu'est-ce que je dois faire avec les poissons ?

**George** : Tu peux leur donner à manger également le matin !

**La voisine** : Où est la nourriture ?

**George** : Tu la trouveras à côté de l'aquarium.

**La voisine** : Et le courrier ? Tu veux que je le récupère tous les jours et que je le mette sur ton bureau ?

**George** : Oui, je veux bien ! Ce serait très gentil. Juste une dernière chose : une société de bois va venir faire une livraison mardi à 14 heures, est-ce que tu peux aller les rejoindre devant la porte ?

**La voisine** : Oui, bien sûr ! Je verrai avec eux pour la livraison et je leur montrerai où il faut l'empiler chez toi. Tu le places toujours dans le garage à côté de la porte ?

**George** : Oui, et aussi est-ce que tu peux faire une toute dernière chose pour Claire ?

**La voisine** : Oui, qu'est-ce que je peux faire pour elle ?

**George** : Si tu vas au marché le samedi avant qu'on revienne, est-ce que tu peux lui acheter quelques légumes, un peu de fromage de chèvre et du pain ? Elle te serait infiniment reconnaissante !

**La voisine** : Mais c'est avec plaisir ! Elle sait bien que je vais au marché tous les samedis matin – tu pourras lui dire que je lui prendrai tout ça... Elle n'aura qu'à me donner sa liste avant de partir.

**George** : Merci mille fois Catherine, tu es un ange !

**George**: Hello neighbour!

**The neighbour**: Hi George! So, you're ready for your trip?

**George**: Oh yes! And how! I need a change of air. With my wife, we thank you a lot for taking care of the animals and the house!

**The neighbour**: No problem! So tell me, for your cat – What do I give her to eat?

**George**: You can give her some pellets. This bowl there is hers!

**The neighbour**: And when do I give them to her?

**George**: She's used to eating them in the morning.

**The neighbour**: OK, and what should I do with the fish?

**George**: You can give them some food, also in the morning!

**The neighbour**: Where is the food?

**George**: You'll find it next to the aquarium.

**The neighbour**: And the mail? Do you want me to get it everyday and should I put it on your office desk?

**George**: Yes, I would like that! That would be nice. Just one last thing: A firewood company is going to make a delivery on Tuesday at 2pm; can you meet them in front of the door?

**The neighbour**: Yes, of course! I will meet them for the delivery and I will show them where they must stack it at your place. Do you still put it in the garage next to the door?

**George**: Yes, and also, can you do one very last thing for Claire?

**The neighbour**: Yes, what can I do for her?

**George**: If you go to the market on the Saturday before we return, can you buy her some vegetables, some goat cheese and some bread? She would definitely be most grateful!

**The neighbour**: With pleasure! She knows that I go to the market every Saturday morning – you can tell her that I'll pick it all up... She can just give me her list before leaving.

**George**: Thanks a million Catherine, you're an angel!

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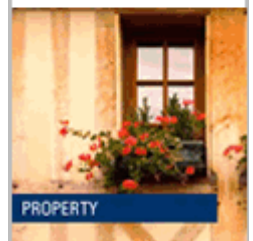
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## Pronouns (cont'd)

## Try this exercise!

Fill in the missing blanks with the appropriate pronoun! If you wish, you can try to translate the paragraph into English. Click here for the answers and translation (or go to page 36).

“Que penses-tu de Serge? Je \_\_\_ aime! Je \_\_\_ trouve beau, généreux et drôle. Je ne suis pas certaine qu’il \_\_\_ aime car quand je \_\_\_ dis : Je \_\_\_ aime, il \_\_\_ répond ‘merci’. Je \_\_\_ envoie des emails pendant la journée à son travail et je \_\_\_ demande toujours comment il va. Il ne \_\_\_ répond pas toujours mais je sais qu’il pense à \_\_\_ . J’ai rencontré ses amis et nous \_\_\_ appelons de temps en temps pour \_\_\_ inviter à sortir avec \_\_\_ (Serge et moi-même). J’aime bien être avec \_\_\_ (les amis) car ils sont très sympas et je pense qu’ils \_\_\_ apprécient bien. De temps en temps, un ami à Serge \_\_\_ demande: ‘Alors, quand est ce que vous allez vous marier? Et Serge ne répond pas. Je pense qu’il aime bien être avec \_\_\_ parce que quand je ne suis pas avec \_\_\_ pendant quelques jours, il \_\_\_ appelle pour \_\_\_ dire qu’il est triste sans \_\_\_ et que je \_\_\_ manque ! Je suis un peu perplexe.”




## Deux dictées au choix

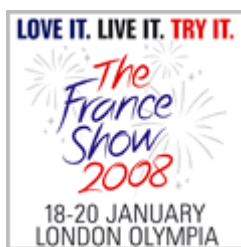
We provide two *dictées* to choose from, according to your level in French: one for beginners, and another one for intermediate level French.

Click on the link below to listen to each of them. Then try and write it without making any mistakes. You can compare it to the original text on page 37.

N.B.: It would be a good idea to read all the articles of this issue of *French Accent* before doing the dictation, as you will recognize many expressions.

Beginner level: 

Intermediate level: 



Louer une voiture en France comme à l'étranger...

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## *Le coin des branchés*

**I**n keeping with the main theme of this issue, the following idiomatic expressions all employ a culinary vocabulary to express something that is quite often far removed from food. In most cases, we provide a literal translation plus its idiomatic meaning.

**La cuisine électorale** (electoral cooking) = all the behind-the-scenes manipulations and shady deals of politicians at election time.

**Rajouter de la sauce/allonger la sauce** (to add some sauce/adding more liquid to a sauce) = to exaggerate considerably.

**A toutes les sauces** - *Mettre quelqu'un à toutes les sauces* = to pile on jobs and/or responsibilities.

**Jeter de l'huile sur le feu** (to pour oil on the fire) = to make matters worse.

**Faire noir comme dans un four** (It's as black as in an oven) = It's pitch black. You can't see anything.

**Etre sur le gril** (to be on the grill) = to be on the hot seat.

**Etre grillé/Se faire griller** (to be grilled) = to be discredited, to have blown everything.

**Etre cuit** (to be cooked) - *Il est cuit* = to be drunk or to be all washed up.

**C'est du tout cuit** (It's already cooked) = it's a sure thing, it's in the bag.

**Etre dur à cuire** (to be difficult to cook) = said about someone who is not easily discouraged, very resistant in the face of difficulty.

**Mijoter** (to simmer) - *Qu'est-ce qu'il mijote ?* = to cook up. What's he cooking up, plotting?

**Chanter comme une casserole** (to sing like a pot) = to sing off key.

**Faire un bruit de casserole** (to make a noise like a pot) - *Cette vieille bagnole fait un bruit de casserole* = literally to sound like a pile of junk. This old jalopy sounds like a pile of junk, a tin can.

**Passer à la casserole** (to get to the pots and pans) = an expression used by women who reluctantly and unenthusiastically allow their husbands to make love to them. It's a drudgery.

**Se mettre à table** = to sit down at the diner table.

**Mettre les pieds dans le plat** (to put one's feet in the plate) = to put your foot in your mouth

**Mettre les petits plats dans les grands** (to put the small dishes in the larger one) = to put on a big spread.

**Faire tout un plat de quelque chose** (to make an entire dish out of something) - *Il a raté son permis de conduire, il en a fait tout un plat !* = to make a big deal out of something. He failed his driving licence exam and he made a big deal/fuss about it.

**Dans son assiette** (in his/her plate) - *Il n'est pas dans son assiette aujourd'hui !* = to be out of sorts. He's not in great form today.

**Avoir un bon coup de fourchette** (to be capable/handy with a fork) = to be a good eater.

**Ne pas y aller avec le dos de la cuillère** (not to go at it with the back of the spoon) = Not to beat around the bush, to get right to the point.

**Etre à ramasser à la petite cuillère** (to be in a condition that you could be scooped up with a teaspoon) = to be totally exhausted.

**Régler une affaire en deux coups de cuillère à pot** (settle an affair in two blows of a large cooking spoon) = to settle something very quickly.

**Tourner autour du pot** (to circle around the pot) = to beat around the bush.

**A la fortune du pot** (the luck of the pot) = a pot luck meal where everyone brings a dish.

**Rester en carafe** (to stay in the carafe) = to be left behind, forgotten.

**Avoir du pain sur la planche** (to have a lot of bread on the breadboard) = to have one's work cut out for one, to have a lot to do.

**Tomber comme un cheveu sur la soupe** (to fall like a hair into the soup) = to come like a bolt out of the blue.



*Elle sent que ce soir, elle va passer à la casserole...*

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## Interview: Sébastien Babolat, a French Expatriate and Creator of French Podcasts in California

**M**eet Sébastien Babolat, the ‘father’ of French language podcasts! Every week, 40,000 people on the net download Sébastien’s podcasts to practise their listening skills and to discover different aspects of French culture. Find out what a podcast is and why they’ve become so popular.

**Céline Anthonioz:** You manage a website of French podcasts\*. Concretely, what is a podcast?

**Sébastien:** A podcast is no more than just a radio show that you can listen to anywhere at anytime. This is the new way of listening to your favourite radio show – no need anymore to stick close to a radio box and wait for your show to air: you can now download it and listen to it on your MP3 player (ipod, zune or anything). The ability to do so, led to the creation of many independent radio shows, without any specific knowledge or understanding (and without the hassle!) of a streaming program by air-waves or FM/AM band.

**C.A.:** Would you please explain what else the website offers?

**S.:** During the weekly show that I have produced for more than 2 years now, I have greatly expanded what I offer: I try to expose the listeners to all of the cultural aspects of French culture, as I believe that this is the best way to learn a language. On each show, I play some French artists, a book or a movie review, some words and

lar book a week), a video vocabulary to associate words with a picture... And much more!

To help listeners in their learning experience I answer any of their questions on a forum. They also can share their thoughts, travelling tips and discovery of anything French by posting articles on the blog that was made for them.

**C.A.:** Every week, there are 40,000 downloads on the podcasts you create! What makes them so popular? What type of subjects do you speak about?

**S.:** After speaking to a lot of listeners, I think that what

sentences on a specific topic and a conversation (and a grammar point). On top of the “show” there is a transcript so listeners can follow and read what is said, I also propose a bilingual book, with a side by side text (a chapter of a particu-



*I try new ways to help people understand French as it is spoken: videos with commentary, books, audio books, tips and tricks for travelling in France, exercises, dictations...*



## Interview (cont'd)

they like is the fact that they can have many different aspects of the culture within a single show: music, books, movies, audio excerpts, as well as vocabulary and grammar. I feel it helps them enjoy the language. I usually take a subject and talk about it for 2 weeks (on 2 podcasts). Subjects range from “the house”, “the doctor’s office”, “the Tour de France”, etc. They are various but always connected to something you can use in everyday life.

The website and the podcasts are also really personal: a lot of listeners help me in the production of the podcast (I call the volunteers the members of the “podtourage”). They correct my English, discover new subjects, and even help with the graphic design of the website.

**C.A.:** What motivated you to create podcasts on a weekly basis?

S.: Two years ago I had an internship at a company in California and wanted to take the opportunity to get back to my Spanish that I had long forgotten. I started looking for a radio station (and/or a podcast) like NPR (or the BBC worldwide) in Spanish. There was nothing that I really liked. I wanted something where I could listen to a little bit of everything.

By curiosity I looked for French and there was also nothing – so I decided to try my hand in that new medium. I was hoping for a handful of



*I truly love the south of France: I love going to the beach, I like having sunny days all year long and I like when the weather is warm!*

listeners, and was willing to create a show for them. From the start it was a success and the rest is history!

**C.A.:** You offer the podcast services for free but there is an option to receive more French work in the membership area in exchange for a small fee – can you explain what the membership gives to the reader?

S.: I used to give everything for free, as I really do believe in free education. But at the same time, I really wanted to push the podcast to the next level and wanted to be able to offer more, for everyone.

This is why I created the members section. In this section, listeners can find some basic lists of vocabulary, some “podcast extras” (such as the bilingual side by side text, flash cards and the podcast in an enhanced form).

I also try new ways to help people understand French as it is spoken: there are videos with commentary, books made by *Frenchie Productions* (the company I created), audio books, tips and tricks for travelling in France, exercises, dictations, etc. I also have an “interactive” section where listeners can speak and practice their French. I will soon update this section to have a better layout and an easier access. In the membership section I also try new things: parts of a DVD that I am in the process of creating will be available for the members.

**C.A.:** You’ve had great reviews in the press! Were you one of the pioneers to start the French podcasts? What are they saying about you?

S.: I was, as far as I know, the first to create a language podcast as they exist today. The press gave me some good re-

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## Interview (cont'd)

views as other language podcasts use what I have done to apply to theirs: the fact that you can get a video, a pdf and an audio file from itunes (when you subscribe) and the weekly format (even if now other podcasts propose their show on a daily basis).

The articles I'm mentioned in usually explain what a podcast is and what mine, in particular, has to offer. They like the fact that I have a cultural component as well as traditional grammar points. It is funny for me when

I talk to other language podcasters: they always refer to me as the "father of language podcast"! There is a nice group of us, talking to each other every now and then, exchanging ideas and tips.

**C.A.:** Sébastien, today you live in Monterey, in California – do you miss France? If so, what aspects of France or French life do you miss?

**S.:** I miss France a lot, but mostly for the everyday little things: a good croissant (made with plenty of butter) or a *pain au chocolat* (a chocolate croissant), a real baguette, food in general (which tastes very different!), the way the cities are designed (including public transportation!), etc. Mostly I miss my friends and my family.

**C.A.:** Being a Frenchman from Cannes, what can you say about this beautiful region? What is a true 'Cannois'?

**S.:** I truly love the south of France: I love going to the beach, I like having sunny days all year long and I like when the weather is warm! What's great with the south is that we

neighbourship, the freedom in general (stores open later or on Sundays) and the interactions with people (it is sometimes a bit easier and quicker here to make acquaintances). Something that I really like is the cultural interaction: there are so many different people with diverse cultures, living together and respecting each other. I learn a lot from others in the USA, simply by asking and being a little curious, as Americans are very open.

**C.A.:** Anything else you would like to add?

**S.:** There is something funny about French people in the USA (or French speaking persons); when you come here, you can clearly notice the different neighbourhoods of a city (the Chinese part, Italian quarter, etc.) except for one: the French. Every city I try to visit, it seems that French restaurants are spread out and aren't placed together. It is therefore a bit harder to determine where they hang out. But that is also the fun part of it... we have to hunt for the French!

\* [www.frenchpodclass.com](http://www.frenchpodclass.com)



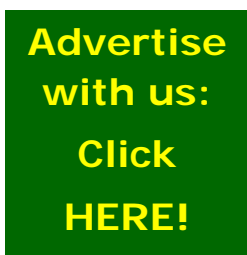
*Listeners can share their thoughts, travelling tips and discovery of anything French.*

are not far (within one hour) from anything you may need: the beach, skiing, national forest, along with many historical sites.

A real "Cannois" is hard to describe, but we are known for being laid back, talking passionately with our hands and exaggerating our stories! We have a lot of families of Italian descent in Cannes, so we fit some of the Italian stereotypes as well! Cannes is a really great place, and it is best in either June or September, when the weather is still nice and there are fewer tourists.

**C.A.:** In your opinion, are there any aspects of American life that you feel are more appealing or positive than some aspects of French life?

**S.:** I really like some aspects of American life: the entrepre-



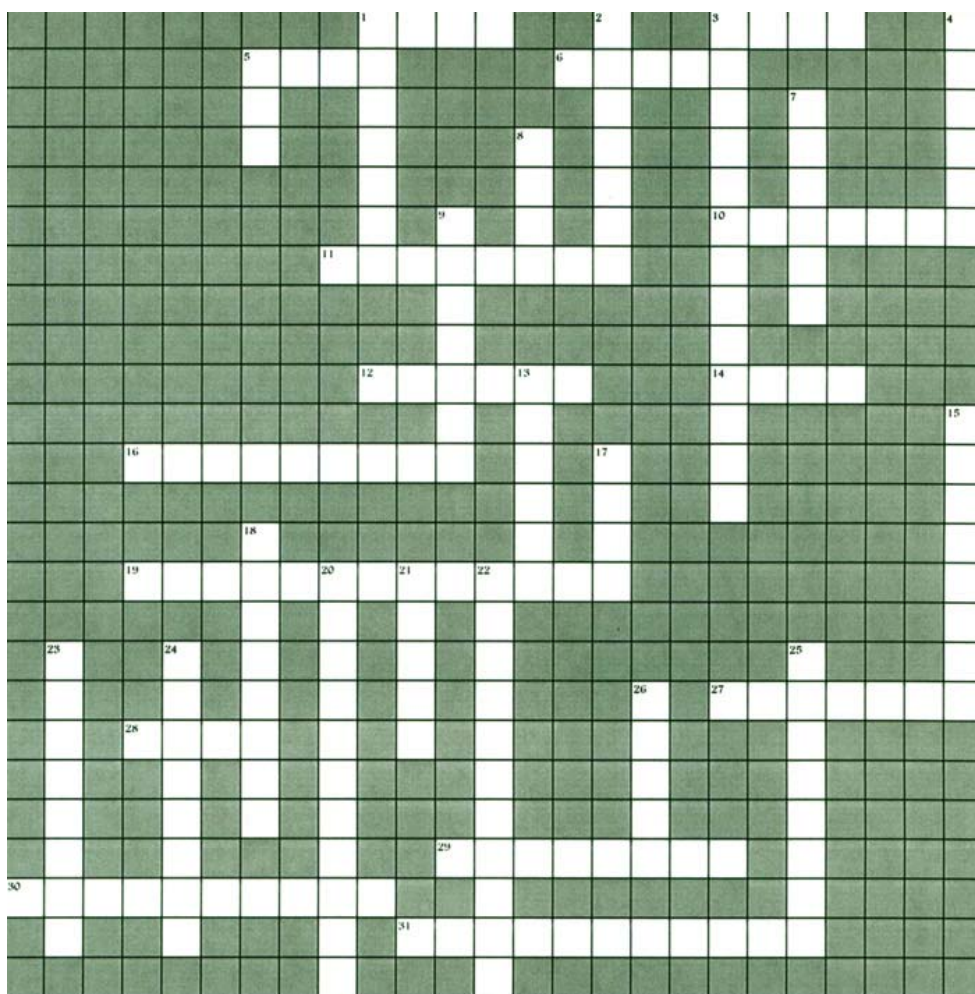
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## Mots croisés

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The words for the Crossword Puzzle are taken from the articles in the current issue.



### Vertical

1. plat composé en partie de blancs d'oeufs
2. employé d'un restaurant
3. François Fillon
4. travail
5. un pronom tonique
7. résidence du Président
8. un sens qui permet d'apprécier les saveurs d'un plat
9. cuisinier
13. les meilleurs restaurants en ont une ou deux ou trois
15. sans goût
17. ce qu'on mange à un repas, un mets
18. membre du gouvernement
20. film sur un petit rat gastronome
21. sorte de cours
22. dégoûtant
23. nom d'un guide de restaurants
24. celui qui aime bien manger
25. quand on ne peut plus payer ses dettes
26. des émissions à effet de \_\_\_\_\_

Created with ElipseCrossword—[www.elipsecrossword.com](http://www.elipsecrossword.com)

### Horizontal

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. sorte de poésie</li> <li>3. cuisinier</li> <li>5. abrég. d'un fast food</li> <li>6. abrég. d'un lieu où on mange</li> <li>10. restaurant ou bar très simple</li> <li>11. essayer une petite quantité pour mieux apprécier</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. premier plat</li> <li>14. impôt</li> <li>16. fromage de Normandie</li> <li>19. surnom sarcastique pour le Président</li> <li>27. avoir du pain sur la _____</li> <li>28. ivre</li> <li>29. nettoie les cheminées</li> <li>30. oiseau qui revient au printemps</li> <li>31. la haute cuisine</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

Solution on page 32

## Don't Forget the *ramoneur*!



### A yearly obligation

The *ramoneur*, chimney sweep in English, is one of the local artisans that you cannot avoid, especially if you live in the countryside, and if, of course, you have a *cheminée* (fireplace) in your home. Even if some insurance companies don't mention it, you need to know that in France it is compulsory to have your chimney cleaned at least once a year. If you don't do so, your insurance company will not cover your loss in case of a fire.

In fact, the same obligation applies to all heating systems, except the *tout électrique* (all electric): every conduit of smoke, every *chaudière* (gas boiler) has to be inspected and cleaned by a professional once a year. These requirements are mandated by *arrêté préfectoral* (declaration by the *Préfet du département*) or an *arrêté municipal* by the local *maire* (mayor), which means that they may differ slightly from one department or one city to another, therefore it is wise to get all the details locally.

However, in any case, it is compulsory everywhere.

Since one must have one's chimney swept once a year (sometimes it might be twice a year), the French usually call the *ramoneur* at the end of autumn, beginning of winter, just before you start using your heating system. But as the professionals are overloaded with work at this time of the year, it is wise not to wait too long before calling them. As regards the *entretien de chaudière*

(gas boiler maintenance), it is even better to set up an annual maintenance contract with the appropriate company. If you rent your apartment or house, you might double check with your *propriétaire* (landlord), but usually taking care of such cleaning is the responsibility of the *locataire* (tenant).

Aside from being compulsory, it is also beneficial for your equipment, for your health (reduced risk of asphyxia because of the smoke) and it might save you some energy.

As regards chimneys only, the *ramoneurs* are part of French tradition, and there have been many stories written about them, especially when they used to work on top of the roof. Nowadays, they do their cleaning inside from the fireplace and push their brushes up through the chimney. By the way, when the *ramoneur* comes, it is recommended that you cover your furniture close to the fireplace as it may just be that it will be covered with *suie* (soot) when he leaves, as some of them aren't perfectly clean.

### *Le petit ramoneur savoyard*

It all started in the Alps region, mostly in the Savoie, as far back in time as the Middle Ages. It was then frequent that the *ramoneurs* were kids, starting at anywhere from 6 up to 12 years of age, from very poor families who, in order to earn some income, would travel all over France with their ladders and brushes, accompanied in small groups by the *maître ramoneur*. They would offer their services to all the houses they passed by and to apart-

Je Porte Bonheur...



ments in big cities, such as Paris, where the *petits ramoneurs savoyards* were well-known. The *ramonage* was not very well paid, but still, from the date of the Saint-Gras (7 September) until spring, they could bring home some badly needed cash. The tradition started in Savoie because in this part of France the snow and weather conditions prevented the inhabitants from engaging in any other kind of activity, especially agriculture. This was, of course, before the advent of skiing and the transformation of these alpine villages into ski resorts...

Of course, this was very hard work for these small kids. The *maître ramoneur* (usually an older *ramoneur* who was too big to get up on the roofs and inside the chimneys) was often very tough with the kids, making them work for 14 hours a day, every day of the week, and walking up to 40 to 50 km a day. They would sleep in a barn or a stable, or in the attic in cities. There were many stories about kids who died of cold or from a bad fall from a roof. Some would get respiratory diseases or became allergic or blind because of the soot. It was only in 1874, and in 1892, that laws were passed relating to the protection of children and making it illegal to employ kids younger than 12.



Many legends and tales grew out of this profession and the children who worked as chimney sweeps.



## Le ramoneur (cont'd)

On a more positive side, many legends and tales grew out of this profession and the children who worked as chimney sweeps. As their role was to prevent fires, the kids were quite often thought to bring good luck. They were also resourceful and able to help with many other

things around a house. Small figurines representing a *petit ramoneur savoyard* that people would keep as a *porte-bonheur* (lucky charm) soon became quite popular. The *ramoneur* also became the happy and mischievous emblem of Savoie and Haute-Savoie. They would often bring along a small *marmotte* (marmot), an animal native to the Alps, and would get

it to dance in the streets to make extra money. And, of course, kids being kids, they couldn't resist the temptation to play a few tricks sometimes or to try and play with other children in the street – which was not always easy as the young girls especially could be frightened by these little people all covered with black soot.

Annick Stevenson



## A Role Play: Let's call the *ramoneur*

**Madame Dupuy** : Bonjour monsieur, vous êtes bien le ramoneur ?

**Le ramoneur** : Oui, bonjour madame, que puis-je pour votre service ?

**Madame Dupuy** : Ici Madame Dupuy. Pourriez-vous passer chez moi un de ces jours ? J'ai une cheminée que j'aimerais bien faire ramoner avant l'hiver.

**Le ramoneur** : Bien sûr, je vais regarder ça. Mais on ne se connaît pas. Vous habitez où ?

**Madame Dupuy** : Non, vous n'êtes jamais venu. En fait, ça fait juste quelques mois que j'habite dans le village. Mais je crois que le ramonage est obligatoire ?

**Le ramoneur** : Absolument ! C'est essentiel. Bon, je vais venir. Mais j'ai pas mal à faire en ce moment.

**Madame Dupuy** : Oui, je comprends, merci. Vous pourriez venir la semaine prochaine, de préférence vendredi ?

**Le ramoneur** : Oh la la, sûrement pas ! Vous vous y prenez tous au dernier moment, et j'ai des dizaines de maisons à visiter, moi ! Attendez... Vous habitez où, vous dites ?

**Madame Dupuy** : Dans le quartier des Granges, vous savez, près de l'école...

**Le ramoneur** : Ah je vois ! Vous êtes voisine de Madame Lejeune ? Je vais chez elle mardi en quinze, vers 16h, je peux passer chez vous juste après.

**Madame Dupuy** : Eh bien ça pourrait aller, je m'arrangerai pour être là. Vous avez raison, ma maison est juste à côté de la sienne.

**Le ramoneur** : Alors je vois laquelle c'est. C'était les Gaillards qui étaient là avant. Je connais la cheminée. Alors on fait comme ça ! A mardi 30 en fin d'après-midi. Au revoir madame.

**Madame Dupuy** : Merci beaucoup, au revoir monsieur !



**Madame Dupuy**: Good morning sir, is this the *ramoneur*?

**The ramoneur**: Yes. Good morning madam, what can I do for you?

**Madame Dupuy**: This is Madame Dupuy. Could you come to my place one of these days? I have a fireplace that I would like to get cleaned before winter.

**The ramoneur**: Sure, I'll see if I can do that. But we don't know each other. Where do you live?

**Madame Dupuy**: No, you have never come before. In fact, I moved to the village only a few months ago. But I think it is compulsory to clean one's fireplace?

**The ramoneur**: Absolutely! Well, I'll come. But I have a lot to do these days.

**Madame Dupuy**: Yes, I understand, thank you. Could you come next week, preferably on Friday?

**The ramoneur**: Wow, definitely not! You all think of it at the last minute, and I have dozens of houses to visit!... Wait... Where did you say you live?

**Madame Dupuy**: In the *quartier des Granges*, you know, close to the school...

**The ramoneur**: I see! You are a neighbour of Madame Lejeune? I'll go to her place two weeks from Tuesday, around 4 pm. I could come to your home right after.

**Madame Dupuy**: That would work, I'll make arrangements to be here. You are right, my house is right next to her's.

**The ramoneur**: Oh, I see which one it is. The Gaillards lived there before. I know their fireplace. So, we'll do it like that! See you on Tuesday the 30<sup>th</sup>, late afternoon. Goodbye madam.

**Madame Dupuy**: Thank you very much, goodbye sir!



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## Time for more taxes

Part from income taxes, two other unavoidable taxes are blowing some grey clouds across the blue sky of autumn: the *taxe d'habitation* (housing tax), payable by almost everybody, renters and owners alike, and the *taxe foncière* (property tax), only for owners of a housing property. These two taxes, together with the *taxe professionnelle* (professional tax), which benefit the municipality where you live, represent 45% of the budget of cities and villages. Details:

### *La taxe d'habitation*

This one is paid by almost everybody. The only condition to be on the list of the *personnes imposables* (taxable persons) is to own or rent a house or apartment which has furniture in it, which means that if you have two houses in two different places, or if you own one and live in another, you pay twice. You also have to pay taxes for any other building which is part of the same property and located less than one kilometre from the main residence, whether they are furnished or not. The tax does not apply to professional buildings, as their owners must pay the *taxe professionnelle*.

If you are the owner of the house or apartment in which you live, you have to pay.

For rental housing, the tax is paid by the tenant, as the principle is that it is the person who lives in it who must pay. The amount of the tax is established according to where you

## Tips & Traps



lived on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Which means that if you moved at any time during the year, you still have to pay it for your previous apartment if you were living there on January 1<sup>st</sup>. And the previous tenant of your new home will have to pay the taxes for that year on your new residence. As you can imagine, this is not always easy to organise, and the landlord sometimes helps in serving as an intermediary between the previous and the present tenant.

**Note:** All owners of rental properties must inform the *Service des impôts* (tax service) no later than one month after a tenant leaves the apartment or house. If they don't do so, they may have to pay the tax themselves.

The amount of the tax is calculated according to the number of square metres, and it varies from one city to the next as the amounts are determined locally (on the basis of housing costs in the region). You may be able to take advantage of *abattements* (deductions) depending on the size of your family, and on your income. The amount you pay may easily reach 800 to 900 €, or more.

For the last few years, the government has found it more convenient to add what is

called the *redevance audiovisuelle* (television tax), to the statement for the *taxe d'habitation*. The TV tax is 116 € for everybody in France who owns a TV, no matter how many you have. Everywhere in France these two taxes have to be paid by mid-November.

### *La taxe foncière*

You have probably paid it already by the time you receive this issue of the magazine, as the deadline is mid-October. This tax is due only to owners of a house or an apartment (who, consequently, must pay both the *taxe d'habitation* and *foncière*). And, as is the case with the *taxe d'habitation*, it is calculated for 1<sup>st</sup> January and its amount differs according to the city where you live. The taxation base is the equivalent of 59% of the rental value in the region where you live. There are also possible deductions. The amount is also difficult to predict, but it could be as high as 1,000 €.

**More details concerning both taxes are available on the website of the French Administration (in French only):**

[www.service-public.fr](http://www.service-public.fr)

## AOC Wines: major reform needed

Last month, a French consumer organization, *UFC-Que Choisir*, dared to take aim at a long-standing icon and symbol of guaranteed quality in France: the AOC Label. According to a very specific enquiry on French wines, it had the audacity to report that it had become meaningless!

## Tips & Traps (cont'd)

The AOC label (*Appellation d'origine contrôlée*), which means “term of controlled origin,” is the French certification granted to some French geographical indications for wines, cheeses, butters and other agricultural products under the auspices of the government bureau called *Institut national des appellations d'origine* (INAO). The AOC seal was created and mandated by French laws in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and in 1992 it extended



beyond France to other European countries. The number of AOC wines in France now numbers 462.

Over the past few months, *UFC-Que Choisir*, with the help of 75 wine professionals, conducted a study that revealed that about 98 per cent of all AOC wines were perfunctorily waved through by the organizations that are supposed to verify their quality, and that producers of AOC wines themselves are members of the certifying juries in those organizations. That means that one in three bottles of AOC wine produced in France is sub-standard. According to the consumer organization, “there has been a steady decline in the quality of many AOC wines for years,” which has undermined the confidence of consumers. Indeed, increasing numbers of complaints are published about these wines. Having the AOC label means increased sales for a particular wine, but one can find many other non-AOC wines which

are actually better. And everybody recognized that the system had become more and more lax: in 2005, 99% of the wines proposed for the label were accepted!

Confronted with such criticism, enhanced by this recent enquiry, the Government had some time ago decided that it was time to revise the system with regard to wines (if some complaints do exist about other AOC products such as cheese, all other products seem to be more in compliance with their respective criteria for quality). Discussions concerning a major reform of the AOC labels are under way and, according to the President of the Wine Committee of INAO, new regulations should be in place before the 2008 grape harvest.

According to the law putting the reform action into place, which was adopted in January 2006, the INAO is required to review and discuss the whole system with the various wine growers' organizations of support and management – with the participation of *UFC-Que Choisir*. Already a few ideas have been approved, with more controls involved and, more importantly, the creation of a totally independent organization that will replace the present jury system.

More info on:  
[www.quechoisir.org](http://www.quechoisir.org)

## B&B under stricter control

Shortly after our article published in the June-July issue of *French Accent* about Bed and Breakfasts in France and the great centralized systems of *Gîtes de France*, a decree published last August imposes a new regulation that has met with a strong critical reaction

from the people who have opened a B&B or intend to do so soon. Applicable immediately, this new decree limits the number of rental units that any B&B owner can rent to a maximum of 5 bedrooms and 15 clients at a time. This decision was taken to try and limit somewhat the huge expansion of this system of tourist accommodations. Indeed, more than 1,000 *chambres d'hôte* are opened every year in France, out of a total of 30,000.

## Radars and false license plates

To avoid being photographed, or “flashed”, by one of the many automatic radars that are becoming increasingly numerous on the roads in France, some car owners have resorted to a rather devious deception: putting false license plates on their cars. The problem is that when these plates bear the same number as that for another car, it is the innocent and unsuspecting owner who receives the ticket in the mail. This has happened several times over the last few months, and it is not always easy for these victims to prove their innocence. In spite of the fact that the *Direction de la sécurité et de la circulation routières*, (French Direction of Security and Traffic) claims that such problems are very quickly solved, several people have found it very difficult to settle the matter, and one individual has been fighting to clear his name for over a year. What can be recommended in such a case is to request a copy of the photo of the vehicle that has been flashed (This is not done automatically), as this usually helps a lot. And if the authorities refuse to admit their error, to seek the advice of a consumer organization such as *UFC-Que Choisir* (see above).





## This is France — French Gastronomy

**F**rance is still known and recognized (but for how much longer?) as the most important country for culinary excellence. A look back at its history will allow us to understand the reasons for this, and its evolution. But tastes change, real gastronomy has become a luxury that is very expensive, whereas the cooking in typical French restaurants is more and more lacking in originality, and a new, “grande” cuisine, one that is inspired by the tastes, savours and spices from other countries, is emerging.

### A Bit of History

How did France become the country of “Haute Cuisine”? A French historian, Jean-Robert Pitte, in his book entitled *Gastronomie française*, traces its origins to the time of the Gauls. That can seem to be surprising, especially since we are aware of the fact that the cooking of the brutish Gauls was very rustic. But, he says, “in Gaule, eating well is inseparable from social political life.” And that is certainly true of the French, as well as a way of demonstrating that gastronomy is not just the high quality of the dishes served, but that it is an entire culture. The presentation of the dishes has almost as much value as their taste, and a true gastronome must also pay attention to *La grande cuisine*. That is certainly what has contributed to this image of France. From time immemorial, the important decisions have been made while seated at a table, and even today someone who

knows how to entertain and can demonstrate his or her high taste for quality dishes served in a very artistic way has a far greater chance of climbing the social ladder than someone who dines at McDonalds. Jean-Robert Pitte provides another confirmation: it was indeed the Gauls who bestowed on the French the mentality of the importance of a meal and of the conviviality around a table, of making the sharing of a meal into a veritable joy, almost a party. That is still the case today. Moreover, if you dine with French people, you will perhaps be surprised to hear them make lengthy comments about the dishes served for the meal, but also talk about what they plan to cook the next day or subsequent days.

But, getting back to *la haute cuisine*, the kind of cooking that is capable of attaining the

## La gastronomie française

**L**a France est encore (pour combien de temps ?) connue et reconnue pour être le pays de l'excellence en matière culinaire. Un retour sur l'Histoire permet d'en comprendre les raisons, et l'évolution. Mais les goûts changent, la vraie gastronomie devient un luxe, qui se paie très cher, tandis que la cuisine du restaurant français typique manque de plus en plus d'originalité, et qu'une nouvelle grande cuisine, inspirée de goûts, saveurs et épices venus d'autres pays, émerge.

### Un peu d'Histoire

Comment la France est-elle devenue le pays de la gastronomie ? Un historien français, Jean-Robert Pitte, dans son livre intitulé *Gastronomie française*, fait remonter ses origines au temps des Gaulois. Ce qui peut étonner, tant on sait com-

bien la cuisine des rustres Gaulois était rustique. Mais, dit-il, “en Gaule, la bonne chère est inséparable de la vie politique sociale”. Et voilà bien une vérité applicable aux Français. Et une manière de démontrer que la gastronomie ne consiste pas seulement à la grande qualité gustative des plats servis, mais que c'est toute une culture. La présentation des mets a presque autant de valeur que leur qualité, et un vrai gastronome se doit également attacher l'importance qu'elle mérite à la grande cuisine. C'est ce qui a certainement contribué à cette image de la France. Depuis toujours, les grandes décisions y sont prises autour d'une table, et même aujourd'hui quel qu'un qui sait recevoir et peut démontrer de la finesse de son goût pour les mets de qualité servis de manière très artistique a bien plus de chances de gravir les marches de l'échelle sociale que celui qui se nourrit



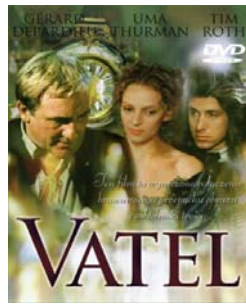
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Jean-Paul Lacombe (at the center) with his cooks, in the kitchen of his famous 2-star restaurant in Lyon (Rhône): “Léon de Lyon”. The restaurant dates from 1904 in the city still considered as the French capital of Gastronomy, with so many other famous chefs (among them, Paul Bocuse). At the end of the year, Léon de Lyon will close to be transformed into a “brasserie de luxe”. Photo: Courtesy of Jean-Paul Lacombe. [www.leondelyon.com](http://www.leondelyon.com)

## Gastronomy (cont'd)

summits of quality, of refinement and of taste, it really took hold in France in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century during the time of the absolute and authoritative monarchy of the “Sun King”, Louis XIV. There was a huge number of dishes served, and an enormous value placed on meals, which had become sumptuous affairs that were staged in such a theatrical manner so as to satisfy the wishes of the king as he dined before his entourage and on Sundays before the public that was allowed to file past the king’s table as he ate. Meals lasted for hours, and each dish served was a masterpiece. And the royal cook was one of the most important people at court. An example being François Vatel. A pastry chef and caterer by trade, he organized exceptional parties and festivities for up to 3000 people. But Vatel is also famous for having committed suicide during a reception because the delivery of the fish was late. A film, *Vatel* (2000), by the filmmaker Roland Joffé starring Gérard Depardieu and Uma Thurman was devoted to this incident. The film won a



César, was nominated for an Oscar and was shown at Cannes. It is now available on DVD.

Another celebrated chef earned his reputation during the same period: François-Pierre de La Varenne, the Marquis d’Uxelles’ cook and author of a book entitled, *Le cuisinier français*, is recognized for having made the transition from unsophisticated medieval cooking to modern *haute cuisine*. The 17<sup>th</sup> Century thus saw a kind of culinary revolution in which the formerly-used strong and exotic spices were replaced with more natural products, local herbs and new vegetables. And greater care was taken with their cooking, as well as that of meats and fish, so that they remained as much of their taste as possible. “When I eat cabbage soup, I want it to taste like

## Gastronomie (suite)

au McDo. Autre affirmation de Jean-Robert Pitte: ce sont bien les Gaulois qui ont légué aux Français cette mentalité de l’importance du repas, et de la convivialité à table, faisant du partage du repas une véritable joie, presque une fête. Ce qui est toujours le cas aujourd’hui. D’ailleurs si vous dînez avec des Français vous serez peut-être étonnés, non seulement de les entendre commenter longuement les plats servis, mais aussi parler déjà de ce qu’ils prévoient de cuisiner le lendemain ou les jours suivants.

### Mise en scène théâtrale

Mais pour en revenir à la cuisine gastronomique, celle qui sait atteindre les sommets de qualité, de raffinement et de goût, elle n’a vraiment pris son essor en France que lors de la monarchie absolue et autoritaire, celle du “roi-soleil”, Louis XIV, au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le nombre de plats servis était considérable, tout comme était immense la valeur attribuée aux repas, devenus somptueux, mis en scène de façon théâtrale pour satisfaire aux souhaits du roi tandis qu’il dînait avec sa Cour

en semaine, et le dimanche devant un public qui était autorisé à défilier près de sa table. Les repas étaient interminables, et chaque mets présenté un chef d’œuvre. Et le cuisinier du roi était l’un des personnages les plus importants de la Cour. Un exemple fut François Vatel. Pâtissier-traiteur de métier, il organisait des fêtes et festins d’exception, auxquels étaient conviés jusqu’à 3000 personnes. Mais Vatel est aussi connu pour s’être suicidé pendant une réception parce que la livraison de poisson était en retard... Un film de Roland Joffé, dans lequel ont joué Gérard Depardieu et Uma Thurman, lui a été consacré en 2000. Ce film, qui a reçu un César, a été nommé aux Oscar, et présenté en sélection officielle à Cannes, est accessible en DVD.

Un autre chef célèbre s’est fait connaître à la même époque: François-Pierre de La Varenne, Cuisinier du marquis d’Uxelles et auteur d’un livre *Le cuisinier français*, reconnu pour avoir marqué le passage entre la cuisine médiévale, peu sophistiquée, à la haute cuisine moderne. Le XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle a donc connu une sorte de révolution culinaire dans laquelle les forts

## Vocabulaire — cuisiniers et restaurants

**Une auberge** = a type of restaurant found more in the countryside, usually serving local products, sometimes rustic, but you can also find more sophisticated ones.

**Un bistrot** = either a café serving only drinks, or a very simple restaurant. Some major restaurants have a separate bistrot section where they serve more simple and less expensive meals.

**Une bonne table** = another way of referring to a good and usually renowned restaurant.

**Un café-restaurant** = a restaurant which has a café section where you can have only a drink.

**Un chef** = a chef.

**La cuisine du terroir** = food from locally grown ingredients.

**Une cuisine traditionnelle** = typical French food. Not always the best, though.

**Cuisiner** = to cook.

**Le cuisinier/la cuisinière** = the cook.

**Le cuistot** = a more familial way to say cook.

**Une gargote** = a restaurant which serves very basic meals, not very good either.

**Une guinguette** = the type of very simple restaurant often located on the banks a river where you can usually eat fish and listen to popular music in the evening.

**Le marmiton** = the assistant to the cooks.

**La nouvelle cuisine** = more modern and imaginative food invented in the 1960-1970’s, served in fancy restaurants, in small but very delicate portions, a bit expensive.

**Un restaurant** = a restaurant.

**Un restaurant étoilé** = a restaurant with stars awarded by well-known French culinary critics (see article page 22).

**Un restaurant gastronomique** = a gastronomic restaurant.

**Un resto** = A popular way to say restaurant.





## Gastronomy (cont'd)

cabbage,” said François-Pierre de La Varenne.

In the 18th century, Gastronomy ventured somewhat out of the royal chateaux and began to gain a foothold with the general public. Antoine de Beauvilliers was the first chef to take such an initiative; he invented the first restaurant when he opened a “bouillon” in Paris in 1765 where the customers were seated at small tables with tablecloths. It was a great success. And, the great chefs of the princes, dukes and marquis followed this example during and following the French Revolution of 1789 when they were put out of work after their employers fled the country. Opening their own restaurants was a means by which they could pursue their profession and continue the traditions of French gastronomy that a much wider public could henceforth take advantage of. Thus, the French Revolution played a definite role in the development of *la haute cuisine* in France.

The tradition continued and French cuisine became richer and more bourgeois by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>. It was a period where formal banquets could be interminable and such excesses inspired numerous chefs in the 1960's and 70's to innovate with what was called *La nouvelle cuisine*, which was lighter but still maintaining the same high quality.

## French gastronomy today

In this time of fast food outlets, TV diners and small restaurants that are within the

means of any budget, French gastronomy is certainly not what it used to be. If it still exists today through the great restaurants, it is less and less affordable for everyone. Some great restaurants turn a higher profit by organizing business dinners or in catering to a more well-heeled clientele from Japan or the United States. As far as the traditional restaurants are concerned, which represent the highest percentage of the number of dining es-



*At the Royal Table, a very important ceremonial. Here: Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette (from the film by Sofia Coppola).*

tablishments in France, they can be disappointing. Those that are opened in the more tourist oriented sections of cities scarcely make an effort any more towards anything other than their exorbitant profit margins for the quality of food served. And some of the small neighbourhood restaurants are just barely acceptable. There are, nevertheless, numerous small restaurants and bistros that are delicious, friendly and not overly expensive. A little research and listening to word-of-mouth comments from others (see article on page 25) can be a big help in finding just the right little place when you have the urge to sample some of the

## Gastronomie (suite)

épices d'origine exotique d'autrefois ont été remplacés par des produits plus naturels, fines herbes locales, et nouveaux légumes. Et un plus grand soin a aussi été apporté à leur cuisson, ainsi qu'à celle des viandes et poissons, pour qu'ils conservent le maximum de leur goût. “Quand je mange une soupe aux choux, je veux qu'elle ait un goût de chou”, disait François-Pierre de La Varenne.

dont pouvait bénéficier désormais un plus large public. C'est ainsi que la Révolution a joué un rôle certain dans le développement de la haute cuisine en France.

La tradition s'est perpétuée, la cuisine devenant plus riche et bourgeoise à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et au début du XX<sup>e</sup>, période à laquelle les banquets pouvaient être interminables. Des excès qui ont incité de nombreux chefs à initier ce qu'on a appelé la nouvelle cuisine, plus légère mais gardant le même niveau de qualité, durant les années 1960-1970.

## La gastronomie française aujourd'hui

A l'époque du *fast food*, des plats congelés, et des petits restos abordables pour toutes les bourses, la gastronomie française n'est certes plus ce qu'elle était. Si elle existe toujours, perpétuée par les grands restaurants, elle est de moins en moins abordable pour tout le monde. Certains grands

Au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, sortant un peu des châteaux, la gastronomie a commencé à se populariser. Le premier à en avoir pris l'initiative a été le cuisinier Antoine de Beauvilliers, qui a inventé le premier restaurant en ouvrant à Paris, en 1765, un “bouillon”, dans lequel les clients étaient installés devant des petites tables recouvertes de nappes. Ce fut un grand succès. Et un exemple suivi pendant et après la Révolution française de 1789 par les grands chefs des princes, ducs et marquis, qui se sont retrouvés privés de leur emploi après la fuite à l'étranger de leurs maîtres. Ouvrir leur propre restaurant était le moyen de reprendre leur métier, et de maintenir la tradition de la gastronomie française

restaurants font parfois davantage de profits en organisant des dîners d'affaires ou en accueillant une clientèle riche venue du Japon ou des Etats-Unis. Quant aux restaurants traditionnels, qui représentent la plus grande proportion du nombre des établissements en France, ils sont parfois décevants. Ceux qui s'installent dans les quartiers touristiques ne font plus aucun effort (sauf pour aligner des chiffres exorbitants, injustifiés pour la qualité servie). Quant aux petits restos de quartiers, certains sont tout juste acceptables. Et pourtant on trouve partout de petits restos excellents, très sympas et pas chers du tout. Un peu de recherche, et le



## Gastronomy (cont'd)

many pleasures of *la cuisine française*.

One positive note is the fact that an increasing number of great chefs who understand the importance of educating the tastes of their clientele in order to perpetuate the traditions of great French cuisine have begun organizing cooking classes or *haute cuisine* workshops either in their restaurants or in individuals' homes. It is easy to arrange a meal in one's home that is on a par with those of the greatest restaurants and at a more reasonable price. These classes have been such a great success that they have spread throughout France (see page 27). It can be hoped that in this way French gastronomy traditions will be given a new impetus.

Another relatively new tendency in French cuisine is the increasingly important influence of cooking from other parts of the world. This is evident in the large number of Asian and Middle-Eastern restaurants, as well as from other regions of the world. The quality of some of them is very average, but there are more and more foreign restaurants

with excellent quality and that adapt their cuisine to French tastes, thus creating a new gastronomy based on foreign influences and using different spices and cooking methods. Some of the dishes are absolutely sumptuous. Many of the new, authentic Thai, Indian, Lebanese and Italian restaurants have by and large surpassed the quality found in a typical, traditional French restaurant.

This exotic influence has not gone unnoticed by French chefs. They are trying more and more to adapt these new and exotic flavours to their own cooking while at the same time using their talent for presentation, both with respect to choosing more innovative designs for their plates as well as in the actual arrangement of the dishes on the plates, all of which is part and parcel of great culinary art and of the purest of gastronomical tradition. And, the French, both the young as well as the not so young, seem to appreciate this tendency very much. At any rate, it is a subject that could serve as the ingredient for lengthy conversations around a table.

## Vocabulaire — au menu

**Les amuse-gueule** = small very refined little portions of starters, served either with the aperitif or before the real starter. Also served at cocktails and receptions.

**Une entrée** = a first course.

**Le hors d'œuvre** = the starter or appetizer.

**Le plat principal** = the main dish.

**Un plat de résistance** = the main, and sometimes unique, dish, big enough to provide enough food.

**La salade** = usually a kind of lettuce salad, most of the time served after the main dish in France.

**L'entremets** = traditionally, another light meal served between the main dish and the dessert. A bit out of fashion today, or used as a synonym for dessert.

**Un dessert** = a dessert.

**Un plateau de desserts** = a selection of desserts on a tray.

**Un plateau de fromages** = ditto for cheeses.



"Caneton Marco Polo", at "La Tour d'Argent". A proof that the presentation of the meals is as important as the food itself.

## Gastronomie (suite)

système du bouche à oreille (voir notre article page 25), peuvent beaucoup aider à trouver le meilleur endroit où apprécier quelques-uns des plaisirs de la cuisine française.

Une tendance positive est que de plus en plus de grands chefs, comprenant la nécessité, pour maintenir la tradition de la haute cuisine française, d'éduquer le goût des consommateurs, organisent des cours ou stages de grande cuisine, chez eux ou même à domicile. Car on peut très bien organiser chez soi un repas digne des plus grands restaurants gastronomiques à un prix bien plus abordable. Ces cours connaissent tellement de succès qu'ils se multiplient partout en France (voir page 27). On peut donc espérer que la tradition gastronomique française connaîtra ainsi un nouvel élan.

## Nouvelle tendance d'inspiration étrangère

Une autre tendance de la cuisine française relativement récente est l'inspiration de plus en plus grande de plats venus d'ailleurs. La multiplication des restaurants asiatiques, du Moyen-Orient, et de bien d'au-

tres régions du monde, le démontre. Certains sont de qualité très moyenne, mais on trouve de plus en plus de restaurants étrangers de très haute qualité, qui, adaptant leur cuisine au goût des Français, sont en train de créer une nouvelle gastronomie, d'inspiration étrangère, faisant entrer de nouveaux épices ou méthodes de cuisson, et offrant parfois des plats absolument somptueux. Bon nombre de nouveaux restaurants thaïlandais, indiens, libanais, italiens authentiques, ont largement dépassé le niveau de qualité d'un restaurant français traditionnel.

Une tendance que les chefs français ont aussi constatée. Ils tentent de plus en plus d'adapter ces saveurs étrangères et nouvelles à leur propre cuisine tout en déployant des talents de présentation, tant par le choix d'une vaisselle bien plus innovatrice que par la mise en scène des plats, qui tient du grand art culinaire, dans la plus pure tradition gastronomique. Ce que semblent apprécier beaucoup les Français, les jeunes mais aussi les moins jeunes. De quoi, en tout cas, d'alimenter de longues conversations, autour d'une table.

Annick Stevenson

## Le vocabulaire du goût

### 1) On the positive side

**Appétissant** = appetizing.

**La bonne chère** = good food.

**Déguster** = to savour a small quantity of good food or drinks.

**Délectable** = a more snobbish way to say delicious.

**Délicieux** = delicious.

**Excellent** = excellent.

**Exquis** = exquisite; a bit snobbish, nowadays.

**Une fine bouche** = a connaisseur, someone who has a very refined taste.

**Etre friand de** = to be very fond of such and such a meal; a bit out of fashion.

**Un gastronome** = a connaisseur who highly appreciates excellent quality of food and knows a lot about it.

**Etre gourmand** = to love eating plenty of delicious food ; one can also say 'un gourmand' as a noun.

**Etre un gourmet** = to love eating a reasonable quantity of highly delicate and excellent food, and would always choose the best restaurants or shops.

**Un mets délicat** = a very refined meal.

**Un mets très fin** = a very fine meal.

**Le plat du jour** = special of the day.

**Se régaler** = to fully enjoy one's meal.

**Savourer** = to savour good food.

**Savoureux** = very delicious .

**La spécialité de la maison** = the restaurant's specialty.

**Succulent** = excellent, succulent.



### 2) On the negative side

**Chipoter** = to hardly try the food on one's plate, to be picky.

**Dégoûtant** = disgusting.

**Dégueulasse** = a popular and idiomatic way of saying disgusting.

**Un glouton** = someone who eats much too fast without taking the time to appreciate the food.

**S'empiffrer/se goinfrer** = to eat much more than needed in a rather disgusting way.

**S'en mettre plein la gueule** = ditto, but a slang expression that is even more pejorative.

**Exécration** = awful; a bit excessive or snobbish nowadays.

**Fade** = flavourless.

**Immangeable** = inedible.

**Infect** = appalling.

**Insipide** = tasteless.

**Sans goût** = ditto.



A very useful French to English food glossary: [www.patriciawells.com/glossary/atoz/atoz.htm](http://www.patriciawells.com/glossary/atoz/atoz.htm)

## Guides & Stars

### Le Guide Michelin

For a gastronomical restaurant, being awarded *une étoile* (a star), or even two or three, is a measure of a very different level of quality. Various organizations give out stars to restaurants, but the most well-known, and the one which still gives the most famous stars, is the *Guide rouge Michelin*.

The *Michelin* guides is now the generic name of a series of guides published yearly by the Publishing Company Michelin, and in more than 12 different countries. *Le guide rouge Michelin*, which, as its names indicates, has a hard-back, red cover, is the oldest and the most famous of the European restaurant guide-books, and the one which allocates the *étoiles Michelin*. The first guide was created in 1900

by André Michelin, and at that time it was only a guidebook full of ads that you received when you bought a pair of tyres for your car... This is because André Michelin was mainly, together with his brother Edouard, known as the co-founder of the Michelin company that made tyres, first for bikes and then for cars.

In 1900 there were only 2,400 cars in France, and the guide

given with the tyres was full of valuable information such as the list of the very few garages in France or the doctors, together with the maps of a few cities and lists of tourist sites. It was only in 1920 that Michelin started to sell the guides and included a list and evaluation of the best restaurants all over France. In 1931 the guide started a classification system using stars, going from 1 to 3.

As everyone knows, the restaurant guidebook business was a huge success and soon spilled over beyond the borders of France with similar red guides being published in other European countries. In France alone, more than 500,000 copies of the guide are sold every year... But the number of chefs who have what is considered the immense good fortune of becoming *étoilés* is rather small

in comparison:

- In France in 2007 there are 26 three-star restaurants, 65 two-star and 436 with one star.
- In Belgium there are respectively 2, 10 and 79.
- In Germany: 7, 15 and 168.
- In Spain: 6, 9 and 109.
- In Switzerland: 2, 12 and 81.
- In the UK: 3, 13 and 106.
- And in Austria there is no three-star restaurant, but 10 two-star and 79 one-star.

*Le guide rouge Michelin* is also quite often criticized by its detractors. One must agree that it has gained such power and influence that earning one more star means that a restaurant will not only have a large increase in its clientele, but also enormous pressure to maintain the quality that earned it the star in the first place. Some chefs simply re-



## Guides & Stars (cont'd)

fuse to play the game and become *étoilés*, or else “give back” their stars. One such chef is Alain Senderens, chef of *Lucas Carton* in Paris which had three stars for 28 years. He returned them in 2005 saying that this distinction had given him too much stress and not enough profit. Considering France to be a very conservative country, he now offers his clients a simpler, but still delicious, cuisine – and a far more affordable one, as he has reduced his menus from 400€ to 100€. The financial stakes of the star-rating system are very high, which explains why one sometimes hears stories of

chefs who go so far as to commit suicide because they have lost a star. One of the most recent and striking suicides was that of Bernard Loiseau who had a three-star restaurant. He killed himself in 2003 even though he hadn't lost a star (not yet, however, he had lost a few points in another restaurant guide, Gault & Millau, see below), but he had apparently become such a businessman that he was too overwhelmed by stress, and by financial difficulties, to cope with what had simply become too big.

### *Le guide GaultMillau*

Created by two friends who were distinguished food critics, Henri Gault and Christian Mil-

lau, the guide bearing their name, which was first published in 1959, is also extremely well-known and important in France and beyond. Even though after many years of collaboration the two parted ways in 1986, and in spite of the fact that Henri Gault died in 2000, the commercial entity that publishes the guides is still called *GaultMillau*.

Gault and Millau were first known as proponents of *la nouvelle cuisine*, which started in the 1960-70s, and was characterized by less fat and the elimination of sauces in order to give more savour to every ingredient. The most well-known chefs who were involved in this type of cuisine

were Paul Bocuse in Lyon (Rhône), les frères Troisgros in Roanne (Loire) and Michel Guérard in Eugénie-les-Bains (Landes).

Contrary to the Michelin guides, GaultMillau doesn't give stars but numeric notations from 1 to 20. However, they have only given a 20 once in the entire history of the guide. They used to say that “perfection is impossible”. The only grand chef to receive a 20, in 2004, was Marc Veyrat, and he got the same notation for both of his restaurants that are located in Haute-Savoie: *L'auberge de l'Eridan* (Veyrier-du-Lac) and *La ferme de mon père* (Megève) – which he sold last January.

## Ratatouille celebrates French Gastronomy

One of the hit films of last summer, everywhere in the US and in Europe, was the movie about a little grey rat who dreams of becoming a great chef and leaves for Paris to pursue his dream. If you haven't seen it yet, we can only highly encourage you to do so, as it imparts more about French Gastronomy than any other explanation. It explains so well the importance of quality of the meals and the talent of the chef. And it is really funny!



What is interesting, too, is that the restaurant which inspired the movie, said to be the oldest restaurant in France, the *Tour d'Argent*, in Paris, has just reopened in mid-September after a three-month hi-tech makeover. The dining room overlooking Notre Dame cathedral has not changed. Only the kitchens, spread over six floors, have been gutted and

rebuilt. The *Tour d'Argent*, which was an hotel with already an excellent kitchen in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when it served its poultry specialties to King Henri IV, is certainly one of the French restaurants which has the highest reputation. Its history is interesting too. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was one of the first to adapt for the best to the culinary Revolution which was taking place, and became the meeting place for most of the gourmets in Paris. But the *Tour d'Argent* was close to the Bastille. On 14<sup>th</sup> July, after capturing the prison, the Revolutionaries plundered the place – and its wines were looted and drunk in the Place de Grève at the price of the Republic's well being... After being closed for many years, Napoleon's personal chef, Lecoq, brought back the restaurant. It soon recaptured its excellent reputation and was frequented by most of the ce-

lebrities of the time. Another owner followed, until it was bought by André Terrail, the grand-father of the present owner, who had previously been trained for ten years in London as the Baron Alfred de Rothschild's cook. He and his son Claude, who succeeded him, maintained the tradition of excellence. “The table is an



*The Terrail Family: Claude in the center, his son André, the new owner, on the right.*

essential ingredient of the art of living: not only does it exalt the sense of taste but all the other senses as well,” said Claude

Terrail. And “Nothing should be taken more seriously than pleasure.”

After his death at the age of 88 in June, 2006, his son André (same first name as his grand-father), 27 years old, took over. But in the meantime, in February of the same year, while Claude Terrail was in hospital, the Michelin guide decided to remove yet another star from the restaurant's rating. *La Tour d'Argent*, had already lost one of its three stars ten years previously! (see article above). Reducing the famous *Tour d'Argent* to a one-star restaurant was a startling decision for everybody. This, in part, was the motivation behind André Terrail's decision to re-establish the restaurant's reputation as a gastronomic legend through an extensive makeover. And *Ratatouille* will undoubtedly be a great help in recapturing the best of its reputation!

A.S.

Web page (French & English): [www.tourdargent.com](http://www.tourdargent.com)



## Scenario: Ordering in a Restaurant



### 1) Arrivée au restaurant

**M. Dubreuil** : Bonsoir monsieur. Est-ce que vous auriez une table pour deux ?

**Le serveur** : Vous avez réservé ?

**M. Dubreuil** : Ah non ! Il ne vous reste plus de place ?

**Le serveur** : Je vais voir. Fumeur ou non fumeur ?

**M. Dubreuil** : Non fumeur, s'il vous plaît.

**Le serveur** : Je crois qu'il nous reste encore une table, au fond, ça vous va ?

**M. Dubreuil** : Oui, très bien, n'est-ce pas chérie ?

**Mme Dubreuil** : Oui c'est parfait, merci !

**Le serveur** : Attendez ici un moment, je vais faire débarrasser la table. Voulez-vous un apéritif en attendant ?

**M. Dubreuil** : Pourquoi pas. Et la carte aussi, s'il vous plaît !

**Le serveur** : D'accord. Vous verrez, vous avez plusieurs menus au choix, ou des plats à la carte.



### 2) A table

**Le serveur** : Vous avez choisi ?

**M. Dubreuil** : Oui, mais nous avons quelques questions.

**Le serveur** : Je vous en prie.

**Mme Dubreuil** : J'aimerais bien prendre le menu à 35 euros, mais est-ce que je peux changer l'entrée ?

**Le serveur** : Oh, certainement, mais il y aura peut-être un petit supplément.

**Mme Dubreuil** : Pas de problème. Donc, je vais prendre le menu à 35 euros, mais avec un feuilleté d'asperges en entrée.

**Le serveur** : Oui. Et pour le plat principal ?

**Mme Dubreuil** : Le gigot d'agneau.

**Le serveur** : Très bien. Quelle cuisson ?

**Mme Dubreuil** : Rosé.

**Le serveur** : Et pour monsieur ?

**M. Dubreuil** : Moi j'hésite encore... Oh je pense que je vais plutôt prendre un plat à la carte. Un steak au poivre.

**Le serveur** : Vous ne prenez pas d'entrée ?

**M. Dubreuil** : Peut-être... Oui, d'accord, je prends les escargots.

**Le serveur** : C'est parfait. Quelle cuisson pour le steak ?

**M. Dubreuil** : A point.

**Le serveur** : C'est noté. Et pour les boissons ?

**M. Dubreuil** : Je pense que nous prendrons plutôt un Bourgogne. Lequel pouvez-vous nous conseiller ?

**Le serveur** : Je pense qu'avec les plats que vous avez choisis, notre Gevrey-Chambertin irait très bien.

**M. Dubreuil** : D'accord, nous allons l'essayer.

**Le serveur** : Un peu d'eau ?

**Mme Dubreuil** : Oui, une demi-bouteille de Saint-Yorre, s'il vous plaît.

**Le serveur** : Très bien. Je vous remercie.



### 1) Arriving

**Mr. Dubreuil**: Good evening sir.

Do you have a table for two?

**Waiter**: Did you make a reservation?

**Mr. Dubreuil**: Ah no! You don't have anything left?

**Waiter**: I'll go check. Smoking or non-smoking?

**Mr. Dubreuil**: Non-smoking, please

**Waiter**: I think we still have one table, in the back. Will that suit you?

**Mr. Dubreuil**: Yes, very well, right dear?

**Mrs. Dubreuil**: Yes, that's perfect, thank you.

**Waiter**: Wait just a moment. I'll have the table cleared off. Would you like an aperitif while you wait?

**Mr. Dubreuil**: Why not. And the menu as well, please!

**Waiter**: OK. You'll see, we have several fixed-price menus to choose from, or else you can order à la carte.

### 2) At the table

**Waiter**: Have you decided?

**Mr. Dubreuil**: Yes, but we have a few questions.

**Waiter**: By all means.

**Mrs. Dubreuil**: I would like the 35 euro menu, but can I change the entrée?

**Waiter**: Oh, sure, but there will perhaps be a slight supplement.

**Mrs. Dubreuil**: That's no problem. I'll have the 35 euro menu then, but with a *feuilleté d'asperges* as the first course.

**Waiter**: Yes. And for the main course?

**Mrs. Dubreuil**: The *gigot d'agneau*.

**Waiter**: Very good. How would you like it cooked?

**Mrs. Dubreuil**: Medium rare.

**Waiter**: And for you, sir?

**Mr. Dubreuil**: I haven't quite decided yet... Oh, I think that I'll order something à la carte. A pepper steak.

**Waiter**: You aren't going to have a first course?

**Mr. Dubreuil**: Perhaps. Yes, ok, I'll have the *escargots*.

**Waiter**: That's perfect. How would you like the steak cooked?

**Mr. Dubreuil**: Medium.

**Waiter**: Got it. And what would you like to drink?

**Mr. Dubreuil**: I think we'll have a Burgundy. Which one would you recommend?

**Waiter**: I think that our Gevrey-Chambertin would go very nicely with what you have ordered.

**Mr. Dubreuil**: Ok, We'll try it.

**Waiter**: Would you like some sparkling water?

**Mrs. Dubreuil**: Yes, a half-bottle of Saint-Yorre, please.

**Waiter**: Very good. I thank you.

## How to Choose a Good restaurant – A Few Timely Tips

**F**inding a place to eat when you want something out of the ordinary, or else simply a genuinely good meal, is not always easy. It's all the more difficult when you are travelling and are not familiar with the local restaurants and/or regional specialities. For those of you who eat out often, you probably already have your own way of finding new and interesting places to eat, but we offer the following tips that have worked most of the time for us. There is also a scenario that contains essential vocabulary that could be useful to you when you call to reserve a table.

Other than the two guide-books, Michelin and GaultMillau, which can be excellent ref-

erences in terms of quality and price, there are also numerous on-line restaurant guides, some of which even offer comments from users who have eaten in the restaurant in question. These comments can be very valuable indicators. Many of these sites provide links to the restaurant's webpage so you can get an idea of what the place looks like and their menu. We provide links to several such sites below. The web pages of a city's tourist bureau will also often contain information about restaurants in a particular city. All of this works, of course, if you have access to the Internet – not always a possibility when travelling.

When in a new area or on the road, travel guides often give advice on restaurants, but these references can often be misleading, and in the case of one particularly popular French guide-book, among others, it was revealed in a series of articles last year that restaurateurs paid the publisher for a listing in their guide. The more reputable guide-books like *Lonely Planet*,

for example, are usually quite reliable. You can always ask people you come in contact with, but we have sometimes been given poor advice by hotels, who often even have an arrangement with restaurants to shunt clients their way. When travelling, we often spend an hour or so in the afternoon cruising the parts of a city where there are lots of restaurants just to check them out and read their menus. Even if the menu isn't posted outside, you can always go in and ask to see a copy. We have often been totally delighted with

places to eat we have found this way.

### Some things to avoid:

- restaurants with a "barker" out front trying to coax you to come inside;
- restaurants that have a very touristy looking menu posted outside, often in several languages;
- restaurants where there is almost no one inside even though it is well past the time for dinner or lunch.

Roger Stevenson

## Some Regional Cuisine

**T**here are not many countries like France that are blessed with such a rich variety of cuisine and regional specialties in a relatively small area. France's bordering neighbours have had a large influence in some of the regions: Italy has inspired Provençal cuisine; the wonderful fusion of French and Spanish specialties has given us Basque cuisine; Belgian influences are obvious in the northern regions of France; in the north-east, Alsatian food prevails with recognizable German touches; the French countryside that borders Switzerland in the East is best known for its cheese specialties; as for southern French food, it reveals North African influences from across the Mediterranean such as the famous couscous.

The development of France's regional cuisines is also in large part due to locally available ingredients. Thus, seafood dishes predominate along France's Mediterranean and Atlantic coastal regions. A

wide choice of fruits and vegetables are harvested in central France and in the Loire River valley. Meat dishes prevail to the north, where there are many lamb and sheep farms. Truffles have been used in the creation of unique food specialties in south-western France. And, of course, France's regional cuisines have also been uniquely influenced by the various wine regions, as well as by local cognacs, champagne, liqueurs, and cordials. In fact, wines and liqueurs represent such a vast area that we will deal with them in a forthcoming issue. Whereas each region's specialties merit an in-depth look, the following brief look at a few of them should be enough to make your mouth water.

The city of Lyon has always been renowned for being the Capital of *gastronomie* but if you're not a *cochonaille* (pork products) lover, then you might not enjoy the specialties the city offers, such as the famous *andouillette*, small chitterling sausages made out of pork chit-



Photo David Monniaux

### A Few Websites

[www.lespiedsdansleplat.com](http://www.lespiedsdansleplat.com)

An easy to navigate site with good descriptions of restaurants. Limited to Paris and surrounding departments. No reader comments.

[www.guides-restaurants.fr](http://www.guides-restaurants.fr)

Limited to Paris and a few other cities in the south of France. English version (link at the bottom of home page). They do solicit readers' input, but don't print the comments on web site.

[www.linternaute.com/restaurant/liste](http://www.linternaute.com/restaurant/liste)

A very good site for restaurants in Paris and most of the major cities in France. Ranks restaurants and you can access readers' comments about the restaurant.

<http://guide-resto.fr>

A relatively new site with a limited number of restaurants and cities, but with lots of input from readers.

## Regional Cuisine (cont'd)

terlings and marinated in white wine, or the *cervelas*, a textured, lean, fresh pork sausage flavoured with truffles and garlic and studded with pistachios. Every region produces its cheese specialities and Lyon has a quite different and original one called *la cervelle des Canuts* which is soft, creamy white cow's cheese flavoured with different herbs. The rather derogatory name translates as "silk weaver's brains", and is thought to reflect the poor regard in which the richer community held the Lyon silk weavers.

Alsatian food is a blend of French and German cultures and makes the cuisine somewhat rich and copious. The most famous specialty is *choucroute*, sauerkraut garnished with potatoes and a variety of meats such as sausage, pork or ham. There are many regional cakes and desserts such as the *kougelhopf*, which is a brioche pastry with raisins and whole almonds marinated in kirsch. For Christmas, *bredles* and gingerbreads decorate the tables of all Alsatian families. *Bredles* are cookies of different shapes flavoured with anise, cinnamon or almond.

If you love *camembert*, then you should make a detour to beautiful Normandy. The Normans often eat their signature cheese with a glass of cider. Apples play an important part in Norman cuisine, and the region is famous for its desserts such as the ubiquitous apple pie and liquors such as Calvados and cider. In Normandy, it is the tradition to drink a glass of Calvados in the middle of a meal to help digestion. This 200 century-old ritual is called *le trou normand*.

Nowadays, a *trou normand* is still served in the middle of a meal, but most often consists of an apple sorbet soaked with Calvados.

In the sunny south of France, in Provence, fruits, vegetables and olives are the core elements of the cuisine. The basic ingredients of *Provençal*

cuisine are olive oil, garlic and *herbes de Provence*. Among the typical provençal dishes, *ratatouille*, a vegetable stew made

out from tomatoes, peppers, zucchinis, onions and olive oil, and *salade niçoise*, composed of lettuce, tomatoes,

green beans, tuna, eggs, black olives and anchovies. Thanks to the abundance of seafood, Marseille created its delicious *bouil-*



*In every region, a rich variety of specialties...*

## Sucrieries et bonbons de toutes les régions

Mmm, c'est bon les bonbons !... Quelques spécialités régionales :



*Berlingots*



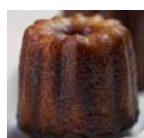
*Bêtises*



*Calissons*



*Caramels*



*Cannelés*

**Berlingots de Carpentras et de Nantes** = multi-coloured sugar candies in the shape of a pyramid.

**Bêtises de Cambrai** = hard mint candies.

**Calissons d'Aix** = white diamond-shaped sweets, made from ground almonds, fruit and syrup and with a white icing.

**Caramels d'Isigny** = soft caramels made from sugar, butter and milk.

**Cannelés de Bordeaux** = very small cakes perfumed with Old Rum and Vanilla Bourbon, slightly caramelized.

**Coussins de Lyon** = marzipan sweets shaped and decorated like cushions.

**Dragées de Verdun** = whole almonds with a coloured sugar coating, generally white but also in subtle pastel colours. Small, delicate, embroidered sacks of them are given to guests for weddings and after a birth, and they are also used to decorate wedding cakes. They symbolize prosperity, fertility, happiness, and good luck.

**Nougat de Montélimar** = chewy confection made of sugar or honey and nuts.

**Pâtes de fruits d'Auvergne** = soft paste-like fruit bars or squares made of fruit and sugar.

**Pavés de Paris** = small cobblestone-shaped chocolates made from gianduja chocolate and covered with melted chocolate and glazing.



*Coussins*



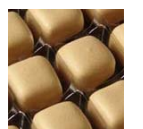
*Dragées*



*Nougat*



*Pâtes de fruits*



*Pavés*





## Regional Cuisine (cont'd)

*labaisse* (seafood bouillon) and *anchoïade*, a sauce made from anchovies, olive oil and garlic. Just north of Provence, in the Ardèche region, a speciality which is rarely found in other regions is called *caillette*, a baked sausage dish made from pork meat mixed with chard or spinach, eggs and spices.

The cuisine of southwestern France features various *pro-*

*duits du terroir*. Truffles thrive in the Périgord region and are used in sauces, omelettes and numerous other recipes. The other local specialty of the Southwest is *foie gras*, which is a traditional Christmas and New Year dish. The cities of Toulouse, Castelnaudary and Carcassonne are renowned for their *cassoulet*, a stew made from sausage and white beans in a light tomato sauce. The region is also home to one of France's best known and oldest cheeses, *roquefort*. If you're a cheese lover, then a detour to

the Alps is a must! Traditional mountain cooking is based on cheese and potatoes. A selection of Savoie cheeses would include *tomme de Savoie*, *beaufort*, *reblochon*, *abondance* and *emmental de Savoie*. One of the authentic Savoyard dishes is *tartiflette*\*. Of course, one cannot forget *fondue*, half

*emmental*, half *beaufort* cheese melted with Savoie white wine in a special fondue dish and eaten with chunks of bread, and *raclette*, an alpine cheese melted on a special grill and served with potatoes, smoked cold cuts and pickles.

Céline Anthonioz

For a comprehensive list of regional cuisines (in English):  
[www.aftouch-cuisine.com/regions-de-france\\_12.htm](http://www.aftouch-cuisine.com/regions-de-france_12.htm)

\* For the recipe of tartiflette:  
[www.learnfrenchathome.com/frenchrecipestartiflette\\_eng.htm](http://www.learnfrenchathome.com/frenchrecipestartiflette_eng.htm)

## Cooking And Serving In France — Real Professions!

**A**s you have probably noticed, when you go to a restaurant in France, most of the time, the service is very professional and the food or drinks are served in a timely manner. The reason for such professionalism is due to the training the waiters receive from the various and excellent professional schools located throughout the country. Not only does a chef spend many years in school, but the waiters do also!! To become a professional waiter, they have to attend a culinary school for 2 to 3 years. These schools are called *écoles hôtelières*, and young people who want to have a career in the restaurant and hotel business may do so by starting their training as early as the age of 14 or 15.

At the end of the programme, students receive a diploma in either cooking, service or hotel management. With a diploma, the waiters earn a real salary and do not depend on tips for a living. It is important to treat the waiters with the same equal respect they give you, and when we wish to get their attention, the French will

most likely call out to them: *Monsieur, s'il vous plaît!* and not *garçon*, which is very outdated and demeaning!

**To find the *Ecoles hôtelières* by French department, click here:**

[www.lhotellerie.fr/ecole/portail\\_ecoles\\_hotelieres.asp](http://www.lhotellerie.fr/ecole/portail_ecoles_hotelieres.asp)

Some hotel management schools offer higher degrees such as an MBA. The most famous are:

Vatel (with an English version), in Bordeaux, Lyon, Nice and Paris for France:

[www.vatel.fr](http://www.vatel.fr)  
AIM (Business Administration – English website), in Paris:  
[www.academy.fr](http://www.academy.fr)

Institut Paul Bocuse (with an English version), in Lyon:  
[www.institutpaulbocuse.com](http://www.institutpaulbocuse.com)

### Cooking schools for adults

Cooking schools are very popular in France and many of



*Elèves du Groupe Saint-Bénigne, école hôtelière à Dijon (Côte d'Or).*

them have professional (and sometimes famous) chefs who teach sophisticated gourmet cooking courses which can last for one day, a week-end or a week. Some of them also offer a mixture of cooking and French language classes lasting anywhere from 3 to 6 months.

They are located all around France and offer many types of cooking programmes depending on the region's specialities (shellfish in Bordeaux and Brittany, duck in South-West, olive

oil in Provence...), cooking diversity (festivities menus, sauces, pastries, bread, ...) and, of course, regional wines.

Some of them will take you to the market in the morning to buy the necessary ingredients for the meals, some will provide accommodation in a beautiful setting, sometimes even in a castle, and others will include a tour of the region.

Vincent Anthonioz

**You can find a non-exhaustive list of those schools here:**

[http://www.infohub.com/travel\\_packages/gourmet\\_cooking\\_schools\\_france\\_193.html](http://www.infohub.com/travel_packages/gourmet_cooking_schools_france_193.html)

## French Politics — Who's in Charge?... The Travails of France's New Prime Minister

The French constitution clearly delineates the functions of the two most important figures of the executive: the president and the prime minister. The differences are fairly distinct. For one thing, the president is elected by a popular vote in national elections, whereas the prime minister is appointed by the president and approved by a vote in the National Assembly. The president is designated as the head of state; the prime minister as the head of the government. It is important to keep in mind that for the French, *le gouvernement* is the cabinet of ministers that is, theoretically at least, appointed by the prime minister. The prime minister, therefore, is responsible for the day-to-day running of the country. He or she has the constitutional responsibility over civil services and the military and for determining government policy. The president is in charge of the more lofty affairs of international negotiations, treaties, appointing high civil servants and judges and is the commander in chief of the military, and, interestingly enough, the president presides over the meetings of the Council of Ministers. However, in practise there is considerable ambiguity and blurring in the roles these two public officials play, and nowhere has that been more obvious than in the curious and often humorous relationship that has developed between Nicolas Sarkozy and his prime minister François Fillon.

Not since Charles de Gaulle occupied the Elysée Palace has there been a president who

seemed to single-handedly take charge of all the affairs of state, including many of the functions normally attributed to the prime minister. Nicolas Sarkozy is the most activist president that France has ever seen, and his “all-azimuth” involvement in both domestic and international affairs has not gone unnoticed by the media. *Le Canard enchaîné* has resorted to calling him *l'omniprésident*. He has indeed appeared to be everywhere at once and proposing solutions to problems both abroad and at home, all of which has been for the most part extremely detrimental to François Fillon's image and self confi-



Prime Minister François Fillon is now no more than an “important collaborator” of the President. Photo published in “L'Usine nouvelle”.

## Qui fait quoi?...

## Les soucis du nouveau Premier ministre



La Constitution française délimite très précisément les fonctions des deux personnalités les plus importantes du pouvoir exécutif : le Président et le Premier ministre. Les différences entre les deux sont assez nettes. Le Président (que l'on appelle aussi le chef de l'Etat) est élu par suffrage universel lors d'élections nationales, tandis que le Premier ministre (ou chef du gouvernement) est nommé par le Président, et sa nomination est approuvée par l'Assemblée nationale. Il est important de se souvenir que pour les Français, le gouvernement est le Cabinet, composé de ministres qui, en théorie du

moins, sont nommés par le Premier ministre. Ce dernier gère les affaires de l'Etat au jour le jour. Au titre de la Constitution, il est responsable des services publics et de l'armée, et est chargé de déterminer l'action du gouvernement. Alors que le Président est chargé de questions d'importance majeure comme les négociations internationales, les traités, et la nomination des hauts fonctionnaires et des juges. Il est aussi le commandant en chef des armées, et, curieusement, c'est lui qui préside les réunions du Conseil des ministres. Toutefois, en pratique, il y a une grande ambiguïté et un certain flou dans les rôles joués par ces deux hautes personnalités, et cela n'a jamais été aussi évident que dans la très étonnante et souvent amusante relation qui s'est développée entre Nicolas Sarkozy et son Premier ministre François Fillon.

Depuis l'époque où Charles de Gaulle occupait l'Elysée, aucun autre Président n'a semblé vouloir se charger tout seul de l'ensemble des affaires de l'Etat, y compris bon nombre de fonctions qui sont normalement du ressort du Premier ministre. Nicolas Sarkozy est le président le plus activiste que la France ait jamais connu, et cette implication tous azimuts, tant dans les affaires internes qu'internationales, n'a pas échappé aux médias.

*Le Canard enchaîné* l'a même qualifié d'“omniprésident”. Il semble en effet être partout à la fois et propose des solutions aux problèmes à l'étranger aussi bien qu'en France, la plupart du temps au détriment

## Politics (cont'd)

dence. He has constantly been upstaged by President Sarkozy, and it seems that all of the important announcements concerning proposed reforms are made by Sarkozy himself, rather than by the Prime Minister or the minister directly in charge of the dossier.

Fillon hoped to take advantage of Sarkozy's absence while the latter was on vacation in the US to garner some time in the public spotlight. The funeral for the late Cardinal Lustiger, held in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, was to be the perfect place for Fillon to occupy centre stage among the official dignitaries, that is until Sarkozy decided to make a quick trip back to Paris to attend the services himself. Fillon just couldn't win.

And, to make matters worse for Fillon, even when he does make a public pronouncement, such as his lengthy interview on the evening news on TF1, it invariably draws the ire of the President. Sarkozy was quoted as saying about the TV interview, "When you don't have anything to say in the first place, you don't go on TF1!" Fillon's latest *gaffe* was his statement that he was "the head of state of a bankrupt country". It was probably a Freudian slip that he called himself the "head of state", even though it was uttered while Sarkozy was in New York for the opening session of the UN General Assembly, but his use of the word "bankrupt" has been

highly criticized in official circles.

All of this has led to persistent rumours, all of which are not very convincingly denied by all parties, that there is a widening split between the two men. Sarkozy has even been said to have threatened privately a cabinet shake-up in the near future, and Fillon has been reduced to a near laughing stock in the press and on certain satirical TV shows like *Les Guignols de l'info*\* on Ca-



Nicolas Sarkozy is often depicted as the new Napoleon... Cartoon from Deligne, published in "Sarkostique", a satirical blog.

nal +. It remains to be seen what the future will bring, but for now the two have adopted the expression that Fillon is an important "collaborator" with the President. Collaborator in chief of the French government. In the meantime, Nicolas Sarkozy continues his frenzied approach to handling the affairs of the nation and the world.

Roger Stevenson

\* [www.canalplus.fr/c-humour/pid1784-c-les-guignols.html](http://www.canalplus.fr/c-humour/pid1784-c-les-guignols.html)

## Politique (suite)

de l'image de François Fillon – et de sa confiance en soi. Celui-ci a constamment été éclipsé par le Président Sarkozy, et il semble que toutes les annonces importantes relatives aux réformes proposées sont faites par Sarkozy lui-même, plutôt que par le Premier ministre ou le ministre directement chargé du dossier.

Lorsque le Président était en vacances aux Etats-Unis, François Fillon espérait tirer parti de son absence pour se retrouver au premier plan aux yeux du public. Les funérailles du Cardinal Lustiger, à la Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris, aurait été pour lui l'occasion parfaite de s'asseoir au premier rang, parmi les dignitaires. Mais Sarkozy décida de faire un rapide aller-retour à Paris pour assister lui-même à la cérémonie. Il n'a laissé aucune chance à Fillon.

Pire encore pour Fillon, chaque fois qu'il fait une déclaration publique, comme une récente et très longue interview sur TF1, il s'attire invariablement la colère du Président. Sarkozy a été cité comme ayant dit, à propos de cette interview: "Quand on n'a rien à dire, on ne va pas au JT (journal télévisé) de 20 heures". La dernière gaffe de François Fillon a été de déclarer publi-

quement qu'il était "à la tête d'un Etat qui est en situation de faillite". C'est probablement un dérapage freudien que de s'être présenté lui-même comme un chef d'Etat, bien

*François Fillon a déclaré être "à la tête d'un Etat qui est en situation de faillite".*

qu'il l'ait fait en l'absence de Sarkozy, qui se trouvait à New York pour l'ouverture de l'Assemblée générale de l'ONU, mais son utilisation du mot "faillite" a été amplement critiquée dans les sphères officielles.

Tout ceci a été à l'origine de rumeurs persistantes, qui n'ont pas été démenties de manière très convaincante par toutes les parties, qu'il y aurait un désaccord grandissant entre les deux hommes. Nicolas Sarkozy aurait même menacé en privé de préparer pour bientôt un remaniement ministériel, et François Fillon fait l'objet de constantes railleries de la presse et de certains shows télévisés satiriques comme *Les Guignols de l'info* à Canal +. Il reste à savoir ce que réservera l'avenir, mais les deux ont maintenant adopté la même expression: Fillon est un important "collaborateur" du Président. Le collaborateur en chef du Gouvernement français. Tandis que Nicolas Sarkozy poursuit sa manière frénétique de traiter des affaires de la nation et du monde.

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## Oh la la la la !!! ... Unbelievable but True Stories from France...

**HELLO Mr PRESIDENT?**  
— Orange mistakenly re-assigned Nicolas Sarkozy's old telephone number to another customer, Michèle, who had just purchased a new cellphone. As a result, her answering machine is overloaded with text and voice messages from various individuals, each of whom congratulates, uses *tu* with, wishes the President well and, above all, asks for personal favours. Interesting!

**IMPORTANT** — This past summer, a man expecting an important letter made arrangements for the post office to forward his mail to his holiday address. It was a registered letter, but it never arrived. He got it on his return. The post office had decided not to forward "important" letters. Perhaps one shouldn't worry about such things on holiday.

**ALLO M. LE PRESIDENT?**  
— Par erreur, Orange a attribué à une cliente française, Michèle, qui a récemment acheté un portable, l'ancien numéro de téléphone de Nicolas Sarkozy... Résultat: son répondeur est saturé de SMS et de messages intimes et de personnalités, dans lesquels chacun félicite, tutoie, embrasse le Président, et surtout lui demande des avantages personnels. Edifiant !

**IMPORTANT** — Pendant l'été, un Français qui attendait une lettre importante a fait suivre son courrier à son lieu de vacances. Mais la lettre attendue, envoyée en recommandé, n'est jamais arrivée et il l'a trouvée à son retour. La Poste avait décidé de ne pas faire suivre de lettres "importantes". En vacances, on ne doit pas trop se prendre la tête peut-être ?

**TOO MUCH WORK** — A woman living in the Ardèche where there is no train service, wanted to buy a ticket for a train trip that was part of a package offered by the local bus company Ginhoux. However, even though she could buy her train ticket from the bus company, they couldn't give her the train schedules. "We have too much to do," said the employees.

**AN UNKNOWN THIEF**  
— A resident of Indre left some automobile parts outside to clean them, but they were stolen in the night. He filed a report with the local police. A month later, the police informed him that his report had been shelved because the thief was unknown. Does one have to know the identity of the thief in order to file a complaint?

**TROP DE TRAVAIL** — Une habitante d'un village d'Ardèche, région non desservie par des trains, a voulu acheter un billet SNCF pour un prochain voyage, facilité offerte par la compagnie d'autobus Ginhoux qui fait le relais. Mais si on peut y acheter son billet on ne peut pas être informé des horaires de train. "On a trop de travail", prétendent les employés.

**VOLEUR INCONNU** — Un habitant de l'Indre s'est fait voler pendant la nuit des équipements automobiles qu'il avait laisser dehors pour les nettoyer. Il a de suite porté plainte. Un mois après, la police lui a annoncé que sa plainte avait été classée sans suite, au motif que l'auteur du vol est inconnu. Faut-il donc bien connaître son voleur pour porter plainte ?



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## Our Planet — Tax Credits for Solar Panels Installation



With the increased media attention on climate change and environmental problems, the governments of many countries are attempting to encourage citizens to upgrade their homes to make them more energy efficient and to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions. Such measures could have considerable impact, especially in France where many older homes have old, antiquated and inefficient heating systems and little or no insulation. However, retrofitting a home with more energy-efficient heat sources and upgrading or installing insulation and double-paned windows can be a costly investment for any homeowner. The French government offers substantial tax benefits to help offset the costs involved, but, as is often the case with French bureaucratic procedures, there are complicated and sometimes confusing restrictions. However, that should not dissuade homeowners from making improvements that will not only save them money in the long run and make their homes more comfortable, but help to reduce the use of energy and the emission of greenhouse gases.

In general, the tax credits are applicable for the installation of the following items **in any**

**type of housing**, new or old. The percentage of the purchase price applicable for a tax credit is 50%:

- solar hot water panels;
- solar photovoltaic panels;
- windmills;
- heat pumps;
- wood burning boilers;
- wood stoves and fireplace inserts;
- heating systems that burn biomass fuels.

For housing that is more than two years old, the following items qualify for a 25% reduction:

- heating systems with a condensation boiler
- energy saving regulation systems (programmable thermostats, etc.)
- installation of insulation, double-paned window, storm windows, insulated shutters

### Only for primary residences

The tax credits are only applicable for primary residences, and not for a second home.

To qualify for a tax rebate, the equipment installed must be ordered from a licensed professional and installed by a professional.

The credits only apply to the purchase price of the equipment and not to the installation charges. In other words, you won't be eligible for a tax credit if you install these items yourself.

There is also a ceiling for the total amount of the tax credit, which has been increased considerably to provide more of an incentive, of 8,000 euros for a single person and 16,000 euros for a married couple, with increases of 400 euros for one dependant, 500 for the second child and 600 each for successive children. The percentages of the tax credits for certain items are also increased from 25% to 40% if the installation

is done before December 31<sup>st</sup> of the second year after the purchase of a home that was built before January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1977.

The increase in the ceilings listed above are in effect between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006 and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

To be sure you are eligible for a tax write off, it is highly recommended that you work with a reputable and reliable professional in your area. Not only are they part and parcel of the deal, but they can provide valuable help in making sure your application for a tax credit will be approved.

*Roger Stevenson*



*Solar hot water panels. ©Entreprise Crestey [www.toulouse-solaire.com](http://www.toulouse-solaire.com)*

### A few useful web sites

[www.industrie.gouv.fr/cgi-bin/industrie/frame23e.pl?bandeau=/energie/developp/econo/be\\_eco.htm&gauche=/energie/developp/econo/me\\_eco.htm&droite=/energie/developp/econo/textes/credit-impot-2005.htm](http://www.industrie.gouv.fr/cgi-bin/industrie/frame23e.pl?bandeau=/energie/developp/econo/be_eco.htm&gauche=/energie/developp/econo/me_eco.htm&droite=/energie/developp/econo/textes/credit-impot-2005.htm)

The official government document with all the often-confusing details. Only in French, unfortunately

[www.ideesmaison.com/Les-credits-dimpots-relatifs-a.html](http://www.ideesmaison.com/Les-credits-dimpots-relatifs-a.html)

A fairly complete list of items and procedures to follow.

[www.nord-nature.org/fiches/fiche\\_e2.htm](http://www.nord-nature.org/fiches/fiche_e2.htm)

An individual's account of having solar photovoltaic panels in the shape of roofing tiles installed on his roof.





## The French Scene — Mathilde Seigner

### A Very Popular Actress



**M**athilde Seigner's destiny was inevitable as she was born on January 17th, 1968 to a family of actors; her grandfather, father, mother and sister were all involved in the theatre and, to top it all off, her sister, Emmanuelle, was married to film director Roman Polanski. Mathilde's first important role for the big screen was in *Le Sourire* in 1994, for which she received the Michel Simon prize, and since then she's performed in numerous films and plays.

#### A Woman of strong character, but with a lot of charm

As well as being endowed with natural beauty, she is a woman of strong character and temperament. Mathilde Seigner is never at a loss for words and has become famous for her *franc parler*. In an interview in the magazine *Psychologies*, she made the statement that she has *un boulot de con* (a stupid job). Her fiery temper naturally leads her to play women who possess strong personalities, such as her roles in movies like *Belle-maman* or *Vénus Beauté*. Her charm and temper obviously appeal to the public. This ebullient temperament blows up literally in *Fran-corusse* where she plays a serial-killer.

She is also explosive on television where she always speaks her mind. Perhaps because of prudishness or a personal set of values, she has never played a nude scene and she refuses to take part in a sex scene. The same is true for films including scenes with drug addicts; the

sight of a needle truly makes her jump.

#### Born in a family of famous actors

Mathilde, whose grandfather was a director of *La Comédie Française* and an accomplished actor, has had many stage roles and has played in *L'éducation de Rita*, *Le médecin malgré lui*, *L'avare*, *Les fourberies de Scapin*, *Les caprices de Marianne*, and *S'il n'en restait qu'un* by Françoise Dorin.

In 2001, she had a very rewarding year as she took on some roles in art films (like the very nice *Inch' Allah Dimanche*), a movie directed by Georges Miller *La chambre des magiciennes* and especially one face to face encounter with the great Michel Serrault in *Une hirondelle a fait le printemps*, a big success!

At the age of 32, she became a very popular actress who was very much in demand.

With *Mariages* in 2004 then *Tout pour plaire*, two funny stories on the views of women on the life of couples, she became one of the stars in the typical French comic scenes, which was confirmed in the movie *Palais Royal* 2005 directed by Valérie Lemerrier (you can read about Valérie Lemerrier in the previous issue of *French Accent Magazine*, August-September 2007).

In 2007, after the confidential *Danse avec lui*, Mathilde Seigner joined Pascal Elbé and Kad Merad in a comedy called *3 amis* produced by Michel Boujenah (a well-known comic

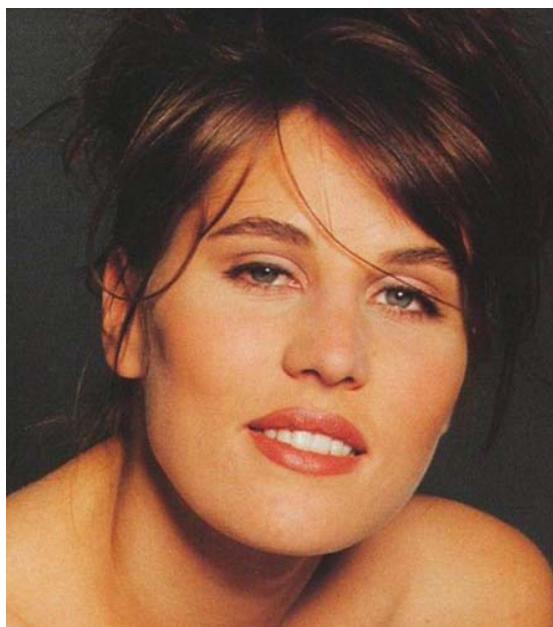


Photo Georges Seguin (Okki)

actor in *Trois hommes et un couffin*), before starring in *Détrompez-vous* with François Cluzet, Alice Taglioni and Roschdy Zem. To be released in October.

Vincent Anthonioz

### Coming soon to French Screens

#### Détrompez-vous


Opening in movie theatres on October 24, 2007.

Directed by Bruno Dega, Jeanne Le Guillou with François Cluzet, Mathilde Seigner.

A kaleidoscope of 4 couples: Thomas and Carole, Lionel and Lisa make up two official couples; the third couple is secretly living a liaison full of passion... as for the fourth couple, formed by mistake, what are they going to do? Seek revenge? No, think again... They are cleverer and more in love than you think...



## A few DVDs with Mathilde Seigner

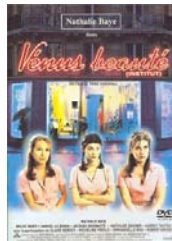


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### Vénus beauté (institut) (1999)

Directed by Tony Marshall,  
with Nathalie Baye, Mathilde  
Seigner, Audrey Tautou.



Angèle is an aesthetician in Venus Beauté, a beauty institute run by Nadine where customers talk about their problems, both large and small, in between treatments. After work, Angèle spends her time seeing men with whom she tries to establish a minimal relationship made up of sex and of comradeship. She does not believe in love and she has her reasons. But one morning, in a railway station, she meets Antoine who is going to truly love her.

### Une hirondelle a fait le printemps (2001)

Directed by Christian Carion with Michel Serault, Mathilde Seigner.



Sandrine tries to escape the stress of life in Paris and her job as a computer scientist by buying an isolated farm in the Vercors where she hopes to become a farmer. Adrien, an old peasant who wants to sell his farm but does not want to transmit his knowledge, especially to a Parisian girl, ends up selling to her due to financial difficulties. Alone, Sandrine is left to cope with taking care of the goats, looking after the development of an ancient shed in a mountain shelter and setting up an Internet site to

sell her products. Sceptical, Adrien watches her transform the farm where he spent his entire life. These two individuals with diametrically opposed personalities and backgrounds are forced by circumstances to live together during a winter and a spring. Little by little, very strong bonds form between them.

### Danse avec lui (2007)

Directed by Valérie Guignabodet with Mathilde Seigner, Sami Frey.

Three years after a dramatic break up, Alexandra learns how to live and love again thanks to an unexpected and surprising encounter with a horse back rider.



## Un oiseau

**J**e suis un oiseau  
avec un chapeau  
Un oiseau zo-zo  
Avec un petit pipeau  
Quand je vole là-haut  
Je vois les ruisseaux  
Les moulins et les bateaux  
Et je leur dis à bientôt !

Chosen and sung  
by Alexandra



Drawing by Alexandra Anthonioz

## “Grand Corps Malade” & Slam

### Les voyages en train

**J**'crois qu'les histoires d'amour c'est comme les voyages en train,  
Et quand j'vois tous ces voyageurs parfois j'aimerais en être un,  
Pourquoi tu crois que tant de gens attendent sur le quai de la gare ?  
Pourquoi tu crois qu'on flippe autant d'arriver en retard ?

Les trains démarrent souvent au moment où l'on s'y attend le moins,  
Et l'histoire d'amour t'emporte sous l'oeil impuissant des témoins,  
Les témoins c'est tes potes qui te disent au revoir sur le quai,  
Ils regardent le train s'éloigner avec un sourire inquiet,  
Toi aussi tu leur fais signe et t'imagines leurs commentaires,  
Certains pensent que tu t'plantas et qu't'as pas les pieds sur terre,  
Chacun y va d'son pronostic sur la durée du voyage,  
Pour la plupart le train va dérailer dès l'premier orage.

Le grand amour change forcément ton comportement,  
Dès l'premier jour faut bien choisir ton compartiment,  
Siège couloir ou contre la vitre il faut trouver la bonne place,  
Tu choisis quoi une love story de première ou d'seconde classe ?

Dans les premiers kilomètres tu n'as d'yeux que pour son visage,  
Tu calcules pas derrière la fenêtre le défilé des paysages,  
Tu te sens vivant tu te sens léger tu ne vois pas passer l'heure,  
T'es tellement bien que t'as presque envie d'embrasser le contrôleur.

Mais la magie ne dure qu'un temps et ton histoire bat de l'aile,



Toi tu te dis que tu n'y es pour rien et que c'est sa faute à elle,  
Le ronronnement du train te saoule et chaque virage t'écoeure,  
Faut que tu te lèves que tu marches tu vas te dégourdir le cœur.  
Et le train ralentit, c'est déjà la fin de ton histoire,  
En plus t'es comme un con tes potes sont restés à l'autre gare,  
Tu dis au revoir à celle que t'appelleras désormais ton ex,  
Dans son agenda sur ton nom elle va passer un coup de tipex.

C'est vrai que les histoires d'amour c'est comme les voyages en train,  
Et quand je vois tous ces voyageurs parfois j'aimerais en être un,  
Pourquoi tu crois que tant de gens attendent sur le quai de la gare ?  
Pourquoi tu crois qu'on flippe autant d'arriver en retard ?

Pour beaucoup la vie se résume à essayer de monter dans le train,  
A connaître ce qu'est l'amour et se découvrir plein d'entrain,  
Pour beaucoup l'objectif est d'arriver à la bonne heure,  
Pour réussir son voyage et avoir accès au bonheur.

Il est facile de prendre un train encore faut-il prendre le bon,  
Moi je suis monté dans deux trois rames mais c'était pas le bon wagon,  
Car les trains sont capricieux et certains sont inaccessibles,  
Et je ne crois pas tout le temps qu'avec la SNCF c'est possible.

Il y a ceux pour qui les trains sont toujours en grève,  
Et leurs histoires d'amour n'existent que dans leurs rêves,  
Et y a ceux qui foncent dans le premier train sans faire attention,  
Mais forcément ils descendront déçus à la prochaine station,  
Y a celles qui flippent de s'engager parce qu'elles sont trop émotives,  
Pour elles c'est trop risqué de s'accrocher à la locomotive,  
Et y a les aventuriers qu'enchaînent voyage sur voyage,  
Dès qu'une histoire est terminée ils attaquent une autre page.

Moi après mon seul vrai voyage j'ai souffert pendant des mois,  
On s'est quitté d'un commun accord mais elle était plus d'accord que moi,  
Depuis je traîne sur le quai je regarde les trains au départ,  
Y a des portes qui s'ouvrent mais dans une gare je me sens à part.

Il paraît que les voyages en train finissent mal en général,  
Si pour toi c'est le cas accroche-toi et garde le moral,  
Car une chose est certaine y aura toujours un terminus,  
Maintenant tu es prévenu la prochaine fois tu prendras le bus.








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## Slam (cont'd)

### Who is “Grand Corps Malade”?

Fabien Marsaud, alias “Grand Corps Malade” (Large sick body), is a *slammeur* (slam poet) who was born on July 31st, 1977 in Blanc-Mesnil in the suburbs of Paris.

In July of 1997, Marsaud was working as a camp counsellor in a holiday camp for children (*une colonie de vacances*) for the city of Saint-Denis. A dive into the shallow water of a swimming pool left him paralyzed, and doctors told him he would never walk again. After more than a year of physical therapy and through his courage and determination, he regained the partial use of his legs. This tragic incident led him to adopt the stage name, “Grand Corps Malade”.

In October, 2003, he performed his first slam poetry in a Parisian bar. Later, one of his friends offered to transpose his pieces into music. His first album, *Midi 20*, was released in

March, 2006. This title comes from a song on the album where the lyrics reduce life to the time frame of one day. He talks about Saint-Denis where he grew up, about an unhappy love affair, but also about the pain linked to his accident there.

The first album received a lot of media exposure and allowed the French public to discover slam poetry. The album is for the most part *a capella*, but sometimes the poems are accompanied with minimal melody. The lyrics are recited in a natural voice and are perfectly clear. “Grand Corps Malade” is a very sensitive poet with a rich, deep voice who knows how to evoke everyday experiences with a language that everyone can relate to. It is difficult not to be touched by his poetry.

### *Le slam* (slam poetry)

A poetry slam is a competition where poets read or recite original work (or, more rarely, that of others). These performances are then judged on a numeric scale by previously

selected members of the audience.

Originally created by Mark Smith in Chicago in the eighties, slam poetry quickly spread throughout the world because of the media attention it attracted. It brings a new and fresh approach to poetry and highlights the art of public poetic performance.

The slam takes place in public places, bars, coffee houses, theatres, MJC, cinemas, any venue that can bring poets and an audience together. It also encourages the introduction of verbal poetry in different and unusual places, such as post offices, bookshops, schools, hospitals, prisons or open-air markets, for instance. The only condition for participating is to register in advance with the announcer. The slam makes it possible for anyone to express themselves with complete freedom of style and on any subject. In France, more and more stages have been taken over by this form of art, and poetry slams continue to spread throughout the country.

Vincent Anthonioz

Listen to Grand Corps Malade recite his *Les voyages en train* thanks to YouTube:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdyJVJQia6k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdyJVJQia6k)

## Exercise on pronouns: Solutions from page 8

“Que penses-tu de Serge? Je l’aime! Je le trouve beau, généreux et drôle. Je ne suis pas certaine qu’il m’aime car quand je lui dis ‘Je t’aime’, il me répond ‘merci’. Je lui envoie des e-mails pendant la journée à son travail et je lui demande toujours comment il va. Il ne me répond pas toujours mais je sais qu’il pense à moi. J’ai rencontré ses amis et nous les appelons de temps en temps pour les inviter à sortir avec nous (Serge et moi-même). J’aime bien être avec eux (les amis) car ils sont très sympas et je pense qu’ils m’apprécient bien. De temps en temps, un ami à Serge nous demande : ‘Alors, quand est ce que vous allez vous marier ?’. Et Serge ne répond pas. Je pense qu’il aime bien être avec moi parce que quand je ne suis pas avec lui pendant quelques jours, il m’appelle pour me dire qu’il est triste sans moi et que je lui manque ! Je suis un peu perplexé.”

“What do you think of Serge? I love him! I find him handsome, generous and funny. I am not certain that he loves me because when I say to him ‘I love you’, he answers to me ‘thank you’. I send him emails during the day at his work and I always ask him how he’s going. He doesn’t always reply to me but I know he’s thinking about me. I met his friends and we call them from time to time to invite them to go out with us (serge and myself). I like to be with them (the friends) because they’re really nice and I think they appreciate me a lot. From time to time, a friend of Serge’s asks us ‘So, when are you getting married?’. And Serge doesn’t respond. I think that he likes being with me because when I’m not with him for a few days, he calls me to tell me that he is sad without me and that he misses me! I’m a bit confused.”

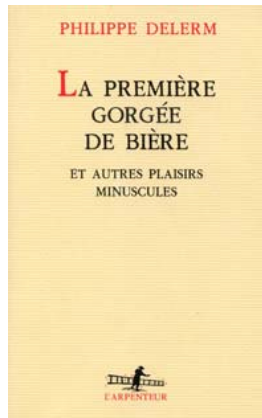
## Le journal du petit déjeuner — 2nd Instalment

It is quite fitting that our serialized literary text for this issue has to do with a meal. Here is the last part of Philippe Delerm's short piece on the pleasure of reading the newspaper at the breakfast table taken from his 1997 collection of witty and extremely well-written texts, "*La première gorgée de bière et autres plaisirs minuscules.*"

Dans les films, les journaux sont souvent symbolisés par la frénésie des rotatives, les cris surexcités des vendeurs dans la rue. Mais le journal que l'on découvre au petit matin dans sa boîte aux lettres n'a pas la même fièvre. Il dit les nouvelles d'hier : ce faux présent semble venir d'une nuit de sommeil. Et puis les rubriques sages comptent davantage que le sensationnel. On lit la météo, et c'est d'une abstraction très douce : au lieu de guetter au-dehors les signes évidents de la journée, on les infuse du dedans, dans l'amertume sucrée du café. La page des

sports, surtout, est immuable et rassurante : les défaites y sont toujours suivies d'espoirs de revanche, les échéances se renouvellent avant que les tristesses ne soient consommées... Il ne se passe rien, dans le journal du petit déjeuner, et c'est pour ça que l'on s'y précipite. On y allonge la saveur du café chaud, du pain grillé. On y lit que le monde se ressemble, et que le jour n'est pas pressé de commencer.

Philippe Delerm, *La première gorgée de bière*, Paris, Gallimard, 1997.



### Deux dictées

#### Beginner Level

Pour les Français le pain est très important, presque une nécessité. Ils mangent du pain à chaque repas, et s'ils ne peuvent pas en trouver, ils ne sont pas du tout contents. En fait, les boulangeries sont parmi les seuls magasins qui sont ouverts le dimanche matin. Et souvent, surtout dans les grandes villes, il y a une queue devant les meilleures boulangeries, et on voit toujours cette image du Français typique qui rentre chez lui, une baguette sous le bras.



#### Intermediate Level

Ah, quel plaisir d'aller acheter des croissants le dimanche matin, tôt quand tout les autres dorment et qu'il n'y a presque personne dans la rue ! Une fois arrivé, le boulanger dans son tablier enfariné vous salue avec un sourire. "Cinq croissants au beurre et une baguette pas trop cuite, s'il vous plaît". Et enfin, de nouveau dans la rue, on se sent différent, la marche du retour ne sera pas la même. Et puis on prend un croissant dans le sac. La pâte est tiède, presque molle. Cette petite gourmandise dans le froid, tout en marchant. Quel plaisir, les croissants du dimanche matin !



"Au refuge du boulanger",  
Megève (Haute-Savoie).

## Une recette de cuisine : soufflé au saumon



**M**any people shy away from trying to make a soufflé, but we could certainly alter the title of the cookbook featured in the film *Ratatouille*, “Anyone can cook” to “Anyone can do a soufflé”. If you follow a few basic steps of procedure, soufflés are very easy to put together and bake, and they provide an elegant dish for any meal. You can also make a soufflé with just about anything you have on hand. The following recipe for salmon soufflé is delicious and will impress your family or guests.

### Some important things to remember when making a soufflé:

-The secret to a good soufflé is the egg whites. Use the freshest eggs you can find, and they must be at room temperature when you beat them, and you must be very careful not to get any of the yolk in the whites when you separate the yolks in the first place.

- Beat the egg whites until just stiff enough to hold their shape and the little peaks that form when you remove the beater from the mixture stay erect.

- When you fold the egg whites into the sauce, do so slowly with a down, up and over motion. Do not stir in a circular motion and mix things up too much. Fold half of the egg whites in well and the second half lightly. Using one more egg white than yolk will make your soufflé even lighter.

-Have everything else ready on the table (salad, dessert, etc) before you start. You must serve the soufflé immediately when it comes out of the oven. It is also a good idea to warn your family or dinner guests that they must be prompt about coming to the table, but you can always serve them an apéro



*Gradually stir the butter and flour in the milk until you have a smooth sauce.*



*Beat the egg yolks slightly and add them slowly to the roux and blend it all together thoroughly.*

*After you have squeezed a bit of lemon juice on the salmon, add it to the roux.*



**B**eaucoup de gens n’osent pas se lancer à faire un soufflé. Pourtant on pourrait vraiment changer le titre du livre de cuisine dans *Ratatouille*, “*Tout le monde peut cuisiner*”, en “*Tout le monde peut faire un soufflé*” ! Si vous suivez à la ligne ces quelques conseils, vous verrez que les soufflés sont assez faciles à préparer et à faire cuire, et qu’ils font un plat qui présente très bien sur une table. Vous pouvez faire un soufflé à peu près avec tout ce qui vous tombe sous la main. Essayez cette délicieuse recette, et vous impressionnerez votre famille ou vos amis !

### Important à se souvenir en préparant un soufflé :

- Le secret d’un soufflé tient dans le blanc des œufs. Utilisez les œufs les plus frais possibles, et ils doivent être à la température de la pièce lorsque vous les battez. Et faites attention de ne pas tâcher les blancs par un peu de jaune d’œuf lorsque vous les séparez.

- Battez les blancs jusqu’à ce qu’ils soient assez épais pour tenir tout seuls, et que les petites pointes qui restent quand vous enlevez le fouet ne s’effondrent pas.

- Lorsque vous incorporez les blancs d’œufs fouettés à la sauce, faites-le très doucement, et de haut en bas. Ne les mélangez pas trop, et ne tournez pas en rond. Incorporez entièrement dans la sauce la moitié des œufs, tandis que la seconde moitié sera à peine mélangée. Utilisez un blanc de plus que le nombre de jaunes pour que votre soufflé soit plus léger.

- Soyez sûr d’avoir tout prêt sur la table (salade, dessert, etc.) avant de commencer. Le soufflé doit être servi immédiatement dès qu’il sort du four. Il est prudent aussi de prévenir vos invités qu’ils aillent se mettre à table juste avant, ou bien vous pouvez leur



## Recette de cuisine: soufflé au saumon (cont'd)

just before to insure they are there. -Soufflés are not terribly filling. If you are serving hearty eaters, it might be a good idea to have a vegetable side-dish to accompany the soufflé.

### Ingredients (for four people)

3 tablespoons butter  
3 tablespoons flour  
1 cup scalded milk  
1 teaspoon salt  
pepper to taste  
1/3 to 1/2 cup of mild cheese (Comté, Abondance, Cantal, Guyère)  
150 to 200 grams of freshly cooked salmon or one tin of salmon + a squeeze of lemon juice  
4 egg yolks  
5 egg whites

### Preparation

To make the *roux*, or sauce, first melt the butter in a saucepan and blend in the flour. Gradually stir in the milk until you have a smooth sauce. Continue cooking the sauce, stirring all the while, until the sauce is thick. Add the salt and the cheese and then let it cool slightly so that when you add the egg yolks, they will not cook before they are supposed to. Beat the egg yolks slightly and add them slowly to the roux and blend it all together thoroughly. Pull the salmon apart so that you end up with small flakes of it, squeeze a bit of lemon juice on the salmon and add it to the sauce. Beat the egg whites until stiff but still moist. Fold half of the egg whites into the sauce fairly well, then fold the other half in very lightly. Pour the soufflé mixture into a buttered soufflé dish and bake for about 35 minutes at 375 degrees F (190 C or setting 5 on a French oven). When the soufflé is puffed up and lightly browned, remove from the oven and serve immediately.

Bon appétit !

Roger Stevenson



*The little peaks that form when you remove the beater from the mixture must stay erect.*

*Fold half of the egg whites into the sauce fairly well, then fold the other half in very lightly.*



*Pour the soufflé mixture into a buttered soufflé dish and bake for about 35 minutes.*



avoir servi un apéritif en attendant pour être sûr qu'ils sont déjà assis.

- Un soufflé est un plat assez léger. Pour les gros mangeurs, ce peut être une bonne idée de prévoir un plat de légumes en accompagnement.

### Ingredients (pour quatre personnes)




3 cuillères à soupe de beurre  
3 cuillères à soupe de farine  
un peu moins de 25 cl de lait bouillant  
1 cuillère à café de sel  
du poivre, selon son goût  
entre 10 et 12 g de fromage à pâte dure pas trop fort (Comté, Abondance, Cantal, Gruyère...)  
150 à 200 g de saumon frais, cuit juste avant, ou une boîte de saumon en conserve + un peu de jus d'un citron  
4 jaunes d'œufs  
5 blancs d'œufs

### Préparation

Pour faire le roux (ou sauce), faites d'abord fondre le beurre dans une poêle avant de verser la farine. Incorporez progressivement le lait en mélangeant jusqu'à ce que la sauce devienne fluide. Ajoutez le sel et le fromage et laissez tiédir, de sorte que lorsque vous ajouterez les jaunes ils ne cuisent pas. Séparément, battez à peine les jaunes et ajoutez-les doucement au roux avant de bien les mélanger. Après avoir réduit le saumon en miettes, et avoir aspergé d'un peu de jus de citron, ajoutez-le à la sauce. Dans un plat creux, battez les blancs d'œufs jusqu'à ce qu'ils soient fermes (mais pas trop). Incorporez-en complètement la moitié dans la sauce, tandis que l'autre moitié sera à peine mélangée. Versez la préparation dans un plat à soufflé beurré et faites cuire au four pendant 35 minutes à 190 degrés (ou numéro 5 du four). Lorsque le soufflé est bien gonflé et légèrement bruni, sortez-le, et servez-le immédiatement.  
Bon appétit !








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*"I like the flexibility of learning this way because I can have weekly lessons regardless of where I am in the world. I am also learning French quicker than other methods or lessons."*  
Paul in Daglan, Dordogne, France.

*"I really enjoy the lessons and my neighbours and friends in my village comment on my progress, so it's great."*  
Alana in Aude, France.

*"Learning French at home, is a brilliant concept... Every time I visit France now my friends and relations remark on how my French is improving and I am amazed at myself sometimes just how much I have learnt."*  
Marian in Backhurst Hill Essex, UK.

*"Since starting with Learn French at Home last March 06, my confidence on the phone and face to face conversation has increased incredibly..."*  
Shelley in Lot et Garonne, France.

*"...When I visited France this summer I was very confident to speak French and found that I was well understood, and didn't revert to english at all."*  
Joanne in Birmingham, UK.

*"The teacher's answers to my questions and explanations of concepts are very clear and I feel like I'm getting a good vocabulary in each lesson."*  
Julie in New York, USA.

*"...Tailored to suit my own needs, it is fun, interesting and, most of all, it's working!!"...*  
Tricia in Dordogne, France.