

# Carmel classic Patisserie Boissière continues to impress

"TREASURE" MAY be an appropriate noun, but the adjective, "hidden"? In the sense that the obvious is often right under our noses, it fits! We've been enjoying excellent coffee, feathery croissants and pastry at the Patisserie Boissière for many years; first as visitors and now happily as locals. But dinners and lunches somehow never occurred to us — a grave mistake. What a little jewel is Magdy Ibrahim's Mission Street full-service restaurant.

Maize-colored walls, a welcoming fire in the Fleur-de-lis tiled hearth, flattering light suffusing the Provençal-inspired room and fine museum reproductions of Pissaro and Sargent, portend a memorable dining experience.



## Traveling Gourmet

By Lotte Mendelsohn

soup.

We always share an order of stuffed mushrooms. These fancy fungi definitely do not come pre-stuffed and pre-packaged. These are on-the-premises prepared from scratch, filled with Asiago cheese, multi-colored veggie flecks tossed with mushroom bits and a wonderful blend of fresh herbs. Share an order with your first glass of wine.

Sous chefs Garcia, Mario and Alex translate owner Magdy's culinary internationalism

**PATISSERIE BOISSIERE**  
**Mission between Ocean & Seventh**  
**Carmel-by-the-Sea**  
**(831) 624-5008**  
**STARTERS: \$4.25 TO \$7.95**  
**SALADS: \$5.75 TO \$9.95**  
**ENTREES: \$10.95 TO \$16.95**  
**DESSERTS: \$4.25 WITH DINNER,**  
**\$3.25 INDIVIDUAL TO GO PORTIONS**

splendidly. Half a roast duck comes to the table juicy inside and browned crispy atop an apricot brandy sauce.

A puffed papillote is the carrier for a salmon filet with crowning artichoke hearts and seasonal vegetables in a lemon-basil butter. When the parchment is slashed the released fragrance makes every waiting moment an eternity, until waitpersons Dane and Sam fold back the edges and we "have at it!"

Let's continue our verbal dining. I'm not a huge meat eater, but the description of the oven-braised lamb shank piqued my "eyes are bigger than my tummy" reflex. The lamb flaked off the bone into a dynamite vegetable and red wine broth; an unusual, but delicious presentation. I would wish for the excess broth in a separate cup or bowl so that my splashings with bread chunks would have been less hazardous to my silk blouse. The liquid is simply too delicious to leave a drop!

Every day there is a pasta special available for lunch or dinner. I have yet to try the Bolognese, but the seafood versions (I tried two on separate occasions) are heavy with chunks of salmon or swordfish and succulent crustaceans or mollusks de jour. The bathing of chive beurre blanc is light and right.

To judge from the number of diners who order them, two of the standard menu items

are constant favorites, the Beef Shepherd's Pie and the Chicken Pot Pie. Both come topped with flavored mashed potatoes, lightly browned and as airy as a croissant crust would be.

Because of its well known morning to noon excellence, we move now to underline the salads and sandwiches. (They are among the many menu items from pastries to hot entrées which can be ordered to take out and enjoy at home.) The sandwiches are served with soup or salad. Although their base contents are familiar, someone in the kitchen does fantastic things with roast beef, turkey, snow crab with shrimp salad and Albacore tuna. In addition

there are two vegetarian offerings; Carmel Garden croissant and the Veggieburger. Again it's the baked croissants, brioches, and French baguettes which make these offerings distinct.

Salads number six, and each is notable. Personal preference sends my spouse back to the Roasted Chicken and Spinach with jicama, apples and caramelized walnuts, or the excellent Chicken Caesar. I opt for the Snow Crab and Avocado bolstered by a mound of fresh, crispy vegetables and greens. What better marriage than a big salad with really good bread? Of course! A glass of wine.

A well chosen house wine is offered at \$13.75 a bottle (\$3.50 a glass) and the compact wine list is a bit like Magdy himself, international and conservative. A good selection of reasonably-priced California and French wines are available by the bottle or by the glass.

Desserts are a joy; rich but airy enough in their execution that one can feel guiltless, almost! The popular Paris Brest adds kiwi fruit to the traditional strawberries for a pretty color contrast. The pâte à choux-based Napoleon layers chocolate mousse, Bavarian cream and sliced bananas . . . to quote Yul's King of Siam, "Etc., Etc., Etc.!"