



At Paris's Clown Bar, Japanese chef Sota Atsumi creates exceptional small plates.

10 Best New Restaurants in France

FROM PARIS TO PROVENCE, WRITER JANE SIGAL EXPLORES THE INCREDIBLE DIVERSITY OF FRENCH COOKING TODAY.

1 Clown Bar PARIS

Despite its glass ceiling painted with circus scenes, Clown Bar is a serious small-plates restaurant. In the kitchen, Sota Atsumi (a Japanese native who trained with Joël Robuchon and Michel Troisgros) combines delicacy, mandoline-sharp technique and smart ingredient sourcing to create modern French dishes like haricot verts with strawberries and feta. 114 rue Amelot; clown-bar-paris.fr.

2 Bistrot Constant MIDI-PYRÉNÉES

Paris bistrotier Christian Constant has reinvented a lock-keeper's house on the Canal du Midi in his native southwest France. Walkers and barge cruisers stop in for some charcuterie at the bar while, in the dining room, Constant re-creates Escoffier cooking in a generous way, with lamb en cocotte and baked potatoes stuffed with pigs' feet. 25 rue de l'Usine, Montech; maisonconstant.com.

3 Fontevraud LOIRE VALLEY

A Canadian architect and French designer have transformed a medieval priory into a sybaritic hotel and restaurant (the dining room's in the cloister). Thibaut Ruggeri's refined menu focuses on local ingredients, like honey from the abbey's bees and, amazingly, mushrooms grown in the limestone caves that were excavated to build the abbey in the 12th century. Fontevraud-l'Abbaye; fontevraud.fr.

4 Villa Marie Jeanne MARSEILLE

Vailleilles de Montmirail buys little rockfish and conger eel directly from night fishermen in the Vieux Port, then transforms them into an epic bouillabaisse—a benchmark for this city's defining dish. Diners eat family-style at shared tables in the garden of his family's 18th-century stone manor. 4 rue Chicot; villa-marie-jeanne.com.


**EPIC
SEAFOOD
STEW IN
MARSEILLE**

5 Le Canon NICE

You'd expect this excellent new bistro with Formica tables and flea-market chairs to offer Côte d'Azur comfort food. Instead, Moroccan-born, Nice-raised chef Elmahdi Mobarik serves inventions like farro spaghetti and roast rabbit "à la Royal Air Maroc" (with North African spices). 23 rue Meyerbeer; 011-33-4-93-79-09-24.

6 Percherons CÉRET

Mathieu Perez, who ran the kitchenette at the beloved Les Deux Amis wine bar in Paris, decamped to the foothills of the Pyrenees to open this superb bistro. The six-course Catalan market menu is one of the best deals on the Spanish border. 7 rue de la République; 011-33-4-11-64-41-12.

THE NEW
CÔTE
D'AZUR



Nice chef Elmahdi Mobarik with Le Canon's owner, Sébastien Perinetti.

7 Café Sillon LYON

After a two-year sabbatical cooking in restaurants from Italy to Peru, kitchen auteur Mathieu Rostaing-Tayard is back. In a city full of pork-loving bouchons (bistros), his menu is clever, complex and vegetable-centric. Even desserts verge on the botanical: Scoops of black sesame seed ice cream in cherry soup go surprisingly well with eggplant jam. 46 avenue Jean Jaurès; 011-33-4-78-72-09-73.

10 Bloempot LILLE

The entrance to this restaurant is through sky-blue double doors, with the only signage a scrawled adhesive label stuck to the letter box. Inside, a brick-walled carpenter's atelier has been repurposed as a canteen. Befitting the location near the Belgian border, French *Top Chef* finalist Florent Ladeyn interprets Flemish cuisine in a hyperlocal, naturalist style. Dishes like shaved beets with haddock and nettle cream pair beautifully with one of the rare artisanal beers on the list. 22 rue des Bouchers; bloempot.fr.

Jane Sigal, F&W's France correspondent, is the author of *Bistronomy: Recipes from the Best New Paris Bistros, due out in October*.

8 Miles BORDEAUX

The Israeli, Japanese, New Caledonian and French-Vietnamese partners at Miles (as in distance traveled) represent what food in France is becoming: nomadic, spicier, more personal. They cook through the prism of their origins in a chef's-choice format of reimagined French dishes, like crisped pollock with carrots and miso. 33 rue du Cancera; restaurantmiles.com.

9 La Grande Maison BORDEAUX

If you never had the chance to eat at Jamin in Paris under Joël Robuchon, his new restaurant in a mansion is a dream haute-cuisine revival. Chef Tomonori Danzaki sends out bountiful cuts of meat—whole racks of lamb, spit-roasted chickens—that servers expertly carve at the table. Guests who stay overnight in one of the Napoleon III-style rooms, each named for a Bordeaux vineyard, get a bottle of the matching wine. 10 rue Labottière; lagrandemaison-bordeaux.com.



Café Sillon's octopus with slow-cooked shallots and bitter black olives.



Joël Robuchon's La Grande Maison is in a gorgeous Bordeaux mansion.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ANTHONY LANNERETONNE; DEEPIX; CHARLOTTE BOURVET

Best New Paris Hotels



Opened in 1925, Le Bristol was a favorite of Charlie Chaplin.

THE REOPENING LATER THIS YEAR of two of Paris's most extraordinary hotels, The Ritz and Hôtel de Crillon, is exciting news. But there's no shortage of buzzy places to stay in the city that are ready to check into now.

1 Hôtel Plaza Athénée
CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES
This hotel recently underwent a \$200 million face-lift. In the silver dining room of Alain Ducasse's restaurant, a new menu focuses on seafood dishes like blue lobster with preserved clementines. *Doubles from \$1,140; dorchestercollection.com.*

2 Le Bristol
CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES
The 18th-century-style interior has been fastidiously updated over the past six years. The chef has earned three Michelin stars with dishes like foie gras and oysters in black tea broth. *Doubles from \$1,250; lebristol.paris.com.*

3 The Peninsula
TROCADÉRO
The Peninsula's first European property offers airport transfers in a vintage Rolls-Royce. Its restaurant, LiLi, offers authentic dim sum and whole suckling pig. *Doubles from \$1,400; peninsula.com.*

4 Molitor
TROCADÉRO
This 1920s swimming club fell into disrepair after closing in 1989 but reopened last year as one of Paris's coolest new boutique hotels. The Yannick Alleno-curated bistro is a draw, but the main perks are the two massive pools, especially the one outdoors, which is open year-round. *Doubles from \$250; mgallery.com.*

5 Grand Pigalle
PIGALLE
The founders of the Experimental Cocktail Club, an influential bar with outposts in London and New York, chose this once-seedy neighborhood for their first hotel. Minibars are stocked with all the ingredients and tools to make the bartenders' recipe of the day. *Doubles from \$215; grandpigalle.com.*
—M. ELIZABETH SHELDON