



# LA BELLE FRANCE

THE SOPHISTICATED  GUIDE TO FRANCE®

## *Aux Verres de Contact* *A Left Bank Delight*

You need to see clearly to spot this one. This stylish year-old bistro/wine bar is nestled into a hole-in-the-wall on the tiny rue de Bièvre off the Boulevard Saint-Germain. But the name is not a play on ‘contact lenses’... it’s the phrase that a famed sports journalist named Antoine Blondin (1922 – 1991) used to justify the stratospheric bar bills on his expense account. (There’s a portrait of a very self-satisfied, well-lubricated Blondin on the wall.)

Three years ago, Guillaume Delage opened **Jadis**. Once again, the name is a tip-of-the-hat to Blondin whose autobiography was entitled *Monsieur Jadis*. The restaurant quickly became THE cool jet-set bistro to frequent. A friend reported that when he arrived for dinner one night, Sy Newhouse, Anna Wintour and Lloyd Blankfein were all holding court... at separate tables, no less.

However, for all those bistro-lovers without private chauffeurs, there was a downside. Location. Jadis is situated near the Convention metro, on the far south end of the 15<sup>th</sup> arrondissement.

**Aux Verres de Contact** opened a year ago in the heart of the Latin Quarter, just a few blocks from

Notre Dame. The kitchen is run by Sarah Baraudon, who happens to be Madame Delage in private life. The concept? An ever more relaxed version of Jadis, and a place where people can stop in for tapas (cheese, charcuterie etc.) and a great glass of Côtes du Rhône from a winelist supervised by Jérôme Huard of *les Grandes Caves* outside of regular dining hours.

But you really don’t want to miss those regular dining hours. Baraudon offers a 15€ two course lunch, but you won’t want to stop at two courses either. The three-course *prix fixe* is a sensible 31€ and choosing from it merits careful

consideration. Order a glass of Nathalie Flamet’s excellent Champagne, 12€, while thinking it over.

Even a simple tomato salad turned into a preview of Nirvana. The heirloom fruit – red, gold and luscious little green ones with stripes – is supplied by a farmer who deserves a knighthood. Go nuts and get the 2€ supplement of buffalo mozzarella and wipe up the tangy vinaigrette with some of Paris’s best bread.

Or go for something fancier and like the brilliant *daurade* carpaccio marinated in a punchy ginger sauce atop thin-sliced beets, zucchini and sprouts. We also loved Baraudon’s



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**Chef Sarah Baraudon**

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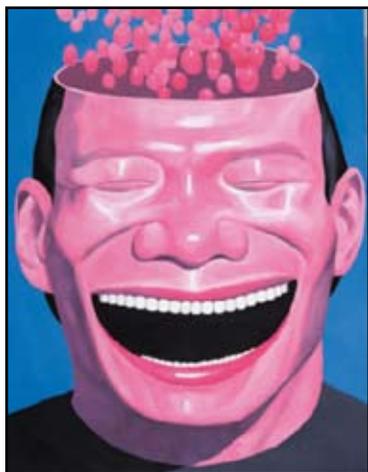
will be competing against nine celebrity chefs hailing from Quito to Tokyo for the **2012 Trophée Passion** held in the professional kitchens at Paris's *Ecole Ferrandi* (LBF - May 2012). Two-starred super-chef **Thierry Marx** (Mandarin Oriental) heads the international jury. Fans of Lizotte's hometown creations like wild sea bass with hedgehog mushrooms or hand-cut pasta with Berkshire pork sausage are in for a surprise. The chefs have five hours to create a main dish with Connemara lamb (using bananas and carrots) and a pineapple dessert (with chocolate and beets). Lizotte is a seasoned competitor, having already represented the US at the Bocuse d'Or.

**Club Consciousness** is gaining ground in Paris. In April 2011, we did a round-up of the newly-trendy sandwiches that were tempting hungry Parisians. We'd



have postponed the story if we'd known that Antoni Pascual and Stéphane Gillard - refugees from the Plaza and Meurice hotels - were planning to open their specialty sandwich bar a few months later. **Le Club** serves nine different club sandwiches - everything from beef and blue cheese, Petrossian salmon, and king crab - for

15€ to 19€ (*frites* or bio legumes included) with wine, beer and a wide range of fancy cocktails. It's a great place for late-night snacking (open until 1:30 am every day but Sunday) in comfortable leather chairs near the bar or in the downstairs



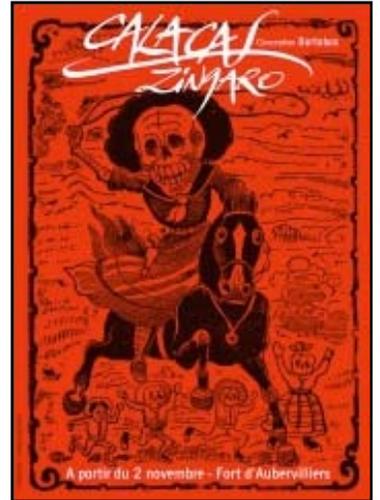
'den', decorated by stylist Philippe Model with delicately distressed wall-paper. **The Club**. 24 rue Surcouf, 75007. Tel: 01.45.50.31.54. [www.theclub-paris.com](http://www.theclub-paris.com) M° Invalides.

**Better late than never...** We got word of the **Yue Minjun** retrospective at the Cartier Foundation, November 14 to March

17, too late for last month's calendar. This is the first major European show for the mysterious Beijing artist who is widely considered the guiding light of China's

'Cynical Realism' school. His spin on Manet's "Execution of Emperor Maximilian", surrounded by smiling grotesques, seems to set in the shadows of Tian'anmen Square. But is it? **Fondation Cartier**. 261 boulevard de Raspail, 75014. [www.fondation.cartier.com](http://www.fondation.cartier.com) M° Raspail

**It looks like Halloween on Horseback...** but it's actually the latest equestrian extravaganza from **Bartabas** and the **Zingaro Theater**. "Calacas" - which means "skeleton" in Spanish - returns to the Paris area on November 2 (the Mexican Day of the Dead) in a pageant where horses are the messengers and even guardian angels at the Fort d'Aubervilliers theater complex (with restaurant) on the outskirts of town. Tickets and information: 01.48.39.18.03 or [www.zingaro.fr](http://www.zingaro.fr) Fort d'Aubervilliers. 176 avenue Jean-Jaurès, 93000 Aubervilliers. M° Fort Aubervilliers



**There are bargains under the sun...** for those who can put off their visits to the south of France until *vendanges* time. In October, a week in a three bedroom/ three bath house with a private pool at the glamorous **Château les Carasses** complex profiled in our November 2011 issue costs only 650€ per couple. Note that the 20-meter infinity pool in the picture is heated although, with roughly 5 hours of sun every day in October, it really doesn't need it. **Château Les Carasses**. Route de Capestang, 34310 Quarante. Tel: 04.67.00.00.67. [www.lescarrasses.com](http://www.lescarrasses.com)

