

Parution janvier 2014



[Go Back To Home](#)

[WOMEN'S FASHION](#)

[MEN'S FASHION](#)

[DESIGN](#)

[TRAVEL](#)

[FOOD](#)

[CULTURE](#)

[VIDEO](#)

FOOD MATTERS

Food Matters | A Paris Restaurant Where Dessert Is What's for Dinner

FOOD | BY ALEC LOBRANO | JANUARY 28, 2014 9:37 AM

SEARCH

GO



« PREVIOUS
The Collections |
The Top 10
Moments in Spring
2014 Paris Couture
Week

NEXT »
In Palm Springs, a
Refreshingly Rustic
Alternative to
Midcentury
Modernism



At Dessance in Paris, a purple potato purée with raw and poached apples, arugula and marjoram *granité*.



“It’s time to rethink the conventions of a meal,” says the French restaurateur Philippe Baranes. That’s just what he’s done with Paris’s first all-desserts restaurant, Dessance — the name is a neologism that combines ‘dessert’ with the French word for birth, ‘naissance’ — which recently opened in a 17th-century townhouse in the city’s Marais district. “Some people find it confusing or even disturbing, but there’s no reason a dish can’t be savory and sweet at the same time,” he says. “My idea was to break the *cloisonné* way in which we think about food.” The menu at Dessance doesn’t run toward the pastries, cakes and tarts that a desserts-only concept might imply, but rather offers a small but intriguing collection of dishes that can be eaten as both desserts and main courses, including, for example, a surprising combination of violet-colored *vitelotte* potato purée with raw and poached apples, arugula and marjoram *granité*.

To execute his vision, Baranes recruited the talented young chef Christophe Boucher, who had previously worked at the edgy Aux Mare des Oiseaux auberge near La Baule and Restaurant Ledoyen and Le Grand Vefour in Paris, to create the sweet-but-not-too-sweet menu. “The important thing is that my dishes aren’t too loaded with sugar, cream and butter,” says Boucher. “Sugar quickly sates the appetite, so it has to be used with moderation.” Instead, he works with fruit, vegetables and fresh herbs to create flavor and texture. “Freshness and varying tones of acidity are very important, too,” he adds.

The best way to appreciate these futuristic sweets is to order the “Carte Blanche” menu — which includes an appetizer, four desserts and tiny confections known in France as *mignardises* — and the drink pairings, in which wine, fruit juice, tea, coffees and even whiskey (nine-year-old Japanese Mizuwari by Nikka Yochi) are offered with each course. This allows the diner to discover the fascinating logic of Boucher’s creations, which gradually become sweeter over the course of a meal. On a recent Sunday, a gently tart purée of pears with a chervil-root cream, a tangy Greek yogurt sorbet and chervil-flavored meringue wafers led off the meal, followed by a stunning composition of liquid beet purée inside of beet gelée, cranberry compote, bergamot ice and cocoa nibs under a cloud of white chocolate. Next came the potato mash with apples. All three dishes were as elegantly balanced as Alexander Calder mobiles, and deeply satisfying.

The more traditional “dessert” finale of the meal included a whiskey-flamed, baked-Alaska-like “omelette norvégienne” with a fascinating smoky taste and a beautifully made pastry of layered chocolate-and-vanilla praline topped with bitter caramel foam. For traditionalists requiring a shot of savory, Roquefort madeleines with lemon cream or a plate of 40-month old Comte cheese are also on offer, though it’s a testament to Boucher’s gifts that few tables that night were inclined to order them.

Baranes says he chose the northern district of the Marais for his restaurant because it’s “a very creative part of the city that attracts a lot of aesthetically alert, open-minded people.” To offer this clientele a little eye candy, the designer Joseph Grappin fitted the long, narrow dining room with a modern décor that includes a curved oak-latté trellis, Pierre Guariche chairs and a spotlight granite counter where Boucher creates his dishes in full view.

The menu at Dessance will evolve constantly according to Boucher’s whims and the availability of ingredients; he only works with seasonal produce, much of which comes from the boutique food provisioner Terroir d’Avenir. But if he was able to conjure up this much magic in the dead of winter, the other three seasons promise to be spectacular.

74 rue des Archives; Third Arrondissement; +33 (1) 42-7723-62; [dessance.fr](#). Open Wednesday-Friday 3 p.m.-11 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 3 p.m.-midnight; six-course tasting menu 36 Euros, 44 Euros if shared for two.

