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MARTINIS

A SEARCH FOR THE BEST COCKTAILS IN PARIS

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Gallopin Bar Brings Vintage Glam Back to Paris Cocktails

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Le Gallopin brings back old school glamour with the reopening of their cocktail bar featuring 100% French twists on classics and vintage spirits under the direction of Stan Jouenne.

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The Gallopin is one of those traditional French institutions that first opened doors back in 1876 selling beer and wine. It then grew into a bigger “American” cocktail bar catering to locals and the Anglo crowd and a few years later, gained more attention with a beautiful new glass ceiling installed for the 1900 World’s Fair. The entire space is an ornate, glamorous, beautiful Belle Époque celebration of Cuban mahogany, artisan-crafted copper and brass details and twinkling chandeliers. However, over the past few decades, it’s felt like these old-school stalwarts have fallen a little out of favour – having become a bit tatty and taken a beating from Brooklyn style neo bistros and craft cocktail lounges – and maybe justifiably so. For many of the past years, it felt like the Old Guard was resting on its laurels and doing nothing but courting tourists hungry for a taste of “true” Paris, no matter how trumped up it felt.



Thankfully there is renewed hope for the integrity of these old institutions. A few years ago, Mathieu Bucher (trained chef and son of Jean-Paul Bucher of the Flo Group) took over the Gallopin. Once he brought local bartender and consultant Stan Jouenne into the mix, things became even more interesting. You might recognize Stan’s name from time spent at La Maison du Whisky, Tiger bar, his multiple cocktail awards and so. Once these two history buffs combined their respective food and drink know-how, they were on their way to injecting some new life into this old place in a way that still pays homage to the past.



Stan has developed a cocktail menu that focuses exclusively French ingredients. There are thirteen house creations based on very french liquids like pineau des charantes, suze, absinthe, cognac, and more. But what's really a treat here are the vintage spirits. This classy selection of old alcohol ranges from the 1920's with an Anisette de Bordeaux Cazanove (48 Euros a pour) to a 1965 Izarra Jaune ou Verte Circa (18 Euros). You'll find Amers, wine based aperitifs and more classic French goodies. Overall this is a drool-worthy selection of vintage bottles, the likes of which aren't available elsewhere in Paris for tasting. According to Stan, the selection is "coherent with the style of the Gallopin, which proposes exclusively French cuisine." I must agree.



If the combination of Stan's past work and the samples from the launch party are anything to go by, it's going to be impressive in terms of cocktails. The Brongniart Cocktail is an "homage to the architecture of the Bourse (stock exchange) nearby" and delivers a warm and nutty combo of cognac, red vermouth and more with a beautiful rim of crushed nuts and chia seeds. Otherwise, the Champagne cocktail amps up the classic version with the addition of Suze Cocktail bitters. Prices range from 12 to 16 per drink. And everything can be tried alongside some bar snacks sure to impress francophile foodie like sweetbreads and foie gras pate en croute inspired by l'Oreiller de la Belle Aurore.

This is an exciting project and I look forward to seeing how it plays out. Paris has a rich history when it comes to cocktail bars and societies spending time in its more beautiful brasseries, bars and restaurants. I'd love to see that historical side of the Parisian food and drinks scene revived into something more authentic and genuinely appreciated by locals once again. Fortunately, Le Gallopin seems well on its way to kicking off that trend.

Le Gallopin

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