

Zagat Survey, the world's leading provider of consumer survey-based leisure content, released its brand new *2008/2009 Paris Restaurants* guide. Based on roughly 930,000 annual meals worth of experience consumed by 5,500 avid diners, the new guide contains ratings, reviews, and price estimates for 1,000 restaurants, bistros and cafes across all 20 arrondissements and suburbs of Paris.

"Anyone serious about dining out knows that Paris is a great place to visit," said Tim Zagat, CEO of Zagat Survey. "In no other city can you find as many living legends of the culinary elite still behind the stoves."

Haute History: Despite the death of Jean-Claude Vrinat, for the eleventh straight year, Taillevent was voted number one for Food and overall Popularity. **Le Cinq** in the Four Seasons Hotel placed first for décor and service. Other top chefs scoring high marks include Guy Savoy (

Guy Savoy

), Pascal Barbot (

Astrance

), Pierre Gagnaire (

Pierre Gagnaire

), Bernard Pacaud (

L'Ambroisie

), Alain Ducasse (

Restaurant Alain Ducasse

), and Joël Robuchon (

L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon

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Scene-Stealing Settings: Attaching a top designer to a restaurant is becoming de rigeur, and a near-guarantee of interest as dining out becomes more than just about food. Recent high-profile style-statements include Patrick Jouin's futuristic revamp of **Jules**

Verne

Philippe Starck's surreal, tented décor for

Le Dali

and Philippe Boisselier's monochromatic scheme for

Le Saut du Loup

and the Fornasetti art – and artifact – adorned

L'Eclaireur

. In fact nearly 40% of surveyors noted that they'd patronize a restaurant just for its décor or ambiance.

High Cost of Dining: It's no surprise that Paris dining is expensive, but nearly 77% of our surveyors state they're eating out at least as often if not more as they did two years ago. Since 2006, the average cost per meal rose 2.9% annually to €55.43 or \$85.89 – more than twice the average cost in the U.S. of \$33.67. This measure is marked even further when it comes to dining out in the city's twenty most expensive restaurants, where prices surged to €161.66 or \$250.49, up from €149.78 or \$181.34 two years ago.

Smoke-free At Last: When we last surveyed Parisian diners in 2006, 73% said that smoking should be banned in restaurants. With the citywide ban in effect as of January 2, 2008, 83% now say that they support the ban. Those that don't can find solace on restaurant terraces, where smoking is still permitted.

Quel arrondissement? Parisians still prefer the 8th arrondissement, which garnered 43% of the vote. The 8^{ème} is home to such greats as Taillevent, Alain Ducasse, Apicius, Le Cinq, Lasserre, Laurent and newcomers such as SYDR, Mood and Mini Palais. Trailing far behind are the 7^{ème} with 12%, the 17th with 8% and the 1st with 7%.

Wine Bar Revival: Seventy-nine percent of our surveyors typically order a bottle of wine when dining out, so it is fitting that a new generation of bar á vins and bistrot á vins like

La Cr merie

Les Fines Gueules

and

Les Racines

are opening up throughout Paris. Cheeses, charcuterie and a few high-grade dishes accompany their wine menus.

Green is the New Black: Though a bit late to jump on the "bio" bandwagon, 56% of Paris' surveyors now say they are willing "to pay more" for sustainably raised or organic food, and 72% say "non" to trans fats, claiming that they should be banned altogether.

Like all Zagat Survey guidebooks, the *2008/2009 Paris Restaurants* is made by consumers for consumers. In addition to Most Popular and Top Food, D cor and Service listings, the guide includes such useful categories as Best Buys, Celebrity Chefs, Child-Friendly, Business Dining, Outdoor Dining and Romantic Places as well as dozens of other handy groupings.

Paris Restaurants (\$14.95) was edited by Troy Segal, Alexander Lobrano with assistance by Amy Serafin, and was coordinated by Mary Deschamps and Claire Fitzpatrick-Quimbrot. The guide is available at bookstores and other retail outlets, through ZAGAT.com, ZAGAT.mobi or by calling 888-371-5440.