

Stephen Starr restores Bal Harbour's French spot with Le Zoo

Onion soup, steak frites and Bouillabaisse are on the menu at this Bal Harbour Shops bistro.



By Sara Liss 12/6/2015

The who: Restaurateur Stephen Starr [branches out with French](#) at The Bal Harbour Shops which already features his Asian restaurant Makoto next door. This is Starr's fifth South Florida restaurant. **Chef Craig Wallen** (Cesca) helms the kitchen.

The space: The old La Goulue 200-seater has been bistro-fied with brass fixtures, mosaic tile floors, wood paneling and French magazine collages from the 60's give the place a polished, *La Vie En Rose* feel. The outdoor patio is still the hot people watching spot with tiny round tables, blue and red rattan chairs and whimsical Le Zoo sign.

The dishes: Global takes on traditional French dishes. Expect the classics and daily specials like Coq Au Vin and Beef Bourguignon along with lighter options like raw seafood and salads. Prices are on par for the neighborhood with starters \$10-\$24 and mains \$15-\$38.

Crusty ZTB bread gets things started and then it's on to porcelain pots of onion soup gratinee and **foie gras parfait** with port gelee. The mushroom tart is brimming with pioppini 'shrooms and dusted with truffled pecorino. Skip the zucchini blossoms and their too-heavy breading and opt instead for **escargot in hazelnut butter**. Mains of steak au poivre, roasted chicken with mashed potatoes and trout amandine might make Parisians homesick while the burger with its side of perfect pomme frites might become a neighborhood favorite.

Profiteroles for dessert are presented unconventionally as a slab of ice cream with caramelized banana topped with pastry rather than individual buns and the milk **chocolate pot au creme** is just big enough for two. **Bottom Line:** It might be worth braving the socialites and shoppers for a seat on the pretty patio of this classic brasserie.