

ROUNDABOUT

BY LOIS DWAN

● You come upon the Parisien Gardens just as Lake St. begins stiffening for the climb into the foothills of Alhambra. An unlikely spot for a French restaurant, although I am no longer surprised by where I find good restaurants.

The Parisien Gardens has an old-fashioned formal politeness to it, with a pleasantly maitre d'hotel waiter, a centering chandelier and candles on the table. It is owned by the family Arretche. Madame la mere, Jean Arretche, is in charge of the kitchen. She is assisted in various ways by her son, Jean-Pierre Arretche, and her daughter and son-in-law, Christian and Raymond Larade. The family is Basque, but this is not at all a Basque menu. It is a fairly venturesome menu, however, and I would have been grateful for advice on specialties.

Our waitress was willing, and a pleasure to watch, handling trays and serving tables with the swift grace of a ballerina. But she confessed that all she really liked was roast beef. (Later, Jimmy, the bartender, recommended almost everything.)

The appetizers include oeufs mimosa, oeufs a la meuniere, filets d'anchoise mimosa, as well as a very good pate maison and escargots that were satisfactory but not astonishing. Dinners include soup and salad and I would suggest the litany of dressing choices is an American bad habit that there is no very good reason for acquiring.

The soup was split pea, served very hot from a tureen and of an uncommon green and delicacy. There was a good soft-crust bread that was served immediately. Frog legs (grenouilles maitre d'hotel), scampi Parisien (saute in Sauvignon Blanc), coq au vin blanc, poulet saute chasseur, garlic fried chicken (poulette frite a l'ail, pigeonneau aux olives vertes, rack of lamb, poussettes de veau a la Richelieu are among the choices. I selected coquilles Normande, a nicely done saute of clams and mushrooms in a cream sauce, of good flavor, with a touch of hotness. Crevette en brochette were shrimp beautifully broiled with bacon and mushrooms and served on a platter.

A "popular" dinner menu—of steaks—is offered and the luncheon menu is mostly American, although a tureen of soup with French bread (\$1) and a cold beef vinaigrette with potato salad (\$1.50) lifts it somewhat out of the ordinary. Some pleasant wines are listed and prices are also pleasant. \$3.50 to \$5.95 for dinners with relishes, soup and salad. Off the rather formal dining room is what seems to be the friendly neighborhood bar.

Madame Arretche is a superior chef, but there is a lack of communication and rather too much effort demanded of the guest. It would help, I think, if some member of the family were about to advise on dishes, suggest wines, etc.

Parisien Gardens is at 2556 N. Lake St., Alhambra, is open seven days. Lunch is served Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; dinners from 5 to 10 p.m., Sunday from noon to 10 p.m. Reservations advised: 794-3747.

Polynesian Luau

Stephen Crane, president of Marrero Restaurants, announced last week that plans had been completed for the 15th Marrero restaurant, a Polynesian luau which will be part of the new



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