

Acquire a taste for cuisine Française at Corner Café

BY PAMELA BIERI

Special to Palm Desert Sun

French Corner Café offers a delicious slice of France with authentic pastries and cuisine with an ambience of French charm.

From the pastry cases brimming with luscious pastries, petit fours, crispy croissants and French macarons to the sunny yellow walls decked with murals and art posters, wicker tables and chairs, this café at the corner entrance of Desert Crossings shopping center brings a true European experience to the desert.

A well-traveled friend recently said that while she has only eaten bakery items at the French Corner Café, "It's the closest thing to Paris I've tasted — croissants, fondant-filled cakes."

Owner and host is French-born Marc Davy; his brother Aimeric is the patisier, and baker is Antoine Pichent. Davy has taken this charming place several notches

higher since he took ownership several years ago. He expanded the menu and hours of operation, upgraded the ambience and offers exquisite pastries.

Open for breakfast for croissants, crêpes, egg dishes, omelets and French toast, Davy's menu claims "The best almond, regular and chocolate croissants in the whole valley are here," from \$2.75 to \$3.75. A quick breakfast croissant sandwich with eggs, cheese and bacon, sausage or ham is \$6.95. Crêpes with fresh fruit (\$10.45); or an omelet with spinach, mushroom and fruit, or salmon and tomatoes (\$10.95) are among other breakfast choices.

Lunch items range from the Cordon Bleu sandwich (\$13.95); croissant and French dub sandwiches (\$13.95) to classic salad Niçoise (\$13.95); and soups du jour (\$5.95 cup; \$7.25 bowl).

French Corner Café is also known for its "every night entrée"

served with vegetables and gratin potatoes for a prix fixe two- or three-course meal of \$19.95 to \$21.95. Entrees include mussels marinières, shrimp Provençal, calf's liver sautéed, Provence Lobster Ravioli, filet of sole, steak pommes frites and more. The weekend entrée on Friday, Saturday and Sunday is \$25.95 with choices of scallops gratin Coquille St. Jacques; rack of lamb, filet mignon au Roquefort, steak au poivre and veal Marsala.

Escargots (\$12.95), frog legs (\$12.95) and French onion gratinee (\$5.96 cup or \$7.25 bowl) are among the starters.

Enjoy one of Aimeric's pastries such as the Madagascar with orange crème brûlée and dark chocolate, or the L'Exotic with passion fruit, banana and coconut with a cup of tea, espresso, latte or cappuccino during the Happy Tea Room Hour from 2:30 to 5 p.m. for \$7.95.

at a glance

French Corner Café

Where: 72-423 Highway 111,
by Target

Information:
(760) 568-5362,
www.frenchcornercafe.com

Hours: 8 a.m.-8 p.m. daily;
Small Bites Happy Hour,
2:30-5:30 p.m.
Mon.-Fri.; Tea Room Hour,
2:30-5 p.m. daily

Or try small bites for \$14.95 during Happy Hour Monday to Friday, from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., including a choice of six smaller courses with a glass of house wine, champagne or mimosa. Sautéed sole, mussels with wine sauce, and four small savory filled crêpes are among the small bites choices.

Davy also offers "The Classic Cuisine of France" series once a month from January through April from 3 to 8 p.m. for \$25.95



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French-born owner and host Marc Davy has expanded the menu and hours of operation and upgraded the ambience at French Corner Café.

that includes a glass of wine. February's selection, served through Friday, is cassoulet, a southwest specialty. March 15 to 25 will be Pot au Feu, an Alsace

Lorraine specialty with a glass of Riesling and April 15 to 25 will be bouillabaisse, a Provence specialty, served with a wine of that region.