



French Bliss

With Bread & Butterfly, chef Billy Allin offers Atlantans a sparkling Parisian detour

PATRONS WALK INTO BREAD & BUTTERFLY, the French-inspired café in the leafy Inman Park neighborhood of Atlanta, like actors stepping onto a set. One recent morning, a woman with a French bulldog tucked beneath her arm stopped to grab a coffee and a pastry. As she perused croissants and muffins, arrayed on a white marble counter, the clerk tried to convince her that this impossibly cute pup deserved its own Instagram account.

Set on the ground floor of a new multiuse development on the fringe of the city's first trolley car suburb, Bread & Butterfly is a stage.

Seated on bentwood chairs at café tables, beneath a pressed-tin ceiling, Atlantans act out French daydreams. Fueled by rolled omelets sprinkled with herbs, béchamel-troweled ham and Gruyère sandwiches, and demi-casseroles of pearl-onion-bobbed coq au vin, they fritter away mornings and while away nights.

Nine years have passed since Kristin Allin and her husband, the chef Billy Allin, opened Cakes & Ale in nearby Decatur. At that idealized neighborhood restaurant, they earned a reputation for quiet brilliance, thanks to restrained dishes such as wood-oven-roasted trout and vinaigrette-sluiced leeks, inspired by Billy's time in the kitchens of Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California, and, later, Watershed, the Decatur restaurant where Scott Peacock honed a vegetable-centric style that influenced a generation of young chefs.

Most chefs would next have zigged toward a burger bar or an upscale meat-and-three. Allin zagged toward Paris. More accurately, he conceived a casual, all-day restaurant inspired by his travels to France and to New York City, where expatriate French cafés and brasseries first gained traction in America.

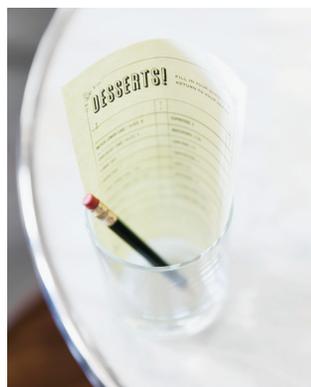
Bread & Butterfly focuses on French repertory cooking: Asparagus spears, embellished with brown butter and brightened by the saline pop of caper buds. Chicken liver mousse, skirted by silky brown ribbons of roasted onions. Grilled lamb chops, glossy with rosemary jus and tossed with olives.

Not all dishes follow the script. Baked Comté arrives wrapped in Italian prosciutto. A crazy-delicious German chocolate cake, garnished with chewy coconut rasps, tastes like it was lifted from the Americana playbook. Allin, a self-aware chef and restaurateur with a dry humor, calls the cumulative style Frenchlanta.

French restaurants were once the pinnacle of sophistication in the South. In the Atlanta of the 1980s, when I came alive to the joys of restaurant going, Guy Luck crafted pistachio-jeweled country pâtés and baked poofy brioche at Violette, set in a former bank. During

CAFÉ SOCIETY

From top, left to right: Guests in Bread & Butterfly's main dining room; cheese-stuffed prosciutto; rosé for two; sweets on offer; chef Rémi Granger; bistro touches; the B&B bar; the omelette du jour; the sunroom's neon sign.



★ FORK in the ROAD

that same era, Brasserie le Coze, in Lenox Square mall, seduced me with the sexy pleasures of wine-steamed mussels and frites. Over the ensuing decades, Atlantans left their fantasies of French indulgence behind. They fell hard, instead, for the cuisines of Vietnam and Korea, and rediscovered the cooking of their own backyard.

Since it opened, in late 2015, Bread & Butterfly has picked up the Gallic slack. To anchor that intent, Allin hired the chef Rémi Granger this spring. The menu, which is altogether his, shifts gracefully with the seasons. A native of Blois—an asparagus-growing center on the north bank of the Loire River—Granger grew up in a family of farmers and vintners. After working across town with Kevin Gillespie at Gunshow, he angled to cook the food of his grandparents. Today that's a typical narrative for a Southern-born chef, intent on exploring his forebears' cuisine. Turns out, that tack works for a chef with deep roots



BON APPÉTIT
Bread & Butterfly server Jamal Morris helps guests enjoy lunch.

in France, too.

Granger's fidelity, buoyed by the wine choices of Jordan Smelt, pays dividends at every turn. The *carte de vin*, which leans toward Burgundy and the Loire Valley and includes a roster of very reasonably priced carafes, makes it possible to also drink the sort of grower-crafted wines Granger's grandparents would have savored. Start with a bottle of La Châtelaine, a sprightly white Burgundy from Domaine de la Cadette, close with a bottle of Les Grézeaux, a barnyard-funky Chinon from Bernard Baudry, and all will soon be right with the world.

Before you queue for a seat, you

THE ALL-DAY ALL-STAR

Atlanta's Star Provisions gets a revamp

When Anne Quatrano and Clifford Harrison opened Star Provisions in Atlanta's Westside in 1999, they proved pioneers. Long before other restaurateurs combined shopping and all-day eats, the husband-and-wife team built an emporium with a charcuterie lab, cheese cave, bakery, sandwich counter, and housewares shop. (Then, as now, that space also served as an anteroom for Bacchanalia, their fine-dining restaurant.) Earlier this year, they relocated to an airy new Westside home and refreshed that concept to deliver the goods and goodness, from morning radishes with butter to late lunches of porchetta baguettes with broccoli rabe. starprovisions.com—**J.T.E.**

should know the origin of the name. The Bread-and-Butterfly is a fictional insect from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*: A bread loaf crust defines the body of Carroll's Bread-and-Butterfly. Thin slices of bread, glossy with butter, make up the wings.

Breakfast, lunch, or dinner at this gorgeously contrived café reveals the embedded metaphor. Like that creature, born of Carroll's imagination, French restaurants here in the South are fictions. Designed to entertain and divert, they remind us that public food and drink, cooked with care and served with kindness, promise escape as well as indulgence. On those promises, Bread & Butterfly delivers. ©