

G R E A T C H E F S O F B O S T O N

Brasserie Jo's French Onion Soup

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by Clint Hamblin

Brasserie Jo is located within the Colonnade Hotel at 120 Huntington Avenue in the heart of the Back Bay. Executive chef Nicholas Calias together with chef de cuisine Matthew Gaudet are maintaining the original culinary vision of world-renown chef Jean Joho, who developed the style, environment and classic cuisine of this traditional French-styled gathering place for eating, drinking and socializing. This surprisingly large restaurant features light snacks, fresh seafood, full meals and a wide selection of regional French wines and their very popular Alsace-style beer, "Hop Là," was created especially for Brasserie Jo.

With a great love and passion for food, Calias said, "We make every effort to acquire the freshest ingredients and produce quality dinners for our guests."

Dinner started with a Pâté Maison Platter which includes a variety of delicious pâté wedges to spread on a small slice of warm French bread. Two perfectly dressed salads followed – one made from Belgian Endive with Bleu d'Auvergne, and the second was an exceptional Salade Frisée Lyonnaise served with bacon and a poached egg.

Steak Tartare is making an appearance in many Boston restaurants, but very few are as delicious as Brasserie Jo's version served with Pomme Frites. Very cold beef with a slightly peppery taste that easily spreads on a piece of toast may make you wonder why we bother to cook meat.

What would any French brasserie be without Escargots en Cocotte in garlic butter? Tiny tender snails sit in a buttery concoction of garlic, cognac and herbs, and when the snails are gone, tear off a piece of French bread and wipe the dish clean. This is an incredibly delicious and classic French appetizer.

Jumbo Lump Crabcakes served with Watercress Coulis and Saffron Aioli was crunchy on the outside with tender and flavorful crab on the inside.

Sautéed Skate Wings with Capers and Pomme Purée made a brief appearance and was quickly devoured. Skate is not a fish seen on many menus, but this tender and light white fish is certainly worthy of entrée status. The Roasted Sea Bass served with White Beans and Piperade was also perfectly prepared. The fish falls apart at the touch of a fork, and the vegetables and white beans add a wonderful peasant food taste to this entrée.

And for dessert, how about a plate of profiteroles or cream puffs filled with a sweet dessert filling? Or a lemon tart with mixed fresh berries on top might be the perfect closer – unless you're into chocolate, and then the chocolate mousse should be your grand finale for this special eating experience.

What would any brasserie be without a classic French Onion Soup Gratinée served with Baked Croutons and Gruyère Cheese? This is just about as good as it gets, and what a beautiful presentation, with the melted cheese and chopped parsley on top, inviting you to break through with your spoon to savor that wonderful sweet onion taste and rich soup broth. Easy to make and even easier to eat, this



Chef de Cuisine Matthew Gaudet and Executive Chef Nicholas Calias

Brasserie Jo creation is well worth making at home.

**Brasserie Jo's
French Onion Soup****Ingredients**

2 pounds white onions – julienne
1 cup oil
1 liter veal or beef stock
1 liter chicken stock
1/3 liter water

2 cups marsala wine
Chopped parsley
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup shredded Jarlsberg cheese
1/2 pound sliced provolone cheese
3 each cubed baguettes
3 tablespoons oil

Preparation

Heat oil in a deep skillet and add onions. Sauté onions until they are deep brown and caramelized. Deglaze with marsala wine, and add veal or beef stock, chicken stock and water. Simmer for one hour. Season with salt and pepper.

Toss the cubed baguette with oil, salt and pepper. Place on a baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees until golden brown.

Pre-heat top broiler to high. Place soup in crock or dense bowl. Add croutons and top with sliced provolone and shredded Jarlsberg. Cook under broiler until golden brown. Sprinkle chopped parsley on top and serve.

Wine Pairing

Chateauneuf-du-Pape, Dom. de Vieux Lazaret '04

Signature Cocktail

The Martinique Martini is a fruity and delicious libation reminiscent of the tropics, but with the combination of orange rum, peach and pineapple flavors, the Martinique Martini might feel more like a breakfast drink.

Martinique Martini

3 part Bacardi O (orange rum)
1 part Creme de Peach
1 part Creme de Cassis
1 part pineapple juice
Splash of champagne

Shake it all up and serve.



The Martinique Martini