

Cognoscenti

magazine

Because life is short

Père Jeanty Yountville, California

Like its older sibling Bistro Jeanty, **Père Jeanty** is an evocation, a conjuration, a tribute to and remembrance of the type of restaurant that could more commonly be found in the French countryside in decades past.

We found Père Jeanty's décor pleasing enough. Rough tile floors, rattan-and-wood chairs, and textured wallpaper set the tone, with white lace dividing curtains softening the masculine effect. Chef Jeanty himself selected the antiques, and there are some very fine pieces among them.



A French country style bistro

Featured on the menu are plenty of steak and chops dishes, but the chef goes beyond mere steak sauce to jazz up his dishes in some really creative ways. A fig and prosciutto pizza with caramelized onions and gorgonzola was a study in contrast, a palate-teaser with varying degrees of sharpness and sweetness. Next a super-thick veal chop was slow-roasted then mesquite grilled and served with lovely peppery *jus* and *haricots verts*. Bone-in ribeye was also mesquite grilled, but this time matched with rich *béarnaise* sauce and fries. (Père Jeanty's *frites* deserve to win a "Best Napa Valley Bistro Fries" contest. They arrived at table exactly as fries should be: firm and crunchy on the outside, soft and pillowy on the inside.)

There was yet more pleasure to be discovered in the garnet depths of *M. Chapoutier's* Le Sizeranne Hermitage 1999. Drawn from the cellar as we ordered our meal, it arrived at table just above cellar temperature. Although we allowed the wine a full hour in

a decanter to warm up, it remained tight all evening. Maybe this cherry/cranberry flavored Chapoutier offering is just closed now, but it had some "unresolved issues," as they say... will its elements ever come into proper balance? Wine lovers, take note: Père Jeanty's wine card is well chosen and *very* well priced.

The restaurant's appealing country ambience extends to its friendly bar. Pausing here, we tried a *Château de Briat Baron de Pichon-Longueville* (N.V.) "Hors d'âge" Bas-Armagnac. Its orange and caramel flavor complex was nicely complemented by darker, more intriguing notes of prune and pecan pie. This was very fine for a N.V. offering.

This article was written by contributing editors to *Cognoscenti Magazine*. Photo courtesy of *Père Jeanty*.

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