

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[printer friendly](#)

[download pdf](#)

Published March 18th, 2009

Un, Deux, Trois-Voila!

By Linda U. Foley



Philippe Chevalier Photos Linda U. Foley

A squall of small tables, ambient lighting, a glowing Cherry wood bar, and French waiter greet us on a recent Wednesday night. 'Duo Gadgo,' a French American couple from Moraga, plays traditional chansons. A sense of de ja vu makes me feel as though I'm in a bistro at the Rive Gauche. . . minus the smoke and the Seine beyond the windows.

This is Chef Philippe Chevalier's first foray into running his own restaurant. His route to this point is layered with impressive haute cuisine experiences.

Born into a fishing family in the Vendee Region of France, Chevalier entered the culinary world in his early teens and by age 27 had earned the distinction of Executive Chef. His career path wound through the Michelin-studded venues of Paris (Maison Prunier), St. Tropez, St. Berthelemy, and the French West Indies. In 2002, he was ready to tickle the palettes across the ocean as Executive Chef at Le Salamandre in Danville. Just a year later, Diablo Magazine recognized him as the Best Chef of Bay Area restaurants. In 2004, his "chefing" at prestigious Chez Papa in San Francisco, resulted in the recognition of the Best French/European Restaurant in San Francisco by the Examiner.

Chevalier Restaurant is barely seven months old and is getting its legs. Though the restaurant is small and prone to being noisy, it feels comfortable and the wait staff is efficient and pleasant.

Eric Lacombe, from Montpellier in the south of France, is one of just two waiters tending to a full house. While Eric allows me to sample one wine, the other waiter notices my camera and offers to take a picture mid-stride.

I choose a glass of Stone Street Chardonnay at \$14 from an extensive wine list and it is good once it has "warmed up" a bit.

The menu-nearly as large as our table-brims with largely Provencal-inspired classics such as onion soup, oysters, escargot, foie gras, mussels, charcuterie and coq au vin. For something less French, there is pork from Iowa, Hawaiian Ahi tuna, Colorado lamb and homemade gnocci.

There are daily specials such as Bouillabaise and traditional Cassoulet.

We decide on escargot, salad with mustard dressing, Sole Almandine and

Rabbit in Cream Sauce, followed by warm apple tart. The rabbit was velvety like a young happy chicken, the vegetables fresh and cooked to a light crunch and the tart apples were perfect on the light and crispy tart.

Chevalier-which translates into Knight-is more like a king in his narrow galley-style kitchen as well as the perfect host as he checks on his guests to assure that they are happy.

Though Chevalier is on the pricey side, the food and ambience make it worth to enjoying a small and perfect piece of France right in our backyard.

Bon appetit and au revoir!

Chevalier Restaurant
960 Moraga Road
Lafayette 385-0793

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[back to top](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA