

Le Petit Bistro

★★★★

8 East Market St.
Rhinebeck
(845) 876-7400**PRICE RANGE:** Appetizers
\$5.50-\$7.95; and
Entrees \$17.95-27.95**RESERVATIONS:**

Recommended

HOURS: Open for dinner
Thursday-Monday**CREDIT CARDS:** All major
credit cards accepted**HANDICAP****ACCESSIBLE:** YesFood: ★★★★★
Atmosphere: ★★★★★
Service: ★★★★★
Value: ★★★★★**What the stars mean:**

(none) Poor

★Fair

★★Good

★★★Very Good

★★★★Excellent

The stars are not meant to be used as a way to compare this restaurant to others. Each establishment is judged independently. Opinions are strictly those of the reviewer, who visits the restaurant only once, and readers are urged to try the restaurant for themselves.

Rhinebeck restaurant excels on all levels

By **CARIE GONZALES**

STEPPING through Le Petit Bistro's unassuming storefront in Rhinebeck, it becomes immediately apparent where its name comes from.

Yes, the dining room is small and the kitchen is even smaller. The dark wood paneled dining room with wide plank floors is brightened only with dim lighting and crisp white tablecloths. The room feels intimate and out-of-the-way, not at all limited by its size. My husband and I secured a Friday night reservation. We were quickly seated and offered cocktails from the semicircular bar that is the dining room's centerpiece.

USING local produce and meats when possible, Chef Joseph Dalu creates dishes that reflect the bounty of our region.

Appetizer choices include a house pate (\$6.50) and a half smoked trout (\$6.25). Fondue Bruxelloise (\$5.75) or Swiss cheese croquettes were simple, light, and crisp. The Potage du Jour was a white bean and escarole soup served with a dollop of pesto. The soup's base was a rich chicken broth, hearty enough to warm a per-

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son on the still chilly spring evening. A salad is also included with all entrees. Fresh mixed greens were tossed with a tangy vinaigrette.

THE BISTRO'S regular menu is composed of classical French dishes including roasted duck, frog's legs, and Dover sole. The traditional Carré d'agneau Roti (\$22.95) was excellent. Tender, rosy lamb chops were nearly upstaged by the scalloped potatoes served alongside. While many regular customers rely on the bistro's regular menu, the chef uses nightly specials as a way to broaden his own and the diner's culinary horizons. Often there are as many special entrees written on the blackboard as there are on the regular menu. The night we dined, a Latin inspired Grilled Cobia (\$18.95) was offered. The large chunk of the meaty fish stood up nicely to the dark and spicy mole sauce that draped it. Rice along with a crisp and fresh pico de gallo tempered the heat and added a nice crunch.

Make sure to save room for the bistro's homemade desserts. Light cream cheese icing topped

a spicy and rich carrot cake. The lemon tart was creamy and super tangy with a light flaky crust. Pecan pie is always a favorite.

IN THE DINING ROOM service is as friendly as it is flawless. Knowledgeable and enthusiastic descriptions of special dishes make the choice even more difficult. The expert staff leaves no small detail overlooked.

Le Petit Bistro excels on all the levels a fine restaurant should, where a professional

staff and elegant surroundings complement the quality of the food. These elements all come together to make one of the tastiest and most pleasant dining experiences in the Hudson Valley.

Carie Gonzales is a baker living in the Hudson Valley. You can e-mail her at cariegonzales@yahoo.com.

Rhinebeck Farmers Market off to a fresh start, despite gray skies

By **Darrell F. Kuhn**
Staff Reporter

One of the Village of Rhinebeck's summer season attractions has begun.

The Rhinebeck Farmers Market kicked off its ninth year on Sunday, May 25 in the municipal parking lot on East Market Street. The first day of the market drew a large turnout of people eager to purchase fresh agricultural products from local farms and merchants.

Vendors on hand at the market sell a wide variety of products such as fruits, vegetables, plants, honey, pickles, relishes, soaps, meats, cheeses, flowers, and plants. Bread, wine, and other products are also for sale.

Ray Tousey, the president of the Rhinebeck Farmers Market's Board of Directors, said that everyone has been eagerly awaiting the market to open for the season, especially after the long win-

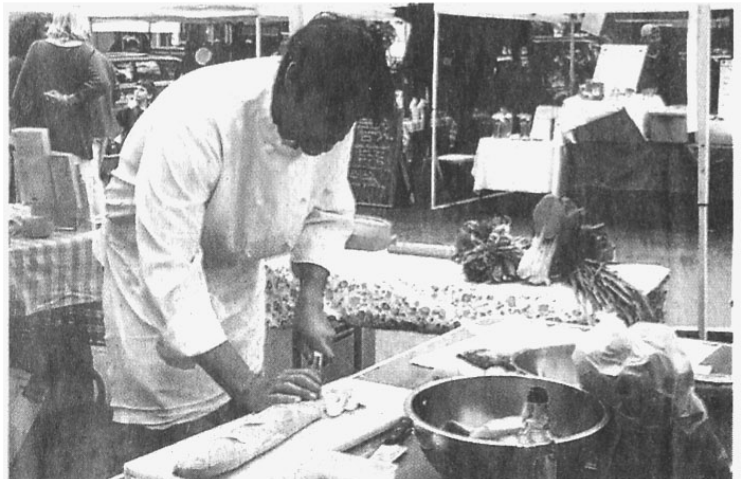
ter. Tousey said that the Rhinebeck Farmers Market is a showcase for local agricultural products. Vendors selling their products at the market, Tousey said, come from Dutchess, Columbia, Greene, and Ulster Counties.

"We are trying to represent as much local produce as we can possibly offer," said Tousey. "We try to offer the public as much of a variety as we can. This is a nice turnout for the opening day. There is a lot of enthusiasm."

Elizabeth Ryan, the owner of Breezy Hill Orchard in Clinton Corners, is a vendor at the market. Ryan said that the Rhinebeck Farmers Market is an event everyone looks forward to all winter long. Ryan, who is also a founding member of the market, said that the market is an event that brings the community together.

"This really enforces what a small town community is all about," said Ryan.

(Continued on Page A8)



A SALAD LESSON: Joseph Dalu, the chef and owner of Le Petit Bistro in the Village of Rhinebeck, prepares to give a demonstration on making salads at the Farmers Market opening on Sunday, May 25. (Photo by Darrell F. Kuhn)