

Flagey's posh new cantine

Place Flagey is the cool place to be, even if it's a building site. Now that Le Variétés has opened and brought tables and chairs onto the pavement opposite the church, the old radio building even has a restaurant.

It started off quietly. At first I thought the linen tablecloths and tall wine glasses looked a little classy for the neighbourhood and that this would put people off. I was wrong. Every day, I see more people inside.

The restaurant's main feature is a two-metre roasting contraption, which allows the meat to turn slowly around a flame until it is cooked to perfection and its surface a golden brown. Thanks to a system of metal spits and chains, the meat is suspended and most of the fat can drip away while it cooks.

How did my "*jambonneau laquée*" with honey, lime and four spices" taste? The knuckle of ham was tender and lean, the flavour of the honey was just right, though the lime could have been more prominent.

The menu features the trendy dishes of the Belgian culinary repertoire: asparagus, *foie gras*, *carpaccio*, beef *tartare* and risotto, carefully executed, with original touches like home-grilled dried tomatoes that tasted fabulous, and fresh goat cheese, flavoured with honey and lavender seeds.

The wine list is extensive and French. I opted for a glass of the house wine, which proved to be an above average Chardonnay. A three-course meal will set you back around €35, without the wine. But the service and atmosphere – and the beautiful reconstruction of a late 1930s interior – are worth it. At lunchtime, there's a two-course menu for €15 and you can enjoy a drink on the terrace outside. **Maria Tarantino Le Variétés, 4 Place Ste Croix, Brussels (Ixelles), tel 02.647.04.36.**

Open every day from noon to 2.30 pm and 6.30 pm until midnight.

OK, these are Le Creuset's new balti dishes, but they would still do your merguez proud.
From €41.75. Tel
056.35.42.00 for info

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