

REVIEW

Vogue Bistro

ITS STRIP-MALL LOCATION IN SURPRISE IS A SURPRISE, INDEED, BECAUSE THIS FRENCH BISTRO WITH FLAVORFUL FARE IS WORTH A DRIVE.

ON THE LEFT SIDE OF MY TABLE at Vogue Bistro, I've got a plate of duck confit (\$24). It's pretty, the meaty bird leg bronzed in its own fat and nestled atop a savory stew of fava bean and carrot cassoulet. On the right, there sits a hamburger (\$8), the thick, juicy patty perched on a brioche bun and wearing a precariously tall top hat of arugula, applewood smoked bacon, caramelized onion chutney and pungent Gorgonzola.

In the middle of the table, there's charcuterie (\$9), fanning oil-glistened salami and cured meats alongside rough chopped pâté, petite sausages, olives and toasted almonds with warm baguette and Dijon mustard. And to the back, there's meatloaf (\$15), steeped in rich sherry sauce, plus a plate of lobster tempura (\$7).

It's a decidedly delicious, eclectic display, and even more unexpected is the place in which I'm eating it all. Vogue Bistro opened last March in Surprise, plunked in a typical strip mall that backs up to a ubiquitous sea of tile-roofed homes. Such obscurity is exactly what attracted co-owners Roman Yasinsky and chef Aurore de Beauduy Yasinky to the ZIP code. The French-born and Le Cordon Bleu-trained chef with more than 20 years experience in three- and four-star restaurants across France and the U.S. relocated to Arizona in 2005 and took a job as executive chef at Silverleaf Country Club in Scottsdale's DC Ranch. Scottsdale, she soon found, meant intense competition for the dining dollar and also necessitated higher prices than she wanted to charge.

So now, after I've finished rubbing my eyes over the reasonable prices here - nothing costs more than \$24 and most entrées max out at \$15 - I put my hands to much better use wielding a fork.

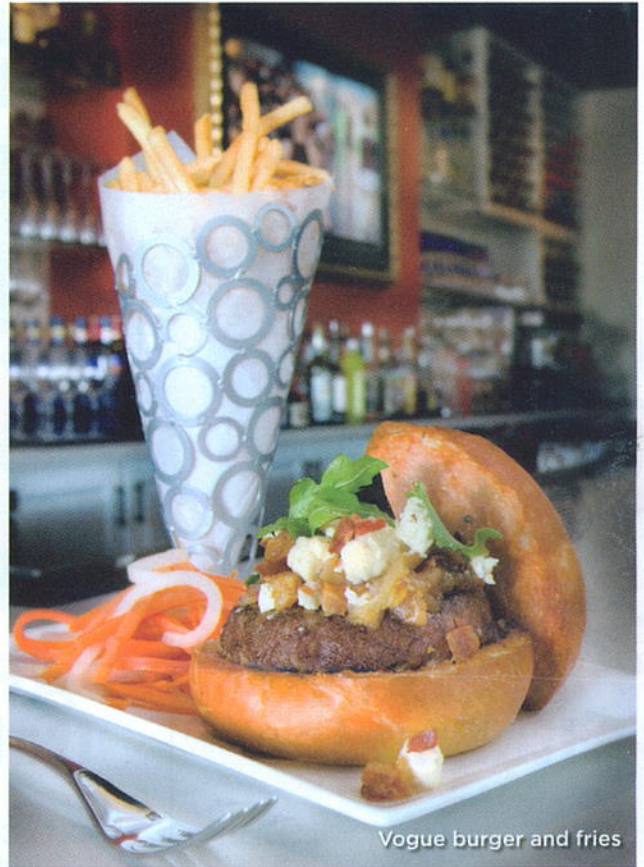
At first glance, Vogue is nearly a parody of French restaurant clichés, with its raven-haired chef donning a stylish black cap and jacket, a glittering chandelier dangling above a sleek marble and leather bar and the quintessential butter-drenched escargot (\$7) gracing the menu. The significance of the Vogue name isn't subtle: A TV screen shows prancing models on a catwalk, and a list of a dozen martinis carry the names of fashion gods like Dior, Chanel, Prada and Versace. Side dishes are aptly labeled "accessories."

Yet, happily, the experience isn't stuffy, and the food isn't at all frou-frou. Indeed, serious French-craving diners from all parts of the Valley would do well to hop on the freeway for this cooking.

Chef Aurore prefers lighter flavors, using more vinaigrettes than butter and cream, and keeps things bistro-casual with such dishes as the silky house-smoked salmon appetizer accented with crème fraîche and capers (\$9). I love the punchy, julienne ginger amid the frito misto of calamari and carrot (\$5), delicately tempura fried and served with saffron aioli. *Foie gras* (\$12) is the most indulgent part of the meal, cured in Cognac and spread with sweet fig-apple compote on brioche toast.

The entrée list is friendly and well-executed. Kudos to the Steak Vogue (\$15) - an onget (hanger) cut prepared medium rare - for being suitably chewy and deeply flavorful under brandied peppercorn sauce, served with a side of crisp fries. I'm also smitten by Vogue's nod to American fare with a twist: Mac and cheese (\$3) gets sassy with smoky truffles and salty pancetta.

But chef Aurore really shines with her specials, generally offering two or three fancier choices each night. Hers is one of the best beef Wellingtons (\$24) I've enjoyed, the rose-pink tenderloin baked in crackly-crustured puff



Vogue burger and fries

pastry and juicy with wild mushrooms, *foie gras* and scalloped mousse.

If there are any missteps in Vogue's runway walk, they're found in the desserts. Not that there's anything wrong with the lovely crème brûlée (\$5), pineapple tatin (\$5) or housemade truffles (\$5). It's just that, with her skills, the chef must have some spectacular confectionary tricks she's not yet sharing.

— Carey Sweet can be reached at phxmag@citieswestpub.com.

DETAILS

Vogue Bistro

Cuisine: French

Address: 15411 W. Waddell Road (Marley Park Plaza), Surprise

Phone: 623-544-9109

Website: voguebistro.com

Hours: 11 a.m. to midnight, Tuesday through Saturday

Recommendations: *Foie gras* cured in Cognac and spread with sweet fig-apple compote on brioche toast; Steak Vogue, hanger-cut, prepared medium rare, with brandied peppercorn sauce; beef Wellington baked in puff pastry, with wild mushrooms, *foie gras* and scalloped mousse.