



# PRESS RELEASE

Press contact : Jacky G. Lesellier CONM CMA

## THE TIMES SATURDAY REVIEW (Novembre 1990)

THE BAGATELLE  
CONCEPT Ltd

704-711 Tudor Estate

Abbey Road

London NW10 7UW

Tel : 020 8453 8000

Fax : 020 8453 8001

Order Department

Tel : 020 8453 8025

Fax : 020 8453 8026

BAGATELLE  
BOUTIQUE

44 Harrington Road

London SW7 3NB

Tel : 020 7581 1551

Fax : 020 7591 0517

### Crossing the pain barrier

**W**ith the Channel tunnel barely joined, a beachhead has already been established in Southwest London. Walk down Harrington Road from Queen's Gate, towards South Kensington Tube station, and there on the left, just before Pineapple Dance Studio, you could swear you were in the avenue Victor Hugo - in Gaston Lenôte's amazing cakery, to be exact.

That, it seems, was the idea behind Bagatelle, the new pâtisserie-boulangerie in the long-established French quarter of London (Institut Français, Lycée, French Bookshop, Androuet's cheese at Jeroboams), and they have certainly got the ingredients right. Of the five young women who staff the place, two are fresh from the Paris emporium of the great Gaston, none as yet is fluent in English and all, anyway, are under instructions to greet customers with the traditional "Bonjour monsieur, dame".

The French connection does not end there. This pale-pink, pale-green shrine to the higher pâtisserie was designed by Lenôte's own architect, Gilbert Harmon, and fitted out by his fitter-out, Essour Fournil. And - leaving no stone unturned - the whole shebang was dreamt up and is run by one Jacky Lesellier, who (you are beginning to get the picture?) just happened to be the maître pâtissier's right-hand man. That is just the front of house: the chef pâtissier and his right-hand man are also alumni of what is unarguably the planet's finest academy of baking.

The mix has produced a sort of miracle of displacement: nothing has been lost in translation. The place, with its wealth of breads, cakes, pastries (and a delicatessen counter), has that look of controlled

cornucopia, of clinical sensuality that hitherto one had associated only with the classier establishments of Paris. St Quentin, in the same area, is fine, but still a pâtisserie du quartier; Cannelle, in the Fulham Road, so insistently minimalist that it displays only one cake in its windows, is very, very good and also Lenôte-inspired, but - need one say more? - gets its breads from Bagatelle.

**U**ntil now you would have to wake up at the crack of noon in your suite at the Savoy, Claridge's or the Ritz to savour these baguettes (full-length, unlike their stunted cousins in the supermarkets, with eight - count them - knife slashes), normands, perigourdines, provençales and viennoises, made from seven different flours imported from Les Moulins de Brasseuil and delivered here, as in France, fresh three times a day. I found the cakes, croissants, brioches, tarts and petits fours I tasted here in no way inferior to those for which I used to cross Paris to buy from Lenôte in the 16th arrondissement. There are ices, sorbets and fruit coulis to go with the cakes and chocolates - and all the ingredients come from France.

Another French touch - required there by law - is that the functions are separate; the staff who handle the goodies do not touch the readies. Apart from the hygienic advantages of this, it has the merit of leaving those serving you more time to do so - and more time to prepare your cakeaway, with ribbons and things. A national talent this: French women have fingers the way other women have hands.

The place is open daily from 8am to 8pm, and from 8am to 3pm on Sunday. Go to Paris, of course, if you can. If not, see you at Bagatelle - but make it soon. My fear is that such peerless quality is rarely maintained without that other French ingredient: an informed and demanding clientele.