

Weekend

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Eating Out

At Bistro St. Tropez, the food is French; the view, Philadelphian

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While the view from Bistro St. Tropez offers a splendid cityscape tableau, it certainly can't compete with the breathtaking panorama of the Mediterranean one gets from Nice.

But to Patrice Rames, who attended culinary school in the Riviera resort, it's the perfect background for his contemporary French food served with artistic flair at some extremely reasonable prices.

Rames, 34, the proprietor and a product of Le Bec-Fin, opened Bistro in 1987 on the third floor of the Marketplace, a design center at 24th and Market that deals strictly with architects, designers and those in related businesses.

By 1992, Rames had moved up to the fourth floor. This gave him a much larger space, and — more important — a kitchen he designed. Plus there was the shimmering view of the Schuylkill, 30th Street Station and, depending on the seat, the Art Museum.

The restaurant also has a cafe-like setup outside the main dining area, around the corner from the elevators. It's not the most ex-

Dining Find

BISTRO ST. TROPEZ

The Market Place
2400 Market St.
215-569-9269

Open: Lunch 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. Dinner 5:30 to 10 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays.

Price range: Lunch \$5.75 to \$9.95. Dinner \$9.95 to \$14.95.

Credit cards: Yes.

Nonsmoking section: Yes.

Atmosphere: Bistro with a city view. ☺

otic arrangement; something like dining in an office hallway, but sometimes at lunch that's all that is available.

Which is quite a testament to Rames' food.

At lunch there are soups, salads, hot and cold sandwiches. Delicious LeBus bread is used, and garnishes range from tomato-on-

ion chutney to pesto and cumin-flavored slaw. There also are a few entrees and pastas du jour; all are served on oversized plates and are pleasingly presented.

A pureed soup of roasted peppers and eggplant (\$2.50) sounded more intriguing than it tasted, but the onion soup (\$2.75) was a classic creation, light and delicate, and not sealed over with thick layers of rubbery cheese.

Fried Chinese-style dumplings (\$3.95) were crisp and greaseless, filled with a centerpiece of minced shrimp and flavorful enough on their own to not need the rather tasty dipping sauce.

Grilled mako shark (\$9.95), an entree special, came with a lemongrass salsa, whipped rosemary potatoes and sauteed string beans. At dinner, a pan-roasted salmon (\$13.95) also uses lemongrass.

While dinner features numerous catch-of-the-day fish, there are meat entrees as well, and even the likes of pork medallions with caramelized apple and onions (\$10.95), and sauteed sweetbreads with a morel reduction sauce (\$12.95).

A full-service bar offers wines by the glass, and there are chic and memorable desserts. Best to make reservations for dinner.