



The Great Cupola

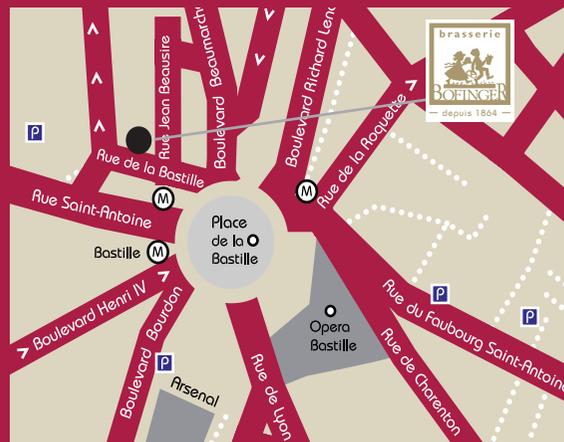
It started out as a windowless courtyard which was long used as a place to store coal. An oval cupola was added in 1919 to provide light and to decorate it; adorned with floral motifs, it was made by glass painters Gaston Néret (who also worked with Hector Guimard) and Royé. In the centre of the room, a service table enhanced with wisteria (which replaced the original stork) separates the 32 most sought-after tables in the restaurant.

The walls around the room are adorned with friezes, medallions on canvass and paintings representing winemaking towns. The herons and Barbotine ceramics spread throughout the venue are by Jerome Massier (the Massier dynasty is believed to have founded Vallauris ceramics).



The Staircase

It has a wide curve and provides a panoramic view over the Great Cupola room. It features a very fine wrought-iron bannister decorated with plant motifs. As you climb the staircase, look for an inlay work by Charles Spindler representing Strasbourg Cathedral (the Spindler firm in Alsace is still in business to this day).



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Open Mondays to Fridays from noon to 3 pm
and from 6:30 pm to midnight. Open Saturdays
from noon to 3:30 pm and from 6:30 pm to midnight.
Open Sundays non-stop from noon to 11 pm.
In August, closes weekdays at 11 pm.

Metro: Bastille (Lines 1, 5 and 8)

Car Park Saint-Antoine
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BRASSERIE



BOFINGER

Discover the story
behind a Parisian institution

The birth of the most Alsatian brasserie in Paris

Founded in 1864 by Alsatian Frédéric Bofinger at number 5, Petite Rue Saint Antoine (renamed Rue de la Bastille in 1877), “the most beautiful brasserie in Paris” was to mark the French capital’s history. For it was in this very establishment that the city’s first-ever draft pump was installed. So that year, Parisians were given to discover “draft” beer – which at the time came in at 18% to 25% ABV.

Ever since the days of the French Monarchy, Alsatians had taken to settling down in the Saint-Antoine neighbourhood in order to work as carpenters and furniture makers. Those craftsmen would come here to drink beer, bringing their own mug as tradition demanded at the time. In fact, the shop sign logo shows a young Alsatian girl holding a kugelhof and a young Alsatian boy with his beer mug and a pretzel, both running towards the brasserie.

Belle Époque enhancements

During the Belle Époque, Mr Bofinger’s son-in-law took over the venue, which was extended from number 5 to number 3 while being modernised and enhanced. The Cupola Room was built on the site of a former coal storage area, and two new dining rooms took the place of a dairy shop and bakery, whose columns can still be seen. From 1919 to 1921, architect Legay, interior decorator Mitgen and master glassmakers Néret and Royé got together to provide Bofinger with the kind of splendour that led it to be known as “the most beautiful brasserie in Paris”.

A prestigious setting

WWII brought an end to Bofinger’s success. Then when Eric de Rothschild and Isidore Urtizverea purchased the brasserie in 1968, the stars of the Paris smart set in arts and politics started flocking back to Bofinger’s, where François Mitterrand himself chose to celebrate his election as President. On March 13th, 1989, Bofinger was listed on the Supplementary Historical Monuments Inventory.

A sparkling brasserie

In 1996, Flo Group founder Jean-Paul Bucher acquired Bofinger, which went on to do a roaring trade that continues to this day. Regulars, tourists, celebrities, fans of the first dining room (more discrete, but where one can see and be seen) as well as those seeking the privacy of the first-floor lounges, are all here to cast a respectful glance at the wisteria beautifully blossoming beneath the majestic cupola, and to delight in the Chef’s tasty specialities. One has to admit that life sparkles like a champagne bubble at Bofinger’s... Could it be the Genie of the Bastille?



It’s a story...



The Five Continents Lounge (or Left-Wing Cartel Lounge)

During the International Colonial Exhibition in 1931, the walls of this lounge were adorned with wood inlays by Panzani, representing the five continents, once in the daytime and once at night. The chandeliers were made by the Müller Brothers, master glassmakers in Luneville.

This is the very room where Radical Party Chairman Edouard Herriot founded the “Left-Wing Cartel” in 1924.

The Gambrinus stained-glass window

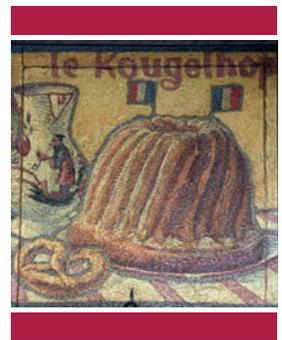
The lounge features a stained-glass window by Néret, showing Gambrinus sitting on his barrel. This character is the symbol for beer drinkers, representing good cheer and happy living in the Flemish tradition.



The Hansi Lounge



Named after artist Jean-Jacques Waltz, aka Hansi, who illustrated the woodwork on the walls of this private lounge, and who also created the establishment’s shop sign logo. He used to dine there with Curnonsky, the famed French gastronome, humourist and food critic dubbed “the Prince of Gastronomy”. One of the walls features Spindler’s “Village Wedding”, where the “Vive la France” (Long Live France) inscription had been replaced during the German occupation by the words “Vive le Vin” (Long Live Wine).



The Specialities

Beyond the very warm-hearted and friendly décor, there is much to explore among Bofinger specialities, like sea sauerkraut, homemade foie gras, not to mention the famed kugelhof.

The seafood counter serves up fresh, tasty platters every day. Oysters and shellfish big and small have been menu highlights ever since the Bofinger adventure began, for the customers’ everlasting delight.

