



**Just Opened: Sips Bistro & Bar,
Bringing French Cuisine to Bridge Street
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Phoenixville has a new addition to their already-diverse dining scene with the opening of Sips Bistro & Bar, a restaurant and bar that brings comfortable, classic French cuisine to Bridge Street. The creation of owner Fabien Chaigneau, Sips is located in the restaurant space of the historic Chester Hotel, and it couldn't be a more perfect place to bring such a unique restaurant to the area.

The warm, antique feeling of the interior can easily pull you back in time, and Fabien said the space, to him, brought about ideals of La Belle Époque, or "The Beautiful Era" in France. For those that have seen the movie "Midnight in Paris," it is easy to see La Belle Époque in this historic building. From the original, polished wood of the bar, to the converted patio, with the hitching posts for the carriages still intact, there isn't a place quite like it in Phoenixville. Sips also offers outdoor seating in their private courtyard, complete with small pond and fountain.

Having spent some time in France in the past year, this was so reminiscent of a place we could just pop into after strolling through the streets of Paris, perhaps around the corner from the Eiffel Tower, and grab a lovely bite to eat over candlelight.

While visiting Sips, I had the chance to taste three of Fabien's dishes, and let me tell you, there is no doubt in my mind that this restaurant will be a hit. Fresh ingredients and simple, classic cooking techniques produce amazing, high-quality dishes—and that's just what the selections offer. The menu is divided into sections such as "Tartines," "Salades" and "Specialities," and I was able to taste a bit from each one.

I started my tasting with the Tartine de Saumon fume, which was smoked salmon on country bread, with a lemon crème fraiche and capers, served with a fresh, leafy green salad. The combination was simply divine. The citrus crème fraiche was the perfect juxtaposition to the deep smokiness of the salmon, with the tart of the capers tying the dish together.

Next, I was able to taste the Lyonnaise Salad, which is a new favorite of mine, and as I know I have written before, everything is better with an egg on top. This was a Frisee salad, with sautéed potatoes, bacon, and a mustard emulsion, topped with a poached egg. Heaven. The egg was cooked perfectly, and the mustard emulsion was a great flavor that flawlessly complemented the potatoes and bacon.

The final dish I sampled—and one I was most excited about—was the Moules Frites. Fabien specializes in seafood, and this dish was not a disappointment. Mussels

cooked in white wine, shallots, herbs and butter were simply, melt-in-your-mouth perfect. The rich, buttery sauce was so flavorful, I swore that there must be additional ingredients, but no...simplicity and technique are key here. Fabien informed me that the only thing you would find in his walk-in freezer would be ice. Everything is fresh and of the highest quality, and in this dish, you could really tell the word "shortcut" is not in the dictionary at this restaurant.

Sips just received their liquor license, and has just begun to serve lunch as well. The wine list and specialty cocktails should be available by the end of August, and some of the beers have already been tapped!

Fabien hopes that in the next months, Sips cannot only be the place you bring your loved one for date nights, but the place you can stop in for some lunch, or for a bite to eat during happy hour. May I recommend hopping in your car this weekend, turning on "Si tu vois ma mère," and driving to some of the best, and most affordable, French cuisine around?

For more information on Sips, you can visit their website or Facebook page. Sips is located at 400 Bridge Street in Phoenixville, and you can call them at 484-924-9721. Make a reservation by using OpenTable, by clicking [here](#).