

## Best Bites Blog

Daily dispatches on the Washington, DC area's food, restaurant and dining scene.

### **LIVE! from Adour at The St. Regis: The First-Ever Real-Time Restaurant Review**

By [Todd Kliman](#) | September 9, 2008

Food and Wine editor and restaurant critic **Todd Kliman**, via Blackberry and Twitter, takes a long, hard look at **Alain Ducasse's Adour** at The St. Regis on opening night.

- A final thought ... One of the hardest things for a restaurant to develop is an identity. It'll be interesting to see whether Adour can ... [about 11 hours ago](#)
- Speaking of a workout: I could use one about now ... [about 11 hours ago](#)
- I'll tell you - I don't know how many of these things, these Tweets, I've sent, but my thumbs have gotten a workout. [about 11 hours ago](#)
- And - three critics' scorecards (okay, Adour-cards) from opening night, in order to give you a complete, if cubist-ic, picture of night 1. [about 11 hours ago](#)
- What's in store? Well, a video Feedback, for one - in which diners share with us their first-night impressions ... [about 11 hours ago](#)
- And as I mentioned on today's chat - be sure to tune in to the website tomorrow at 11 for part 2 of our coverage ... [about 11 hours ago](#)
- And I hope you all got something out of this and had a good time keeping up ... [about 11 hours ago](#)
- It's been anxious-making, and fun. I hope the posts were not so lengthy that they exceeded the Tweet-count ... [about 11 hours ago](#)
- Whoever's out there, and reading along with this, the first-ever real-time restaurant
- At these prices, and with this pedigree, I would have liked to have seen more in the way of risk. [about 11 hours ago](#)
- At this point, I think it's more the kind of place you are taken to (if someone springs for the tab) than a place you splurge for. But it's early ... [about 11 hours ago](#)
- No home run, and the expectation, frankly, is sky-high: an exquisite experience. It's not that. ... [about 11 hours ago](#)
- I'd say - I'm interested to see how Adour settles in ... [about 11 hours ago](#)
- Allowing for opening night kinks - they're inevitable - and overlooking the frills that came my way ... [about 11 hours ago](#)
- Final thoughts ... [about 11 hours ago](#)
- The chocolate, especially. Wow. I almost think Ducasse should consider opening up a confection shop in the lobby, just to sell them. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- Before, I said that I kept coming back to the bread. Now, it's the macaroons I keep coming back to ... [about 12 hours ago](#)

- Ah, so we learn Monsieur Ducasse has been reading the blog all night ... [about 12 hours ago](#)
- And we're done ... Eight minutes shy of four hours. I do like to linger ... [about 12 hours ago](#)
- Terrific coffee: an Ethiopian blend, dark, dark, the beans taken almost to the point of overroasting. But not quite. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- The David Rockwell design is simple and unfussy: lit wine racks frame the room, dark wood floors echo the old, wooden beams above. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- I've said it before, but it bears repeating: the room glows. Gold, glowing gold in the soft light. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- Then again, there IS a bounty on our table. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- Quick to fold the napkin - quick to notice, quick to respond. Good drilling. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- And - he's gone. A tasting menu, plus an extra app, plus wines - \$160-170, easily. And he's gone before we are ... [about 12 hours ago](#)
- The guy next to us, his macaroon tray: beat up, demolished. He picked them up, squeezed them, plucked their essence out. Now, just remains ... [about 12 hours ago](#)
- Superb. They're better than the macaroons at the celebrated Laduree, in Paris. And that's saying something. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- Ah, I forgot to mention ... A tray of macaroons, eight of them. The guy next to us gets them, too [about 12 hours ago](#)
- With dessert, we have achieved lift-off ... [about 12 hours ago](#)
- I'd say, right now, it's my new favorite dessert in the city. Kudos to the pastry chef, Fabrice Bendano. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- The signature dessert at all Ducasse's restaurants. I can see why. Very hard to do a good baba. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- And, a gift: the baba au rhum. Sliced tableside, armagnac poured atop it. Whipped cream dolloped on. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- Gala apple souffle. A touch undercooked, with a wonderful vanilla ice cream. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- The first bottle of Dom has just been sold. To the table next to us. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- A terrific dessert, neat balancing of components: cold, creamy, rich, icy, breadly, milky. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- A strawberry and rhubarb panna cotta with a strawberry granite and Botock brioche, filled with almond paste. [about 12 hours ago](#)
- Okay, what I've been waiting for: desserts are superb, the best course by far tonight ... [about 12 hours ago](#)
- A flash goes off: guy next to us snaps a pic with his camera phone. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- Coffee, we're told, is served with dessert, not after. An American thing. The French serve it after. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- Weird: the music's BETTER in the men's room. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- Room almost at capacity now, and a real buzz at the bar; you'd think the place had been open for months ... [about 13 hours ago](#)
- "That was a year of legendary frost," sez my friend. He knows his frosts. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- There's a 1991 Sauternes, Chateau d'Yquem, on the dessert menu. \$125/glass [about 13 hours ago](#)
- Wine list = about 60% French. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- Ramon was high on the Neyers Chard, to go with the sweetbreads. Eh. Not really a match. Lotta oak and butter, not enough acid. [about 13 hours ago](#)

- Celeb sighting - well, what passes for celebrity in DC: Tom Daschle's in the house, at the 8-top in the center. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- Back to the table. My napkin folded into a perfect triangular tent. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- Might've been sitting under a heat lamp, waiting for me to return from "the bathroom." [about 13 hours ago](#)
- Forgot to mention: the foie gras was a big slab - bigger, perhaps, than normal? And cooked past pink inside ... [about 13 hours ago](#)
- And the sweetbreads. ... There's a classicism, almost a conservatism, about the menu ... [about 13 hours ago](#)
- The bread and the amuse, a shotglass of tuna tartare and just enough fresh ginger to register. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- I keep coming back to the bread - baked by Epi d'Or (spelling?), the company that does all his breads. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- A good dish. A very good dish. But a great dish? No, not a great dish. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- I don't think the potato rounds add much; they're pedestals, soaking up sauce. Pedestrian pedetals. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- The squab is gamey, in a very good way - lots of character - and the salmis sauce (gout sauce, we tell the waiter) is deep and reduced. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- Just a hint of lemon, or lemon verbena?, in the steamed bok choy. The sweetbreads are thick, meaty, succulent. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- A very good dish, and again, the colors. Palette of Vermeer. [about 13 hours ago](#)
- An inside joke, a reference to when I took him to Cynthia's, in Severna Park, and he took a bite of gorgeous, thick foie with caramelized peach and asked his wife
- Sweetbreads with bok choy and veal jus. My friend says: what are the real estate prices around here? [about 14 hours ago](#)
- The main courses ... [about 14 hours ago](#)
- He's one of these guys - a guy on whom nothing is lost. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- Ducking out into the stairwell, I run into the bartender. Asks about my meal. Been here 30 years. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- I'm in love with the Cahors. It's earthy but elegant, very well-extracted, lots of fruit - and lots of finesse. Goes well with the squab and the sweetbreads ... [about 14 hours ago](#)
- Now that's a diner! ... Or, well - at least a big-spender [about 14 hours ago](#)
- Waiter comes over. Turns out, he's getting the tasting menu. \$110. But he wants my appetizer, too. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- Guy to my right, looks at my entree. Good? he asks. We suggest the pressed foie gras and chicken. He nods. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- The room glows. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- If you pour your heart into good food and drink, shouldn't you honor good music, too? Real music, music with feeling. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- What's with the music? Inoffensive electronica. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- As a matter of fact, there are a good number of bottles for thirty-seventy on the menu [about 14 hours ago](#)
- A glass of Cahors, for our next course. From who? I'll have to check. It sells for thirty a bottle. Good for Ducasse. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- Would I come back for it? That's the question. And the answer is: no. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- The dish is interesting, but it's more an assemblage of good things than a delicious dish that lingers long after in the mind [about 14 hours ago](#)

- The greens: Bibb lettuce puree, and grilled Romaine. The red; crispy prociutto. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- And it's a wonderfully colorful dish, wonderfully harmonized: greens and reds and golds. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- Just barely enough flour to keep the ricotta from running. Gorgeous. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- The gnocchi were described to us as pillowy. They are. Almost the texture of poached eggs. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- The Riesling is a good match, a very good match. Is there anything that doesn't go with a Theise wine? Maybe moonpies. Then again ... [about 14 hours ago](#)
- Do I like the dish? I do, very much. Do I love it? Almost. But love is too, too strong. It doesn't inspire that kind of emotion. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- Why does Tyson's come to mind? Surely, not the flavor, the artistry. An Americanism: pressed chicken = Tyson's. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- It's served in a rectangle, cool, a considerable slab. Foie gras in the middle, pressed chicken flanking it. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- And the black truffle emulsion. Intense, earthy, sensual. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- The pressed foie gras and chicken, my starter: a dish of great clarity. Rich, but far from over the top. Controlled and elegant. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- The bread is special. And noteworthy, in a city full of restaurants without great bread. [about 14 hours ago](#)
- The baguette: thin, perfectly airy, with a great crumb. You can hear the crunch across the table [about 15 hours ago](#)
- Three choices in the bread basket - whole wheat, olive, baguettes [about 15 hours ago](#)
- Ducasse, says Ramon, works with four elements typically in a dish. The idea, to bring out what's already there and, with luck, to heighten it ... [about 15 hours ago](#)
- Twice we've been told: the food is clean, it's light ... [about 15 hours ago](#)
- It's a Terry These wine. And it's fantastic. No surprise there. [about 15 hours ago](#)
- Ramon, the sommelier, recs a Brundlmayer Riesling, from Austria. [about 15 hours ago](#)
- Our order's in. [about 15 hours ago](#)
- Room filling up ... [about 15 hours ago](#)
- Disc of butter the color of creme brulee. [about 15 hours ago](#)
- More staff than they possibly need. Every care, not just met but - this is key - anticipated ... [about 15 hours ago](#)
- Try this again ... Hoo boy. Swarms of servers. This is what the big-time restaurants do, in the opening months. They flood the room. [about 15 hours ago](#)
- Prices are high. No, higher than that. Higher, still. Twenty-six bucks for my starter. Thirty-nine for my entree [about 15 hours ago](#)
- I have to duck out to the lobby. There's a guy standing sentinel, across from my table. His eyes have not wandered an INCH from our table ... [about 15 hours ago](#)
- Hoo boy. Swarms of servers. This is what the big-time restaurants do, in the opening months. They flood the room. More staff than they pray care, not just met but - this is key - anticipated ... [about 15 hours ago](#)
- To start, a plate of four gougeres. Superb: light, airy, crunchy, salty. Unexpected touch of pepper. [about 15 hours ago](#)
- The space: slicker, more mod than I might have expected. Above, the great, old wooden beams from the hotel's earliest days. Three alcoves in the room, suggestive of the inside of a cork ... [about 15 hours ago](#)
- To start, a bottle of parkling water: Badoit. Instead of San Pellegrino. French over Italian. [about 15 hours ago](#)

- Not five minutes, and already I've been fingered. Of course, the room is practically empty ... [about 15 hours ago](#)
- Alain Ducasse by the entrance as we arrive ... [about 15 hours ago](#)
- Festive air in the lobby, the air of a debut. [about 15 hours ago](#)
- T-minus one hour ... Can't wait ... [about 17 hours ago](#)
- First tweet! I'll be on the Kojo Nnamdi show today at noon to talk about restaurants in a recession. [29 days ago](#)