

A close-up photograph of a white bowl filled with a creamy, orange-colored soup. A golden-brown fried fish fillet is placed on top of the soup, garnished with fresh green herbs. The bowl is set on a white plate, and a piece of bread is visible on the right side.

# Spoon

your city. your food.

FINALLY!  
Philippe Restaurant & Lounge

ABOVE BASIC  
Shade

SPOON PICKS  
Sunday Brunch

WILL WORK FOR FOOD  
Hugo's Sommelier

March 2011

## New Restaurant | Finally...PHILIPPE

by Paul Otremba

After two years of meticulous planning, Chef Philippe Schmit of Bistro Moderne renown is seeing his dream restaurant open. PHILIPPE Restaurant and Lounge occupies two floors in a swank Galleria location, where a sophisticated dining room perches above a sleek bar, and every element luxuriates careful consideration. Chef Philippe knows his audience like he knows food. PHILIPPE captures the live-and-let-live ethos that makes Houston a great place for dining, holding accessibility above pretension and permitting complex passions.



As Schmit's blog moniker "The French Cowboy" testifies, he has embraced Houston's varied character, mixing modern with antique, sophisticated with playful. PHILIPPE's fun is in its wit, which pairs nicely with elegance. Just read the dinner menu's categories: as a "Flirtation," PHILIPPE offers spicy duck confit tamales, a local staple with a haute cuisine tweak. For the "Sumptuous," try lobster bisque with poached fish quenelle. The bisque possesses a deep flavor while the quenelle has an unexpected airiness complimenting its subtly rich taste.



The menu balances local and international influences. In the "Hot + Round" category (think roundish items like pizza and sandwiches), the Monaco tartine takes us on a brief Mediterranean jaunt of focaccia (all breads are baked in house) filled with artichokes, olives, tomato confit, arugula, and basil and topped with exquisite white anchovies from Spain. It's fine dining you can eat with your fingers. In the "Au Naturel" section, "naked" beef is offered with carpaccio's traditional accoutrements or in a Moroccan incarnation with almonds, raisins, and harissa.



Pastry Chef Jose Fernandez contributes smart and modern desserts, like the sweet and salty butterscotch parfait with chocolate shortbread. If you and a companion are feeling exuberantly Texan, you can have a 32oz ribeye "Cowboy Steak" for two. On the lighter side, I'd recommend the dorade (a succulent fish) with vegetables and vermouth cooked in an inventive clear paper pouch and served liked a present to untie: elegant, comforting, and contemporary. That could serve as a motto for this French cowboy's super chic new enterprise.



**PHILIPPE**  
1800 Post Oak Blvd.  
Houston  
713-439-1000  
[www.philippehouston.com](http://www.philippehouston.com)