LA GRANDE BOUCHERIE (The Group NYC & Emil Stefkov)

Destination Fine Dining & Socializing In A Multi- Award-Winning Location With Nouveau French & Italian La Dolce Vita Backdrops At The Neighboring Olio e Piu

-French Restaurant, Brasserie & Steakhouse Fine Dining
-431 N. Dearborn.
-River North/Near North Side

Year Opened: 2024
Size: 10,000 sq ft
Annual Revenue:
Dining Cost $$$/Surcharge: 4.0%.
Frequent Diner Rewards Program: No.
Neighborhood Crime Profile: River North

Containing 15% of the Near North Side area, 25% of the population and the highest non-vehicle ownership, River North has **the most sprawling late-night bars, mega-clubs, party energy & hotel density** within the Chicagoland area. Relatively safe from violent crime, the raw volume of property crime in the Near North Side Community Area is the highest in Chicagoland. **The highest number of property crimes in the Near North Side area are concentrated in the southeast entertainment areas of River North** while the quieter western residential areas report fewer incidents. Contrasting with low homicides, but like property crime, the Near North Side's raw volume of criminal sexual assaults are among the highest in Chicagoland. While the data is based on reported assaults, most sexual assaults are not reported. On a per capita basis, the crime rate is moderated, but still above average. The assaults generally occur in the heavily trafficked entertainment & late-night areas with dense commercial/transient traffic. The concentration of reports correlates with nightlife dynamics in the entertainment districts rather than systemic neighborhood violence. In summary, homicides and violent crime are low, but **robberies, property crime & criminal sexual assaults require caution, particularly in the late-night party type locations.** While most categories of Chicago crime have been trending lower, important to note that sexual assaults during the first half of the year were only slightly lower. Auto thefts rose 8.5% during the same period while non -resident burglaries (auto burglaries) jumped 132%. Compared to 2019, auto burglaries increased by more than 400%. Because the majority of violent crime is clustered around 2:00 a.m. in the dense nightlife locations, **the daytime crime profile for River North is much safer**. On a positive note, **all categories of violent crime have dropped significantly on a YTD basis through August. The most important thing visitors can do to minimize exposure is to dine and socialize earlier in relatively safe neighborhood areas.** By doing so, they are practicing situational awareness and avoidance. Given the big increase in Chicago's auto burglaries, we would also park smart, avoid side streets and dimly lit streets, particularly at night. As with any large city**,** visitors should stay alert and keep their phones and wallets secure at all times.

Click HERE for more on neighborhood crime by zip code, block & address.

In addition to installing a new building facade, the two-story Art Nouveau inspired French La Grande Boucherie has a grandiose ground floor, vaulted ceilings, mosaic floors and a century old museum quality French glass mural. The dominant feature is an 82-foot-long oval shaped pewter bar with unique metal working. The bar is lively and popular, particularly on live jazz Wednesday nights.

Mentored by Charlie Trotter, ***the menu was designed by the award-winning Executive Chef Michael Taus.*** *The well-organized menu* ***balances core steakhouse food with French classics,*** *including Hors d'Oeuvres, a Raw Bar, Salads, Carpaccio, Piece du Boucher (Steak & Frites), Les Grands Formats (large portions for sharing), Plats Principaux (main courses), Fromage, Charcuterie, Garnitures (sides & toppings) and Desserts.*

The authentic French menu is classic, large, broad and impressive. Fueled by rich sauces and tableside preparation, some of the starters include Steak Tartare & Foie Gras while some of the mains include Filet Mignon au Poivre and Canard a L'orange. The Les Grands Formats include a 48-ounce Tomahawk Ribeye, Chateaubriand and a large format Signature Plate. While not currently available, we would resurrect the no room for error Grand Marinier

Souffle and pour Creme Anglaise over it when presented at the table. Click HERE for menus. Click HERE for wines by the glass and HERE for bottles.

We were excited when La Grande Boucherie, La Serre, Obelix, Petite Edith and Petit Pomeroy opened. Our enthusiasm was elevated because we miss the great French restaurant pioneers like Jean Banchet, Jovan Trboyevic, Roland Liccioni, Paul Contos and our friend Dominick Trolli. On a personal level, we particularly miss the "Nouvelle Cuisine" & "La Cuisine du Marche" introduced by the Yugoslavian born Jovan Trboyevic (Les Nomades, Jovan's & Le Perroquet).

In addition to the recently closed Les Nomades, Dear Margaret, Marchesa, Chez Moi, La Sardine and Kiki's Bistro, we also miss the one hundred or so legendary Chicago French restaurants that closed in recent decades. See below for some of the closures.

Le Nomades (2025)	Bistro 110 (2011)	Le Bordeaux (1989)
Dear Margaret (2025)	Brasserie Jo (2010)	Mon Petit (1988)
Marchesa (2024)	Le Francais (2007)	Le Coq Au Vin (1987)
Le Select (2023)	Café la Tour (2007)	Café de Paris (1987)
Chez Moi (2023)	Ambria (2007)	Jovan's (Original) (1983)
Everest (2020)	Le Bastille (1999)	Jacques (1983)
La Sardine (2020)	Chez Paul (1995)	Maxim's de Paris (1982)
Kiki's Bistro (2020)	Le Perroquet (1994)	L'Escargot (Original) (1980)
Tru (2017)	La Tour (1993)	Maison Laffite (1980)
Carlos (2012)	L'Auberge (1991)	Le Mignon (1980)

See Culinary Historians for more exceptional detail and HERE for more on classical French dishes.

French food and the Burgundian wines remain at the top of the culinary food chain. While Le Grande Boucherie has the potential to fill the deep shoes of Chicago's legendary French Restaurants, they need to perfect the kitchen's execution, leverage the ambiance and embrace smart social media marketing.

Quality, consistency, service and affordability are bedrock for success. Beyond the basics, **Chicago's excessive expansion of large luxury restaurants & intense competition demand a meaningful & innovative approach to socializing and marketing as part of the core experience**. While the food and execution have improved, La Grande Boucherie's beautiful buildout, romantic vibe, bar design and happy hour are currently the draw.

With one of the best Happy Hours in our target market, including duration, hours, menu (food & liquor) and pricing, La Grande Boucherie is headed down the right path. Love the $11 a glass French house wines. The live piano music on Sunday, live jazz music on Wednesday and no corkage fee on Tuesday are all smart initiatives.

Given that **large restaurants with expensive buildouts need constant volume to survive,** La Grande Boucherie would be wise to put their socialization initiatives on steroids and promote them with smart social media strategies. While the ambiance is a bit sterile, the recently opened Petite Edith is dishing out some of the best French food in Chicagoland. As a result, we would leverage the ambiance, prioritize the kitchen's execution, the marketing initiatives and turn La Grande Boucherie into the Studio 54 of French cuisine.

We started consuming and collecting the great red French Burgundies in the mid-70s. In addition to being an unmatched heavenly treat, they were widely available in Chicago at that time. Most were priced under $30 a bottle, including wines from: Arlaud, Bouree, Chevalier, Chevillion, Dujac, Gouges, Latour, Lafarge, Leflaive, Marquis d' Angerville, Rousseau and others. Around $5,000 a bottle today, Rousseau's Chambertin was obviously not in that price group. (Napoleon loved his Chambertin while Voltaire favored Volnay) The Rousseau Clos de la Roche we were drinking back then for under $25 a bottle is now over $1,000 and unavailable. We also miss the bottles of Echezeaux burgundy and magic tricks waiting for us at our Pump room table when Lettuce was managing it.

There might be some communal type wines bottled under their names, but none of the top French Burgundy producers mentioned above are widely available today. If they were, the prices would be astronomic and beyond most patrons. The Burgundy producers on current menus are mostly unknown to us. After the Burgundy prices went through the roof, we opened the door to California Pinot Noir and started exploring the lesser known, affordable, high-quality French wines. Unknown to most Americans, we found a lot of them and continue to explore them to this day.

While the love of French food and wine hasn't changed, the restaurant should position as a personal differentiator. To reduce the cost of dining out, **the La Grand Boucherie staff should educate their patrons about the quality and affordability of French wines from less-known areas**, including Alsace, Languedoc-Roussillon, Loire Valley, Macon, Provence and others. The Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris from Emile Beyer (Alsace) are good examples of these wines. Same with the Macon whites from Lafon and Latour. The Lafon Macon is currently on the Obelix menu for $66.

To engage patrons beyond their already highly successful Happy Hour, we would consider live French music and other interactive social events like:

-Stand up wine tastings featuring lesser-known high value French wines
Paired with appetizer stations to drive interaction & socialization
-Classes on less known, affordable, high-quality French wines
-French language classes
-French fashion classes
-How French women stay slim without dieting
-Themed holiday events, including Le Bastille Day

In addition to a Frequent Rewards Diner Program, we would consider periodic special programs that are female centric, including private, ticketed, partners and third-party events. They could also include social celebrations, professional networking and advocacy events.

Have no doubt**, location, good high value food, wine, ambiance, layout and happenings are the fuel for successful socialization and increased restaurant revenue.**

While the Italian restaurants in the DCFG's database are five times greater than the French restaurants today, the graveyard of Chicago's closed French Restaurants is far bigger. In our minds, there is **a huge untapped market today for all things French in Chicagoland**. As the world's fashion capital, there are reasons why consumers are paying Ferrari type prices for French handbags and perfumes.

The Happy Hour stretches from Monday-Friday, 4:00-7:00 pm. Discounted food, wine ($11) & cocktails ($12). Bar & patio only. No corkage Tuesday. Live Piano Sunday, 6:00-9:00 pm. Live Jazz Wednesday, 6:00-9:00 pm. Closes at 11:30 pm on weekends. Click HERE for Yelp images of the high- stakes commitment to Chicago & HERE for **Happy Hour**.