LA BROCANTE FRENCH CAFÉ
2825 S. Kirkwood at Richmond Ave Houston 77082 281.556.0606

You are met at the door by a charming and debonair chef-he is Georges Guy, the owner. You are greeted at your table by a lovely French lady, Monique. She is the wife of Georges, and is co-owner. Your table is surrounded by lovely antique lamps, etageres, chairs, and other items-you can buy them. You are brought a huge six foot high blackboard menu with mouth watering selections-you can order them! Translated as the Antique Market Café, this intimate thirty seat restaurant feels more like dining in the home of the owners than in a commercial establishment. Near Royal Oaks subdivision, La Brocante is another in a long line of successful and affordable French restaurants, which includes Bistro Provence, Don Camillo, Café Rabelais, and Brasserie Max & Julie. They are all owned by the children of Monique and Georges Guy. So sit back and relax, and quit glancing over and over again at that darling little bronze lamp with the cherub holding up the shade! Lunch items, almost all priced between $5.50 and $15.95, include, starting with appetizers: Duck pate peppercorn; Bouillabaisse – the famous fish soup from Marseille; Escargots Bourguignon "garlic butter"; and Oyster Favorite. Among main lunch courses are Goat cheese salad with Ham tartine; Duck leg confit salad with potatoes; Rainbow trout with almond & bacon; Rabbit stew Civet; and Lamb stew with couscous. The dinner menu features many of the same appetizers, and Red snapper quenelle; Grilled salmon with béarnaise sauce; Lamb shank with honey and rosemary; Sweet breads with porcini cream sauce; Duck magret with orange sauce; and Veal paupiette porcini. A tempting and reasonably priced selection of wines is available, and the authentic French desserts are definitely worth saving room for. And, don't forget, the little cherub lamp can be added to your bill when it comes!

RUGGLES GREEN
2311 W.Alabama Houston 77098 713.533.0777

Billing itself as a Certified Green Restaurant, this comfortable little casual restaurant with intimate lighting features all natural ingredients and hormone-free and preservative-free raw materials and products…hence the word "Green" in the name of the restaurant. Having said this, do not expect a bland hippy-like tofu bar…quite the contrary. Starting with one of nature's oldest and finest natural products, wine, Ruggles makes an extra effort to bring a broad choice of wine by the glass or bottle at very reasonable prices. Most glasses are priced between $6-11, and most bottles are under $32. Some designer beers are available. Service is "Café Express" style, with a broader menu…i.e., place your order and then wait for it to be delivered to your table. Why not begin with Crispy calamari, with fresh parsley and lemon, served with habanero ketchup & roasted pepper aioli; or with Crab cake, with grilled onions & sweet pepper aioli; or House-made Organic hummus with homemade flatbread? You may choose to follow with a Jenny dipper salad, grilled wild mushrooms, grilled asparagus and tomatoes on a bed of baby spinach, served with three homemade dressings on the side for dipping; Wild salmon salad, mixed field greens, romaine, Stoop Farms chipotle honey seared salmon, queso fresco, sourdough cheese croutons, Mr. Hatterman's boiled eggs, with Darla's mango ranch dressing; or Chicken curry salad-grilled yogurt curry chicken, wild greens, shaved carrots & jicama, golden raisins, dried mango, toasted almonds, fresh mint leaf & mandarin orange honey dressing. Chow down on a Naturewell natural beef burger with baby spring mix, sharp cheddar or Swiss cheese, lettuce, tomato & red onion, served on a whole wheat bun; Smoked Hudson Farm all natural chicken sandwich, natural chicken & plantains sautéed in marinara sauce, topped with apple smoked bacon, cilantro, guava caramelized onions, black beans, guava sauce and mango chipotle dressing, served on a whole wheat bun; or Cuban pork sourdough panini, roasted natural pork, roasted onions, roasted poblano, cilantro, mozzarella andmago chipotle dressing. For pasta fans, Chef Bruce will prepare Spicy shrimp pasta, whole wheat angel hair pasta with spicy shrimp, slow cooked organic tomato sauce, basis chifonade, red, yellow & jalapeno peppers, ricotta and parmesan cheeses; or Wood fired Quinoa pasta with Gruyere Swiss, mozzarella, parmesan, sharp cheddar & Fontina cheeses. A wide variety of pizzas come out of the wood fired oven, but save the best for last: dessert. Ruggle's famous white chocolate bread pudding, served warm; Chocolate crème brule cheesecake, a layer of New York style cheesecake topped with a layer of popular crème brulee custard, caramelized, then topped with whipped cream; or Charlotte's web, alternating layers of moist chocolate cake pieces, white chocolate espresso on pudding, fresh whipped cream & crunchy Heath Bar pieces. Children's menu available.

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Note: By way of qualifications for reviewing restaurants, Hankamer has owned and operated numerous restaurants, coffee shops, hotels, discotheques and banquet halls over the last forty years; he has travelled to over 70 countries and has studied and lived in Europe for over three years; he was co-owner of a home delivery wine of the month club and imported his own wine labels for years. Copyright 2009 Ray Hankamer, Hankamer Commercial/Hankamer & Associates.