

THE TIMES OF INDIA

MY DELICIOUS ADVENTURES...

Pic: Rashmi Uday Singh

I am on a quest. To meet the vegetarian flag-waving yesteryear Hollywood superstar Brigitte Bardot. I'm in her stunningly beautiful seaside home-town of Saint Tropez. And while on a quest to meet her, I eat my way through some amazing vegetarian food, I fall in love with La tarte Tropezienne, a delicious creamy tarte created by a Polish patisserie in 1955 in her honour when her hot selling film *When God Created Woman* was being shot in Saint Tropez. Yes, it's a vegetarian tart of the region and it's awesome.

And while on this adventure, I come across some exciting facts, too...

What do Bollywood superstar, Deepika Padukone, Hollywood's Brigitte Bardot and the 19th century Indian princess Bannu Pandeï from Chamba have in common? Not only is the stunningly beautiful seaside village Saint Tropez Brigitte Bardot's home, but the 19th-century princess married and lived in Palais Pandeï, where we are dining now. And it is here that Deepika Padukone stays regularly!

INDIA IN ST TROPEZ

It's strange, but it's true. Here, in this beautiful palace, everything you see takes you on a journey to India, including the wall paintings (please see photo). The blend of ochre and red evoke the memory of the house's history, involving the dashing French General Allard who fell in love with the lovely Princess Bannu Pandeï from Chamba and married her: It's over a delicious dinner with my knowledgeable and passionate St Tropez dining companions, Claude Maniscalco and Jacques Silvant,

that I listen spellbound to the love story of the Tropezienne General Jean-François Allard. In the early 19th century, he served Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Punjab, fell in love with the princess and brought her back to Saint Tropez. It is in her beautiful Saint-Tropez residence, converted into a hotel Pan Pandeï that we dine. Statues of Buddha, Indian paintings on both cloth and glass, antiques from Kashmir, Jodhpur and Rajasthan are all around us. We taste chef Quentin Durand's creations, and it's the vibrant vegan starter that comes up tops. He generously shares the recipe...



TASTY TALES
Rashmi Uday Singh

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RECIPE OF LA COCOTTE DU JARDIN DE LA PIBOULE



La Cocotte du Jardin de La Piboule

Ingredients:

Purée of artichokes: 5 hearts of artichokes / 0.2l of vegetables juice / 6g of salt

Vegetables:

2 carrots/2 purple carrots
2 yellow carrots/2 fennels
2 mini zucchini/2 yellow mini zucchini/2 red peppers
2 mini beetroots

Method:

Cook all the vegetables separately in the boiling vegetables juice and saute them right after.

Top with chips of truffle (optional) or chips of artichock

Add crispy shallot/onion.

Edible flowers (optional)

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

It's a multi-treat... vegetarian meals, Tarte Tropezienne and the breathtakingly charming historic St Tropez. The 86-year-old beauty Brigitte Bardot is unable to meet me, but guess what? Her very gallant (fourth and current) husband, Bernard d'Ormale, not only comes with her messages to meet me, but also does a tarte Tropezienne tasting with me. This round brioche, with pearl sugar, pastry cream and buttercream, is addictive. Even General Allard's fourth generation grandson, Henri Provost Allard, joins us. This is what I call having my tarte tropezienne. And eating it, too!



In Le Table du Pandeï Palace, St Tropez with chef Quentin Durand, Claude Maniscalco and Jacques Silvant

MANY A VEGGIE WOW

- Getting an awesome taste of the stunningly beautiful peninsula of Saint Tropez at the Lily Of The Valley where the brilliant chef Vincent Maillard and Art De Vivre pamper us. On my request, he serves up vegetarian masterpieces, from courgette flower quinoa salad to amazing vegan chocolate avocado mousse. Space constrains me from giving more details, but here's a quick whiff of some of the vegetarian friendly restaurants...
- Le Girelier (on the harbour), where David Didelot's Vegan risotto and detox salad delighted.
- At the legendary La Ponche, where the charming owner and Brigitte Bardot's friend Simone Duckstein dined with me and Chef Christian Gay regaled us with his vegetarian masterpieces.
- Living up to it's name, La Petite Plage (the little beach) has a sandy floor and this gleaming restaurant's menu is masterminded by the three-starred Eric Frechon and Chef Yannick Megel does

Chef Vincent Maillard in Lily Of The Valley



magic with the vegetables.

- Finale dinner at the Michelin-starred La Bastide de Saint-Tropez, where Chef Philippe Colinet's mastery over vegetables is a delight.

MODERN VEGETARIAN



Blue Radish Cannelloni

Out of my numerous vegan meals, it's the awesome vegan Blue Radish Cannelloni that is a masterpiece in balance of texture and flavour. It's at the uber cool modern La Toits. Surprises never cease. Coconut cream and almond foam are skillfully used by chef Damien Cruche.

As the chef points out, his inspiration is Provençal with international flavours and use of fresh, local, often organic, seasonal products.

It's a joy to lunch with the charming Daniela LeGrange at this rooftop.

Chef Damien Cruche and Danielle Le Grange at Le Toit



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VEGGIE WOW WITH BRIGITTE BARDOT

She's vegetarian. A flag waving one. She's got all the restaurants in her breathtakingly beautiful hometown of Saint Tropez to introduce vegetarian/vegan menus. And when Brigitte Bardot, the Hollywood superstar of yesteryear says so, everyone obeys. I get to know of this. And right after my graduation, and submitting my thesis on 'The rise and the rise of vegetarianism' in Paris, I make a dash for the south of France. I'm on a quest to meet Brigitte and end up eating some amazing vegetarian food. I fall in love with La tarte

Tropezienne, a delicious creamy tarte created in 1955 in her honour. Yes, it's a vegetarian tarte of St Tropez and it's delicious. Everyone loves her here. I meet an artist (please see photo) who paints only Brigitte's portraits, Serge Cserg. We munch on the tarte together.



Tasting the Tarte Tropezienne with Brigitte Bardot-obsessed artist Serge Cserg

Sadly, the 86-year-old Brigitte is unable to meet me, but her very gallant husband Bernard d'Ormale not only meets me but also does a tarte Tropezienne tasting with me. That's what I call "having my tarte and eating it too".