BRASSERIE

LE PLAZA

EUROPE

BRASSERIE EUROPE

A historic address is reborn in Geneva, just steps from its lake and the city's main train station. Nestled within the iconic Plaza cinema building, at the heart of a hub currently, Brasserie Europe offers a refined culinary experience within the elegant and distinctive architectural setting designed by Marc J. Saugey in 1952.

Open 7 days a week and inspired by the spirit of Europe's great brasseries, the Plaza's restaurant brings to life a vibrant and carefully curated space where people come together to enjoy a delicious moment in the heart of Geneva. With freshness and creativity, the codes of the classic brasserie are reimagined, with a balance of elegance and comfort. The cuisine offers clean, refined dishes, with indulgent variations that enhance the finest seasonal ingredients.

In the kitchen, chef Jean-Jacques Danthine brings his own contemporary and festive touch. The iconic beef tartare is complemented by a tangy thyme gel and pickled vegetables. For those with an appetite for indulgence, a bone marrow can be added to complete the dish.

The culinary creations of the Belgian-born chef are often infused with inspirations from his homeland, reinterpreted through a local lens.

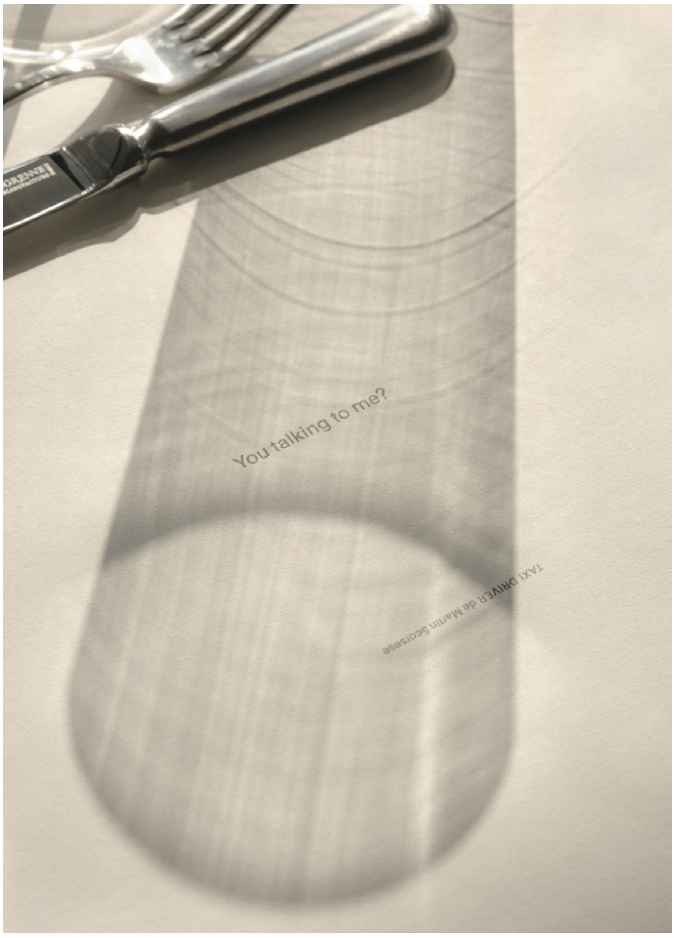
His take on the emblematic Belgian dish waterzooi, for example, features locally sourced fish served in a silky, delicately lemon-scented broth, accompanied by crisp vegetables and pilaf rice.

The creative offerings are distilled into lunchtime specials, ideal for a business lunch or catching up with friends. In the evening, the kitchen remains open until 11 p.m., giving guests plenty of time to enjoy a late dinner and extend the culinary experience.

From the first light of morning, the dining room comes alive in natural light, streaming through the vast glass façade overlooking the vibrant bustle of the city. The pared-back interior showcases noble materials, from the furniture to its unique accessories. True to Marc J. Saugey's architectural heritage and developed in collaboration with Youri Kravtchenko (YKRA Studio), FdMP Architectes has given this historic space a distinctive, chic and urban character.

While awaiting the inauguration of the Plaza complex as a whole in early 2027 — including the restored historic cinema auditorium, immersive cinema, 17-room cinema hotel, Bar Glacier, bookshop-café and exhibition spaces — Brasserie Europe paves the way for its first convivial gatherings. Soon, the high-end culinary experience will be complemented by the many activities of the future cinema centre, where creativity, culture and the art of living will come together in countless ways.







©Roman Lusser
Dish ©Steven Wagner

A BIT OF HISTORY, FROM CAFÉ DE L'EUROPE TO BRASSERIE EUROPE

In Geneva's Saint-Gervais district, Brasserie Europe first opened its doors in the early 1950s, coinciding with the inauguration of the Plaza cinema and the Mont-Blanc Centre complex above it, which housed offices and commercial premises.

The name was inspired by the Café de l'Europe, which had occupied the same site since the beginning of the century, before Geneva architect Marc J. Saugey created this gem of post-war architecture.

Like the rest of the Saint-Gervais district, this part of Geneva was once home to numerous craft workshops specialising in watchmaking, goldsmithing and other forms of precision craftsmanship. Brasserie Europe would later become the Mandarin, a Chinese restaurant that some may still remember.



Exterior view of the Plaza in 1953, photographer unknown.
Atelier Jaeger, iconography Bibliothèque de Genève.

THE CREATIVE PALETTE OF BRASSERIE EUROPE

The word brasserie conjures up an atmosphere that is both sophisticated and lively, where pleasure takes centre stage. Reinterpreting its codes means capturing that spirit of indulgence through bold yet balanced creations. Here, creativity is never ostentatious; it plays with flavours and textures to celebrate the ingredients and heighten the dining experience.

Both festive and approachable, the dishes evolve with the seasons. Nature takes centre stage on the menu, with each of its three acts — starter, main course and dessert — unfolding across five variations. Depending on the latest arrivals, seasonal produce also inspires daily specials, adding to the existing selection. At lunchtime, this vibrant culinary offering is distilled into a weekly three-course menu, ideal for a business lunch or catching up with friends.

At the helm of the kitchen, Chef Jean-Jacques Danthine draws on the richness of his culinary journey. Having lived in Geneva with his family for the past four years, the Belgian-born chef has notably worked at Les Fourneaux du Manège in Bernex. Energised by this new adventure, he subtly weaves a few nods to his homeland into the menu.

Alongside the famous *waterzooi* — a kind of creamy stew reinterpreted with freshwater fish and crisp vegetables — he also draws inspiration from *carbonnade flamande*, a slow-cooked beef stew made with beer, which lends the dish a fruity, subtly tangy note. A classic of the North Sea, his grey shrimp croquettes are given a contemporary twist with a parsley coulis and mustard tuile.

For dessert, he once again looks to the Low Countries, incorporating the soft violet centre of the *cuberdon* — the iconic cone-shaped sweet from Ghent — as a topping for a cheesecake served on a speculoos biscuit.

RENOVATING THE BRASSERIE: CONTINUITY AND ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Enhanced by a vast panoramic glass façade overlooking the intersection, the Brasserie's interior is defined by refined materials, from its furniture to its unique accessories — from the travertine flooring to the bespoke woodwork by Bodenmann, a renowned Swiss woodworking company that has been practising its craft since 1891 in the heart of the Vallée de Joux.

Respecting the architectural legacy of Marc J. Saugey, FdMP Architectes, in collaboration with architect Youri Kravtchenko (YKRA Studio), has given this historic space a distinctive character.

The space's understated elegance unfolds in harmony with the colour palette applied throughout the Plaza complex, reflecting the seamless relationship between interior and exterior that is characteristic of Saugey's architectural language. The same small square glass-paste mosaic tiles can be found on the columns, echoing those on the exterior.

Another detail integrated into the original layout is the seismic support structure, added during the renovation. Positioned at the centre of the dining room, it introduces an unexpected architectural presence. It is a contemporary nod to Marc J. Saugey's ability to turn structural constraints into aesthetic assets — as demonstrated by the imposing aluminium beams of the Plaza cinema's structure, which shape a ceiling that is both organic and futuristic.

Geneva-based YKRA Studio designed a bespoke banquette for the space, following the curve of the street-facing glass façade. To the right, the bar extends in a long, sweeping curve, like a sinuous block of aluminium — Saugey's signature material, also echoed here in the stools and table lamps.





The grey shrimp croquette with parsley coulis and the waterzooi featuring local fish and mussels are the Brasserie's first signature dishes. © Angélique Freytag

As you approach the counter, you discover a series of handles designed to hang the jackets and bags of diners seated at the bar. These hooks were crafted from the aluminium of the cinema's beams during their restoration, using the original material dating back to 1953. Inspired by classical still-life paintings, their conventional forms intertwine with botanical silhouettes, suggesting a root here, a citrus fruit there.

Throughout the Brasserie's refined, pared-back interior, the same attention to detail can be found, with touches from some of Switzerland's historic names in craftsmanship and design excellence. The cherrywood tables by Bodenmann feature a special varnish, applied using an uncommon three-stage polishing process. Horgenglarus, renowned for producing design pieces that are both iconic and understated, specially adapted the design of the chairs for the space. The curtains echo those of the historic Brasserie, reinterpreted in an acoustic version by textile manufacturer Création Baumann.

The Brasserie offers 80 seats indoors, complemented by 40 seats on the terrace in front of the restaurant. This outdoor esplanade sits beneath a large oval opening, directly under the canopy supporting the Plaza's historic neon sign showing quotations from films, refreshed every three months by Geneva-based artist Christian Robert-Tissot.

THE FUTURE PLAZA CINEMA CENTRE: OPENING CINEMA TO NEW IMAGINARIES

The opening of the restaurant during the summer 2026 precedes the full opening of Plaza Cinema Centre, scheduled for early 2027. This high-end culinary experience will extend the rich range of hospitality spaces that will form part of the future centre.
The Plaza, one of Geneva's iconic cinemas, is embarking on a new chapter under the name Plaza Centre Cinéma. Far from being limited to film screenings, the venue is being reinvented as a hybrid cultural destination centred around its historic auditorium. Alongside it will be an immersive space, exhibition areas, a bookshop, café and cinema hotel.
The ambition is to transform cinema from an occasional destination into a continuous experience — playful, convivial and woven into everyday life.

The Plaza's historic auditorium will be restored to its original colours and to the configuration envisioned by Marc J. Saugey. With a capacity of 600 seats — 500 in the stalls and 100 in the balcony — its gilded proscenium frame will be reinstated and slightly enlarged. The existing concrete stage will be preserved and extended with a retractable apron, allowing the space to host concerts, performances and conferences.

The balcony, redesigned with convivial seating and directly connected to the restaurant, will also be able to operate independently for private screenings and events.

The immersive space is a new circular venue excavated beneath the historic cinema auditorium. Dedicated to contemporary forms of digital and interactive creation, it will also be able to accommodate audiovisual installations.

The 17 rooms of the cinema hotel are conceived as a collection of private mini-cinemas, each equipped with a projection system and an exclusive programme. Set within an atmosphere that is both urban and intimate, combining warm wood panelling with Lynchian velvet curtains, the hotel is designed to appeal both to film enthusiasts and visitors looking for a truly distinctive stay.

The former "Bar-Glacier" will also be restored and, together with the bookshop-café and its extension, will form a convivial and lively gathering space. The renovation works have made it possible to optimise the use of the existing building, freeing up an elongated space for exhibitions along Rue du Cendrier.

The synergies between these different spaces will enable a cross-disciplinary programme in which fields intersect and engage in dialogue: screenings, premieres and festivals, as well as performances and events devoted to video games, graphic novels and digital culture.

By conceiving cinema as a form of live entertainment , the programme will seek to weave connections between the mythology of cinema and the exploration of new contemporary practices. It will encourage encounters between generations and different ways of experiencing culture, allowing every visitor to feel at home while discovering unfamiliar territories.





Neon sign from Christian Robert-Tissot's "From below" series. © Nicolas Lieber

View of the Plaza cinema from the balcony. © Max Kettel

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