

The Best Baker in Beacon Hill

Caf e Vanille: Love and Magnolias on Beacon Street

Never fear, this will not be a description of happy young things in J. Crew sweaters necking on Beacon Street in the first flush of spring. ~~I'm not immune to romance. Although there and in May Beacon Hill is does have the mostan~~ astounding display of ~~flowering magnolias, bursting with flowers on Beacon Street in May,~~ but the love I refer to is the deepest, the most sustaining and elevating love there is: ~~the love for~~ dessert. ~~a~~And, more particularly, ~~for Caf e Vanille-Cafe~~ on Charles Street.

Founded by a Frenchman from a family of pastry chefs, Vanille is an ode to all that is right in the patisserie Fran ais. ~~Look-Linger~~ over the heavy-hitting ~~ease of~~ dessert ~~case~~. You will ~~read-see wisps of spare~~ descriptors that tempt even the ~~sanest-most restrained~~ people to abandon their reserve. *Hazelnut mousseline, caramel mousse, chocolate meringuettes, rum-laced white chocolate pastry cream.* And those are just ~~the~~ individual ingredients ~~in the cakes~~. Vanille's ~~creations-goodies~~ are complex ~~and whimsical, creations, with whimsy~~ and a lot of effort ~~put goes~~ into their ~~makingcreation~~. ~~For instance, sampleTake, for example, their~~ chocolate orange cake. This is the Mike Tyson of chocolate mousse confections; it *will* knock you ~~out. out with~~The cake is a delectable ~~combination of~~ chocolate mousse, ~~layered with~~ light spongy cake, ~~and topped with a and a~~ waxy layer of dark chocolate laced with orange. ~~And-What's~~ placed atop ~~each slice of~~ this heavyweight confection? ~~Each slice has its ownAn~~ orange macaroon, decorated with a smiley face. Mind. ~~Blowingly.~~ Good.

Now, being a dedicated researcher, I did not ~~gather my evidence in~~ just ~~take~~ one springtime visit ~~as proof~~. I've gone back during the destitute, frozen, ~~dogsled~~ days [1]of winter, when there was nary a magnolia to be found. And guess what? The Annabellae cake, ~~—~~a sponge topped with meringue and ~~cranberries-cranberries~~—is ethereal in winter. And pray that you come when ~~they Vanille have has~~ the ~~pPanamera~~[2], a double decker of dense brownie-like cake flavored with almond extract and raspberry liqueur, topped by a beautifully light caramel mousse. For \$5, you ~~couldn't pray for somethingwon't~~ ~~find anything~~ this fine on the Champs- lys es.

If, for some reason, cakes and tarts don't float your boat, ~~there is~~check ~~out~~ the ~~entire~~ other half of the bakery. ~~filled with~~Here you'll find breakfast pastries, financiers, macaroons, and French bread. ~~On t~~The menu ~~are~~also ~~offers~~

savory breakfast goodies and even baguette sandwiches. Not only do I brazenly declare that Vanille as-is the place to have dessert in Beacon Hill, but I ~~do~~ also recommend it as the place to have for lunch. In the summer, outdoor seating supplements the marble-topped tables inside, there are tables outside, as well as marble-topped tables inside. Grab a table and sit awhile. You ~~will~~ see locals zipping in for coffee and an apricot Danish, as well as tourists stumbling into the air-conditioning-conditioned oasis, looking as if they're-they've arrived at an oasis of wonder in the middle of been wandering the Sahara.

70 Charles St. (617) 523-9200 www.frenchmemories.com

Monday to Saturday 6:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.

Sunday 7:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.

Beacon Hill: Welcome to Cuteville

Welcome to the cutest half-square ~~mile~~ of real estate in New England: a small community of narrow streets that stretch upward from Charles Street toward the state house, dotted with flowering trees in spring, awash with turning leaves in fall. The streets are some of the oldest in Boston, and the red brick houses are hobbit size, crammed together, and decorated with shutters, red-lacquered doors, flower boxes, and unexpected details. On a given block in Beacon Hill, you may walk by happen upon a door that comes up to your waist; the perfectly maintained grass and solemn black fence of Louisbuerg Square; that is guarded by a locked, solemn black fence, a brass knocker with a gargoyle's scowl; and even one particular house that has a whose mystifying, decorative touch of is a hissing black cat over the door. Although the neighborhood is very affluent, the architecture is a hodgepodge. You will stumble upon find little-cobblestone lanes made of cobblestones, a building half engulfed in wisteria, that has taken over half a building, and a random smattering of brick colonials of adorned with mermaid-style slate tiles added onto a brick colonial. There are, of course, some over-priced restaurants and antiques stores on Charles St.; rect, but the majority of Beacon Hill is a suburban neighborhood, with steep hills. So bring your walking shoes and be prepared for uphill hikes. It's-The area is pretty at any time of year, but if you want that to experience iconic picture of Chestnut Street awash in magnolia and cherry blossoms, be sure to visit during the last part of May.