

## 10 East Broad / Blackwell, Hopewell - Soupe du Jour (1972)

Rev. 7/18/2021 x - D. Dixon

Soupe du Jour was a beloved Hopewell fixture for 35 years. It was founded at the Tomato Factory Antiques Center in 1972 by Valerie Hartshorne and Frad Young, and moved in 1973 to Blackwell Ave. Patty Phillips then took over the business from 1980 to 2007. The restaurant was part of making Hopewell a destination - you could shop at the antique stores, visit the Hopewell Museum, and always stop by Soupe du Jour for a hearty lunch.

### **1972 - 1980 - Hartshorne & Young [8 years]**

- Valerie Hartshorne & Frad Young

#### **3/22/1972 - Opened in Tomato Factory**

Tiny enclosed porch, 8 tables, seat 15  
Soup, bread, cheese, dessert  
\$2.50 - no tax, no tipping, Tues - Fri 12 - 2 pm

#### **1/1973 - Move to Blackwell Ave.**

Former garage, seat 24, \$3, Tues - Sat 12 - 2 pm  
1975 - \$3.50 - From 50 to 70 customers a day  
1979 - \$3.75

### **1980 - 2007 - Patty Phillips [27 years]**

#### **3/1980 - Bought business**

1980 - Lunch \$5, 2 soups  
1980 - Open Mondays  
1980 - Add weekly dinner - Thurs./Fri. - \$8-\$12  
1981 - Add weekly evening coffeehouse, \$3 cover  
1982 - Lunch \$6, salad instead of soup \$5  
1982 - Expanded hours - 11:30 am - 2:30 pm  
1983 - No longer closed in August  
1984 - Add Sunday brunch, 11 - 2:30  
1985 - Lunch \$7.95; 1987 \$8.95  
2002 - Lunch \$10.95, add sandwiches, \$9-\$15  
2002 - Sunday brunch \$9 - \$15

#### **7/2007 - Closed - joined Pennington Market**

### **Basic Soupe du Jour Lunch Menu**

Tureen of soup in enamel bowls  
Bread & cheese on wooden paddle  
Vegetables and dip  
Dessert bars, fruit on skewers, coffee & tea  
Prix-fixe - no tax, no tip



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## 1972 - 1980 - Hartshorne & Young

Soupe du Jour was founded in 1972 by two friends, Valerie Hartshorne and Frad (Francis) Young.

*Although first proposed facetiously over cocktails one December evening, the idea of a restaurant for shoppers seemed potentially a pretty good way to earn some of the extra bucks needed to shove the kids through college. [Princeton Shopper, 10/1975]*

Hartshorne describes the development of the restaurant in an article she published in Family Circle magazine, 10/10/1977: "How Two Housewives Started A Successful Part-Time Restaurant." (This resulted in an outpouring of letters from readers, thanking her for the inspiration and encouragement to try their own ideas.)

*When I proposed the idea of starting a business no one in our community had ever tried, with no money of our own and no experience as restaurateurs, Frad enthusiastically agreed. [Valerie Hartshorne, Family Circle, 10/18/1977]*

The business was started with an investment of \$1000 (and \$644.98 actually spent), with the plan to clear about \$100 a week, assuming they could serve 15 lunches a day:

*At \$2.50 a lunch, that would amount to \$37.50 a day, or \$187.50 a week. Deducting \$50 a week for ingredients (don't forget, that was 1972), \$25 for rent and, say, \$9 for the 5% sales tax in New Jersey, we could clear about \$103 a week. [Family Circle 1977]*

### 1972 - Tomato Factory

Soupe du Jour opened in March 1972, in a tiny enclosed porch in the Tomato Factory Antiques Center building at 2 Somerset Street. At the time, the Tomato Factory hosted a dozen antique stores and an interior decorating firm. The Soupe du Jour room had only eight tables, and could seat 15 people.

There was no stove in the room, so they cooked the soup and bread and desserts at home. And there was no running water (there was a bathroom sink through the dress shop), so they took the dishes and pots home at the end of the day to wash them. And they used a refrigerator in the back of the building.



Soups at Tomato Factory  
- Frad Young (1972)



Bread and cheese at Tomato Factory  
- Valerie Hartshorne (1972)

Soupe du Jour was open from Tuesday to Friday, noon to 2 pm. Lunch cost \$2.50. They originally offered a glass of sherry as a cocktail, but had to stop because they did not have a liquor license.

The basic Soupe du Jour menu and approach was established from the very beginning, with a focus on simplifying the entire process, from cooking, to setting the tables, to cleaning up after. Lunch included a tureen of soup, bread, and cheese. The soup was served in plain but colorful enamel bowls. Mussel shells were provided in lieu of spoons for spooning garnish into the soup.



Dessert included fresh fruit served on a wooden skewer, small pastry squares, and coffee or tea. The pastries included brownies, lemon square, fudge, chocolate mint, and toffee nut bars. There were no plates; instead each setting had a small wooden paddle for the bread and cheese and then the dessert. Unserved soup also was frozen and sold in quarts.

Another core Soupe du Jour policy was the fixed price, with no additional tax or tipping. Due to limited seating, reservations were required (or strongly encouraged in later years).

*This combination of the blue-and-white tablecloths, white walls and bright yellow, blue, green and red soup bowls and tureens has been the basic Soupe du Jour decor since [1972].*

[Family Circle 1977]

However, after a year of work, it was clear that the space at the Tomato Factory was simply too small to justify the work involved, so Soupe du Jour needed to move.

*With about 13 customers a day, principal and interest payments to make on our loan, and being open only four days a week, we were taking home about \$25 every two or three weeks. Gross sales for the 10 months of that year amounted to \$5,646.40; our profits were \$740 each. (That works out to about 50 cents an hour.) Working under those conditions in such a child-sized place for that kind of money was ridiculous. [Family Circle 1977]*

1973 - 1980 - Blackwell Ave.

In January 1973, Hartshorne and Young moved Soupe du Jour to a former garage building behind 10 East Broad Street and off Blackwell Avenue, which would allow more room - and a real stove and refrigerator.

*The building, once a garage, housed one large room with a brick floor, a vaulted ceiling and huge windows which admitted generous quantities of lunchtime light. Even more exciting were the sink and the bathroom. [Family Circle 1977]*



View of neighboring antique shop  
at Blackwell Ave. (1973)



Entrance with signs  
at Blackwell Ave. (1974)

They expanded to being open on Saturday, and raised the lunch price to \$3.00. The new location on the main street helped business pick up from 13 to 25 customers a day, even without advertising.

*This word-of-mouth reputation brought a growing press coverage, which, in turn, attracted more customers. Gross sales for 1973 reached \$13,000, or almost triple those of 1972. Our profits almost quadrupled- from \$1,480 to \$5,706. [Family Circle 1977]*



Original sign (1970s)



Building after sale (1980)

In addition to the happy customers, press coverage of Soupe du Jour was almost glowing (see below). The best one-liner came from the Philadelphia Inquirer in 1976: "one of the world's most charming restaurants." But the big boost to the business came from a front-page feature in the Princeton Shopper in October, 1965: "I've eaten in some of the world's greatest restaurants... But none ... can claim to have been quite so delightful."

*The week the article appeared, our sales jumped from an average of about 50 customers a day to about 70. We knew we'd suddenly moved into a new kind of business and that we'd better do something about it. ... We were on our way.* [Family Circle 1977]

The price of lunch increased to \$3.50 by 1976, and \$3.75 by 1979, continuing to rise around 25 cents a year. The work for the founders included running the restaurant on-site, and the off-site work for cooking and baking.

*Frad waits on tables fewer days now but puts in a 15-hour cooking-baking-marketing stint each week to turn out three days' supply of soup, 24 loaves of bread and desserts. I spend more time with customers, less time cooking (two days' supply of soup, 24 loaves of bread and desserts).* [Family Circle 1977]



Hartshorne at Tomato Factory (1972)



Young and Hartshorne  
with Young's miniature of the new building (1973)

In her Family Circle article, Hartshorne describes the result and satisfaction of their work:

*From a hit-or-miss beginning on a tiny porch with no running water, few customers and on a borrowed \$1,000, we have built a part-time restaurant business that should net each of us \$10,000 this year while permitting us six weeks of vacation and the enjoyment of doing what we love and being our own bosses. Our restaurant, which is open for lunch only, is called the Soupe du Jour, and that's exactly what we serve--a homemade soup of the day, plus homemade bread, imported cheese, dessert and coffee or tea. And the remarkable success of this simple idea has stunned us. ... It's very hard work, but we couldn't imagine not doing it. Besides, our profits keep going up, and Soupe du Jour has become an established part of the community. There's something else that's part of our success. When people see Frad and me in our restaurant - those two perfectly ordinary housewives - they get the feeling that they could do this just as well. And they could!* [Family Circle 1977]

### The Next Day

Valerie Hartshorne and Frad Young sold the business in 1980, when Young was ready to retire. Hartshorne then started a catering company that operated for the next decade or so, serving events from a dinner for four to a wedding for 200.

## 1980 - 2007 - Patty Phillips

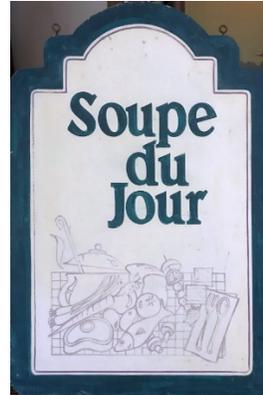
In March 1980, Patty (Patricia) Phillips purchased Soupe du Jour from Valerie Hartshorne and Frad Young. In the 1970s, Phillips had been a ceramic painter for sculptor Edward Marshall Boehm, and had more recently done professional cooking. And she understood Soupe du Jour from having worked there the previous year.

*"It's good, fresh food at a reasonable price" ... "We like to have fun, for you to leave with your belly full, and for you to get a good bang for your buck. Mostly, it's just fun. Life is short."*

[Patty Phillips, quoted in the New York Times, 10/21/2001]



Patty Phillips (c 1990)



New sign (c 1980)

Phillips worked to expand the menu, and the business, while still retaining the style and charm of the Soupe du Jour concept. In the first year, Phillips expanded lunch to six days a week (including Monday) at \$5.00, and started providing two soup options each day. She also introduced a weekly dinner at a fixed price of \$9 to \$12, depending on that day's menu (Thursday and then Friday, 6:30 to 9 pm).

In 1981, Phillips began a several-year experiment with a weekly Coffeehouse evening with live music on Wednesday nights, for a \$3 cover charge. It was fun, but unfortunately not financially viable.

By 1982, Phillips expanded the lunch hours to 11:30 am to 2:30 pm (from 12 to 2 pm), Monday to Friday. And by 1983, she was running the restaurant year-round, instead of taking August off due to the heat. She also experimented with tweaking the lunch menu to offer salad for \$5 instead of soup for \$6.



Front windows (1983)



Tables (1992)

Phillips also upgraded the equipment in the building, installing a six-burner Vulcan commercial stove to allow serious cooking on the premises, including dinners and brunches. The building had no air conditioning, so she added ceiling fans and an awning for the outside patio for hotter days (and later some window units). The Sunday brunch menu also changed during hot weather to omit dishes from the grill. And the building had no heat, except for the stove, so she also added electric heaters by the windows.



Kitchen & back (1982)



View from stove facing door (1992)

By 1984, Phillips added a Sunday brunch from 11 am to 2:30 pm, which featured Eggs Benedict, pancakes, French toast, and sandwiches. lunch was \$8.95 by 1987, and \$10.95 in by 1992.

In 2002, Phillips made a final upgrade to the menu, offering three sandwiches "for the husbands," grilled cheese, smoked turkey, and BLT. Lunch then varied from \$9 to \$15, and Sunday brunch was \$9 to \$15.



Evening dinner panorama (1990s)

## The End of the Day

In July 2007, Patty Phillips was forced to close the Soupe du Jour restaurant. The business had operated for 35 years since it was founded, and Phillips had run it for 27 years.



*"Soupe du Jour opened at the site in 1980 and closed July 29, 2007 after lease negotiations broke down between restaurant owner Patty Phillips and property owner Alec Gallup. Mr. Gallup evicted the restaurant owner from the property. About 1,000 patrons signed a petition supporting Ms. Phillips in her efforts to avoid closing the popular eatery."*

[Community News, 3/13/2008]

## Pennington Quality Market (2007)

Phillips moved to the Pennington Quality Market in September 2007, where she still prepares Soupe Du Jour soups, "notable for their imaginative names, their even more imaginative ingredients and, most importantly, their exceptional, savory flavors." [Bucks Local News, 6/24/2009]

*"Coming from an artistic background, I model my soups after painting. I look for color, I look for shapes, I look for texture. Even many of the names follow colors [such as "Black Mushroom" and "Green Peppercorn"]. Taste is the last thing I think about because it's the last thing you get, isn't it?"* [Patty Phillips in Bucks Local News, 6/24/2009]

## Nomad Pizza Company (2010)

The former Soupe du Jour building was later taken over by the Nomad Pizza Company in 2010, when the company opened its first store.

Nomad began in 2006 as a venture by partners Thomas Grim & Stalin Bedon that provided mobile pizzeria catering to local private parties, using a 1949 REO Speed Wagon truck equipped with a wood-burning brick oven imported from Italy.

## Menu and Recipes

The core Soupe du Jour style and menu remained very consistent through the years, although the specific soup offerings varied widely depending on interest and available ingredients. A perennial favorite cited by both Hartshorne and Phillips was spinach and leek.

### Hartshorne and Young Menus (1972 - 1980)

"Valerie and Frances have anywhere from 60 to 70 recipes from which they prepare a different soup every day."

[Princeton Shopper, 10/1975]

#### Sample lunch menu:

- Tureen of soup
- French bread, cheese, vegetable tray
- Dessert: Fruit stick, small pastries, coffee or tea  
(brownies, lemon square, fudge bars, chocolate mint, toffee nut bars)



#### Sample soups mentioned in newspaper coverage:

- 1972 - Zucchini, Canadian split pea, hunters' chowder, corn and fish, puree mongol muligatawney, fish chowder
- 1975 - 60 to 70 recipes - Spinach leek, Caribbean fish chowder, garbure, Roman egg plant, chicken and brussel sprouts, kaldo berd, Canadian split pea, lima bean and ham; Offered with Foutina or Tibo Scandinavian cheese, and "Flavored from tiny carafe with red or white wine, or croutons and garnish of sliced sausage or bits of hard boiled egg"
- 1976c - Pumpkin, spinach and leek, creamed carrot, Spanish vegetable, mushroom
- 1976 - Thursday is spinach and leek and Friday is Caribbean fish chowder

### Patty Phillips Menus (1980 - 2007)

"We have a list of about 50 [soups], but sometimes we just create our own." [Trenton Times, 9/11/1987]

#### Sample lunch menu:

- 2 soups, 2 breads, 3 cheeses, vegetable tray with dip
- 3 sandwiches - grilled cheese, smoked turkey, BLT
- 3 bar cookies - chocolate mint, toffee nut, lemon squares, plus occasionally e.g. raspberry coconut squares
- Fresh fruit slices on skewers
- Coffee, tea; ice tea or lemonade (different flavors)

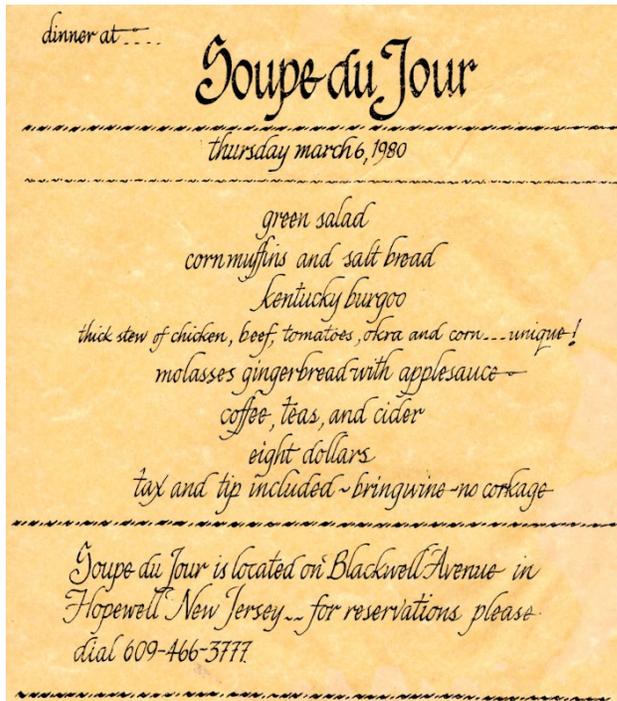
#### Sample Sunday brunch menu:

- Eggs Benedict, pancakes, French toast, sandwiches

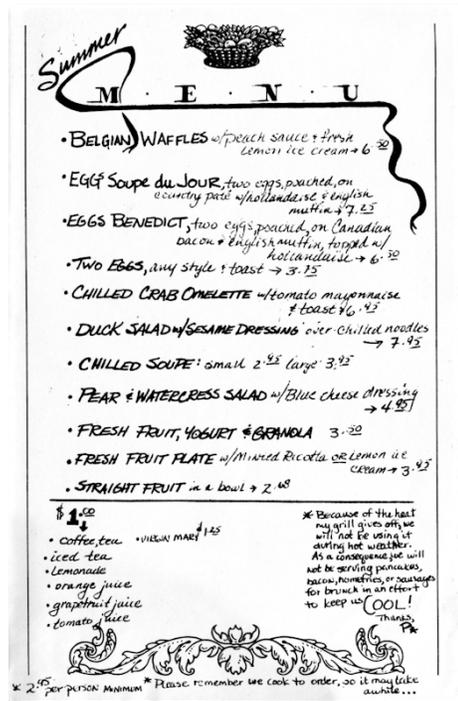
#### Sample soups mentioned in newspaper coverage:

- 1980 - cold gazpacho, hot spinach and leek, ham, leek, and cheese
- 1982 - mulligatawny
- 1985 - cream of asparagus, fish chowder
- 1987 - creamy tomato
- 2001 - parsnip-apple

## Phillips Dinner & Brunch Menus



Dinner menu (1980)



Brunch Menu (c2002)

## Toffee Nut Bar Recipe

The Toffee Nut Bar was a classic Soupe du Jour dessert offering. This recipe from Hartshorne and Young was passed on to Patty Phillips, and published in the Princeton Packet, 8/1980.

### Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3 cups flour
- 3 sticks melted butter

Mix together and pat into the bottom of 10"x15"x2" high pan.

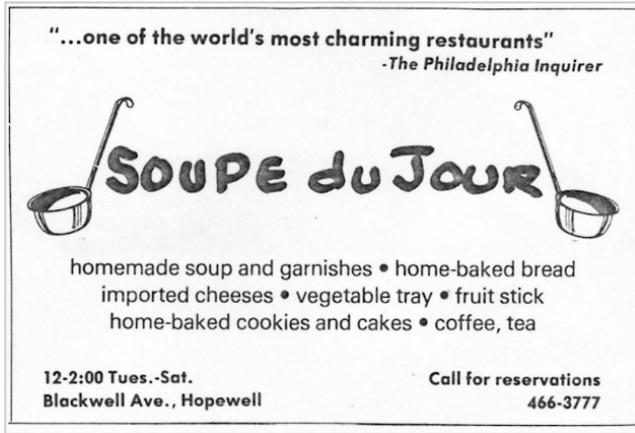
Bake 20 min. at 350° or until edges begin to brown.

### Meanwhile mix together:

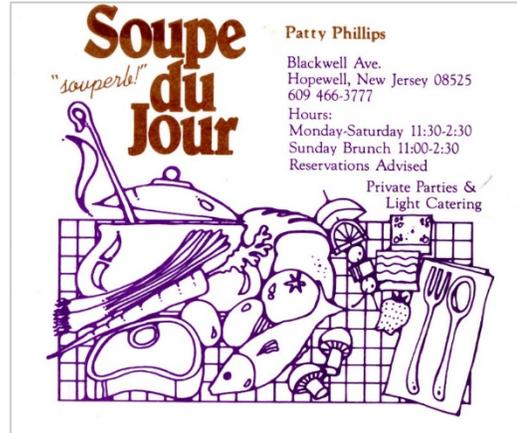
- 3 cups dark brown sugar
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 generous cup of broken-up walnuts
- 1/2 bag of coconut
- 6 eggs
- 3 teaspoons vanilla
- 3 tablespoons flour

Pour over the crust and bake another 25 min. or until set.

Miscellany



Ad (1970s)



Card (1980s)

Seasonings

Under Patty Phillips, Soupe du Jour came to be known for its "funky decor," described as "a kind of 'Alice's Restaurant' ambience." [Courier News, 4/14/2002]

This included a wide array of plants and artwork and oddities, including the "Eats Open" sign above a mounted deer head (one of two), and the infamous tiny (really tiny!) bathroom.

And there were the whimsical salt & pepper sets, from a large collection assembled by Phillips to liven the tables.



Salt & pepper sets  
(Original on top, Phillips on bottom)



More Phillips salt & pepper sets

### The Address: "Bank Place"

Oddly, Soupe du Jour apparently never had a unique street address. The building is part of the 10 East Broad Street property, but the entrance is in back, off Blackwell Ave. As a result, advertisements and newspaper reviews sometimes used "10 East Broad," but mostly settled on just "Blackwell."

More confusingly, the address "Bank Place" was used intermittently for Soupe du Jour and the adjacent properties from at least 1960 to 1988, in the newspapers and in advertisements. This was not an actual street - instead the name was used to describe the property along the north side of the first block of East Broad Street, from the former National Bank building at Greenwood Ave. (2 East Broad) to the distinctive Italianate house on Blackwell (10 East Broad). Betty Gantz also referred to this block as "Bank Plaza."

During this period, the address "1 Bank Place" was used for the main 10 East Broad house in the 1960s, in both newspaper articles and in advertisements.

And the address "2 Bank Place" was used for antique shops in the large L-shaped "carriage house" on the back of the property, both for the Prince of Orange (1960 - 1975) and the High Button Shoe (from 1975). The same address also was used for Soupe du Jour early after its move in 1973 to the smaller "garage" closer to the house (which originally also was used as a second building by the Prince of Orange antiques store).

## References

Information extracted and summarized from sources including books, reports, maps, newspapers, and photos. Many of the original materials (books, reports, maps, photos) are shared on the Hopewell Valley History Project site ([HopewellHistoryProject.org](http://HopewellHistoryProject.org)).

### **Thanks the principals who kindly provided information and materials:**

- Valerie and Caroline Hartshorne
- Patty Phillips

### **Books**

- *Hopewell's Past*, Betty Gantz (1987)

### **Newspapers**

- Trenton Times and other local newspapers

## Reviews

**"I've eaten in some of the world's greatest restaurants... But none ... have been quite so delightful"**

In the course of a spoiled childhood, I would wager that I've eaten in some of the world's greatest restaurants: Lutece in New York, La Tour d'Argent in Paris, La Pyramide in Vienne, Bianchi in Lugano, La Petite Marmite in Palm Beach. But none of my pilgrimages to these 4-star temples of haute cuisine can claim to have been quite so delightful as are my frequent trips to the Soupe du Jour in Hopewell. Obviously, to make so outrageous a statement, my measure cannot have been solely the distinction of the food. I'm speaking rather of a Total Experience — and I can think of no way in which the Soupe du Jour hasn't proved itself to be, quite simply, delightful. The soup, the accompanying food, the owners and their friends, the relaxed atmosphere, the very table settings are all of the same quality: super.

Princeton\_Shopper, 10/1975]

**"an operetta of charming grace notes, but every single appointment ... is there for a reason"**

**THE TABLES, FOR INSTANCE,** are especially festive because of the blue print tablecloths which in turn are topped by a thin piece of transparent plastic to save on laundry bills. The tables themselves were very cheap: just a metal base (\$18 each) attached to a piece of plywood (\$4 each). The Bentwood chairs are on loan from a friend in the restaurant business in New York.

The owners of Soupe du Jour considered buying expensive crockery, but eventually settled on colorful made-in-Japan metal bowls.

"They conduct the heat better and they're unbreakable," said Mrs. Young.

Originally, they thought of serving pie for dessert, but that entails a plate and a fork so pie was abandoned in favor of sugary hand-held squares.

[Trenton Times,  
1/11/1976]

**"hidden gem"**

**'Soup Queen' boasts huge following at Hopewell's Soupe du Jour**

By FRANK CURCIO  
Correspondent

The "Soup Queen" admits she's never caught the classic "Soup Nazi" episode of "Seinfeld." But regulars and first-timers alike know she's the exact opposite of that nasty TV character. And her soup's better.

Patty Phillips is the queen of the soup pot in Central Jersey. Her long-running, hidden gem of a restaurant, Soupe du Jour in Hopewell, overflows with the charm, joy, good will and sparkling conviviality that stems from the owner's personality. Her cheery laugh fills the small restaurant as much as the tantalizing aroma of the fresh-prepared stuff that's made Soupe du Jour a quiet destination for decades.

The shop has a kind of "Alice's Restaurant" ambience, not just because of its funky decor but because the entrance is "round the back" as in the famous folk song. The tiny shop is in what seems a hut 'round back of an old manor house on the corner of East Broad Street and Blackwell Avenue.

Soupe du Jour is the kind of out-of-the-way place rated as "worth the trip." Its menu of fine, casual, home-made dishes melds nicely with the charming, slightly bohemian atmosphere that waits with laughter and good food. The ambience of Soupe du Jour flows from Phillips' infectious smile and mischievous eyes.

"It was originally a carriage house," Phillips says.

This is given credence by the old-brick floor. The interior is loaded with old-fashioned, tongue-and-groove woodwork that contrasts with numerous Asian-influenced decorative points, including a load of paper lanterns strung from the ceiling.

The large, latticed windows make the interior bright and inviting even on cloudy afternoons. Traditional wood, ice-cream-parlor-like chairs accompany tables unexpectedly clothed with faux leopard-spot coverings. A leaping swordfish, a mounted buck's head and a neon "eats" sign counterpoint the more dainty elements of the decor.

[Courier News, 4/14/2002]

**"one of the world's most charming restaurants"**

By Ann Waldron  
Special to the Inquirer

To have a perfect day in Hopewell, N. J., you should go on a Wednesday or a Saturday.

That's because Soupe du Jour, which is one of the world's most charming restaurants for lunch, is open only from noon to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and the Hopewell Museum, which has four floors chock full of entrancing antique furnishings and clothes, is open only on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from 2 to 5 p.m.

If you can't plan your visit with the precision necessary to take in both these multi-star attractions, Hopewell has other things to lure the visitor, of which more later.

Soupe du Jour is located in the carriage house of an old Victorian house on Broad Street in downtown

Hopewell borough. Its ambience, as restaurant critics always say, is beguiling ... brick floors, bentwood chairs, blue tablecloths, plants in the sunny window, odd cooking vessels on the wall.

You do not make choices at Soupe du Jour. You take what they're serving that day and the price is a flat, all-inclusive \$3.50, with no tips, please.

For this you get a pot of soup with as many refills as you like. You get two kinds of homemade bread and cheese, as much of both as you want. You get a beverage. You get dessert, which is always fruit-on-a-stick plus homemade pastries.

Pastries, baked by Valerie Cunningham, vary from day to day. The soup changes every day, too, except that on Thursday it's always spinach and leek soup and Friday Caribbean

[Philadelphia Inquirer, 3/7/1976]

**"consistently serves simple lunches that approach the magnificent"**

For about eight years now, Soup du Jour in Hopewell, N.J., has maintained a low profile. The restaurant consistently serves simple lunches that approach the magnificent. It has relied mostly on satisfied patrons to spread the good word.

Little is fancy in this converted carriage house.

The kitchen is in plain view, enabling diners to watch the chef perform her wonders. The carriage house's high ceiling has been kept intact. Some windows have been added to bring in more light; one window, tucked in an obscure corner, is an interesting stained-glass affair.

The old worn brick flooring has been retained almost untouched. Prints, a few plants, weathered implements from farming days, a modest amount of wicker, and silk flowers comprise the decorations. Baking is done on the premises.

**Hearty food**

Clearly, the muted decor is not the drawing card. Nor are patrons drawn by the service, although it is pleasant and efficient. The attraction here is hearty food, simple, basic food, attractively presented in copious portions at a price clearly in the bargain range.

Courier Times, 1980