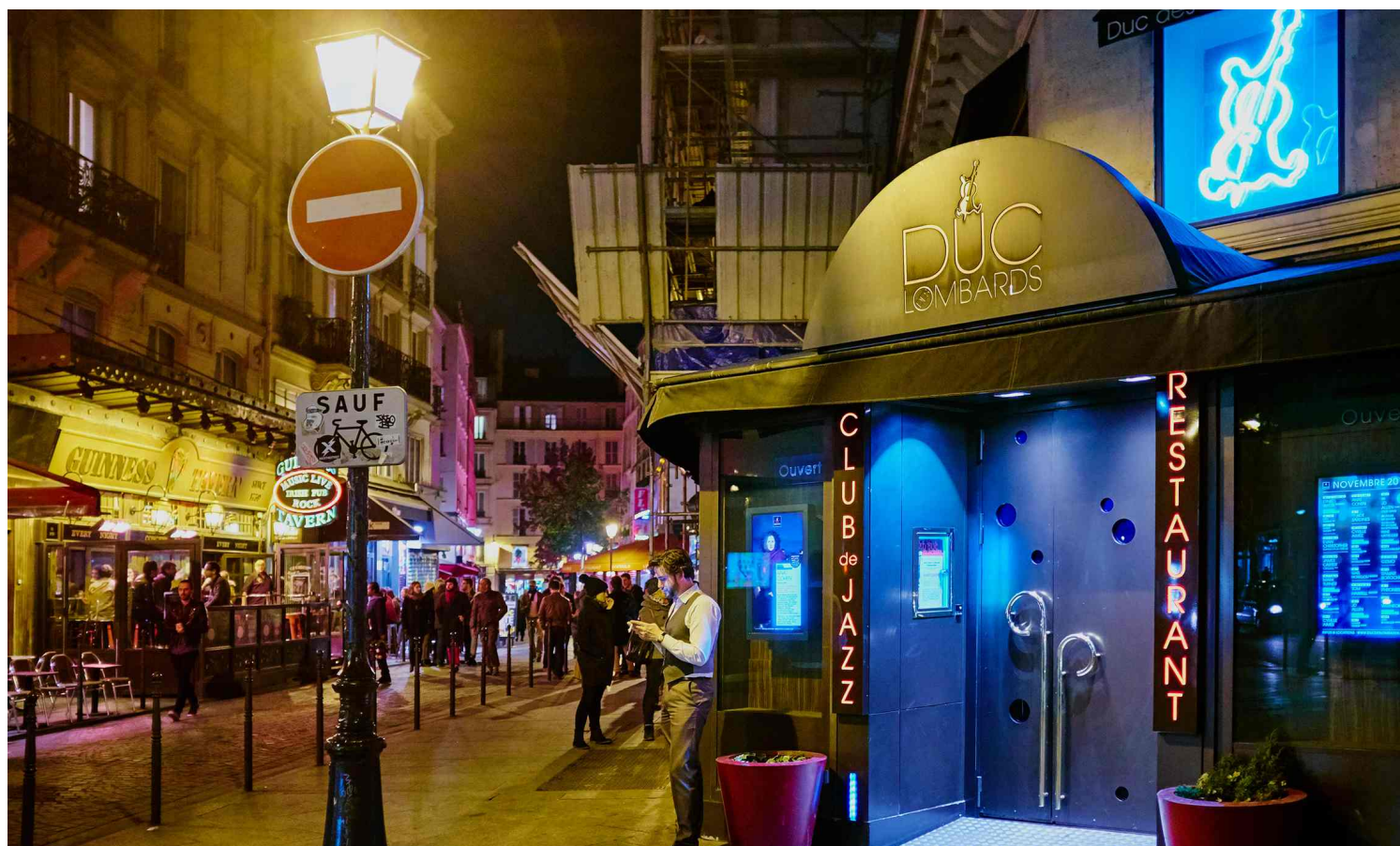


Top 10 Paris jazz clubs – chosen by musicians and experts

Paris has always had a strong affinity with jazz, and there's a wealth of venues to hear trad, modern and avant garde music. Here, performers, producers and critics pick their favourite clubs



All that jazz ... Le Duc des Lombards is still the Paris club 'young jazz cats dream of playing'. Photograph: Alamy

Paris has swung to the rhythms of jazz for nigh on a century. With legends Bud Powell, Chet Baker and Miles Davis woven deep in its history, and pioneers Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grappelli providing the backdrop to its cafe society, jazz is as much a part of the capital's cultural heritage as art, philosophy and literature.

Yet jazz in Paris is no sepia-tinted relic: it remains a flourishing art form that packs out bars, clubs and caverns. With a profusion of styles on offer (from trad, modern and avant garde to bossa nova, jazz-funk and Afro-jazz, not forgetting France's singular contribution to the genre - gypsy jazz), its freedom-loving soul lives on. And the more experimental among the

city's contemporary players are lifting its appeal to new heights.

Jazz Club Etoile



This club has held mythical status on Paris's jazz scene for four decades. Many jazz and blues legends, including Cab Calloway, BB King and Lionel Hampton have passed through its doors. The clientele is an interesting cocktail of music lovers and hotel guests who come down from their rooms [it is in Le Meridien Etoile hotel] to find this incredible jazz club. Recently refurbished, it merges vintage with modern. I love the art-deco design, the subtle lighting, the art on the walls and its nod to Paris in the metro-style tiles and Eiffel Tower-esque metal materials. Its 200 seats and curved stage are just the right size for a jazz club - intimate yet spacious enough - and it's a great place to catch the cream of French and international jazz.

. 81 Boulevard Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, 17th arrondissement, +33 1 40 68 30 42, jazzclub-paris.com

Nicolas Pflug, A&R director, Blue Note Records/Universal France

La Petite Halle



La Petite Halle has become a hub for open-minded jazz people, with unusual jams, seamless DJ sets and memorable moments. Organised by Reza Ackbaraly (the man behind the Jazz Mix at Jazz A Vienne festival), the club recently saw the legendary Tony Allen playing drums with Robert Glasper and Mos Def, Japanese band JariBu Afrobeat Arkestra and Magik Malik jamming with Steve Coleman's band. Its loft-like interior is often packed with local musicians and groovers who party in a laid-back style. The wood-fire oven pizzas are delicious and the terrace delightful when the weather is nice.

· *La Grande Halle de la Villette, 211 Avenue Jean Jaurès, 19th arrondissement, +33 9 82 25 91 81, lapetitehalle.fr*

Manu Boubli, DJ, producer and co-owner of Superfly Records

Le Baiser Salé



Photograph: Alamy

It usually costs just €3 to see a talented local quartet at this intimate club in the Châtelet district, though top-class musicians (mainly from the UK and US) also play there. What's cool about it is there's no amplified sound so the music travels directly from instrument to audience. The decor is simple, with a wooden floor and wooden chairs, making it feeling like an old-school Louisiana jazz joint. People don't go because it's stylish, they go to listen to great music and soak up the vibes. When friends visit Paris and want to listen to jazz, I always point them in the direction of Baiser Salé.

· *58 Rue des Lombards, 1st arrondissement, +33 1 42 33 37 71, lebaisersale.com*
Ben l'Oncle Soul, singer-songwriter

La Dynamo



Photograph: Bruno Fert/Picturetank

Ten years have passed since La Dynamo opened its doors, just outside the Boulevard Périphérique - the club, like those who play there, is on the fringes of the city's jazz scene: the rolling trance bass of the São Paulo trio, Metá Metá, the rambunctious Sons of Kemet, the disconcerting Thomas de Pourquery and the astonishing saxophone player Ilhan Ersahin. The capacity is 300, admission is never more than €16, and in the neighbouring

bar, good wine costs €3. Free jazz or soul, revisionist soundtrack or electronic echoes; history is being made here. For the last decade, La Dynamo has taken a chance on music that is unknown, unprecedented and sometimes extraordinary.

. 9 Rue Gabrielle Jossierand, 93500 Pantin, +33 1 49 22 10 10, banlieuesbleues.org

Jacques Denis, culture journalist for Libération and Le Monde diplomatique

La Cave du 38 Riv



There's an authenticity to Cave du 38 Riv - it's like a "proper" jazz club from the 1950s or 60s. I like to imagine being back in those times, playing with famous musicians. Today most jazz clubs are at street level, so it's quite special to find one that's underground. There is no stage, so the audience is right up close to the band which lends it a friendly and sociable air. Cav du 38 Riv is made up of two adjoining caverns (one for the music and one for the bar) with stonework giving it a medieval feel. It offers a broad range of jazz styles: traditional, modern, bossa nova, gypsy and more. On Friday and Saturday nights there is a late jam - starting at midnight and swinging through till 4am.

. Rue de Rivoli, 4th arrondissement, +33 1 48 87 56 30, 38riv.com

Thomas Ibanez, jazz saxophonist, composer and arranger

New Morning



South African jazz musician Hugh Masakela at the New Morning club. Photograph: Alamy

It's easy to fall in love with the distinctive mood and exotic atmosphere at New Morning. It opened back in 1981 and many jazz icons played there towards the end of their careers: Chet Baker, Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, Dexter Gordon and so on. Prince named it his

favourite place in Paris, returning many times to play surprise after-show jams. The interior of the club is rather like a garage, nothing particularly cosy or chic, but the audience crowding round the stage makes for a special atmosphere. It has a capacity of 500, and feels neither too big nor too small. It's always an eclectic but classy mix (with a regular offering of world music acts, not just jazz), which is why it's well known to music lovers *and* jazz aficionados.

. 7-9 Rue des Petites Écuries, 10th arrondissement, +33 1 45 23 51 41, newmorning.com
 Véronique Croisile, manager of Téréz Montcalm and Lucy Dixon

Sunset/Sunside Jazz Club



Le Sunset Sunside / Paris 01 / 11-12-2012

A club I really enjoy both playing at and visiting is Sunset/Sunside, one of three jazz clubs on Rue des Lombards. It's a spirited little place with a real jazz club ambience: Sunside is on the ground floor, and Sunset is a cavernous space in the basement. You can see all the great names in jazz here, as well as new talent in other genres. It attracts an eclectic crowd, many of whom often go out of curiosity, not knowing in advance who'll be performing.

. 60 Rue des Lombards, 1st arrondissement, +33 1 40 26 46 60, sunset-sunside.com
 Irina R, jazz, folk and soul singer-songwriter

Studio de l'Ermitage



Rene Lacaille (left) in concert at the Studio de l'Ermitage.
 Photograph: Edmond Sadaka/Sipa/REX

Originally an old cookie factory, Studio de l'Ermitage retains many charms from its

industrial past. Yet, when you step inside you can also feel the conviviality of this father-and-daughter run place. It's a medium-size space (250 capacity) and the staff are always happy and welcoming. Its booking policy is discerning and diverse, from jazz to world music, it supports emerging artists and gives monthly residencies to bands such as Akalé Wubé (Ethio jazz), Roda do Cavaco (Brazil) or Cumbia Ya! (Cumbia). We organised a label night at Studio last year for Record Store Day. Most of the label musicians jammed together and it was an unforgettable night. It's in the same street as two other venues, La Maroquinerie or Bellevilloise.

. 8 Rue de l'Ermitage, 20th arrondissement, +33 1 44 62 02 86, studio-ermitage.com
 Franck Descollonges, DJ and founder of Parisian record label Heavenly Sweetness

Duc des Lombards



Photograph: Alamy

Like Ronnie Scott's in London or the Village Vanguard in New York, young jazz cats dream of playing here - that's why the shows and energy are always so intense. World-class artists such as Ahmad Jamal and Kenny Barron play here, and for me its sound system is the best in any jazz club in the capital. The refurbishment is really classy - a bit different to its original early 80s incarnation as a smoked-out mysterious joint. The food and drinks are always top-notch, so that helps, too. My secret tip for visitors would be: hang around after the second set for bartender Lois's creative cocktails - and take in his soul tropical jazz mix, it's one of the best in the city. Definitely the place to go in Paris if you're looking for a straight-ahead jazz moment.

. 42 Rue de Lombards, 1st arrondissement, +33 1 42 33 22 88, ducdeslombards.com
 Florian Pellissier, jazz pianist and composer

Les Disquaires



This is not your typical cosy jazz club: its minimalist style looks like one of the many bars you find in the Bastille area, with a young, hip crowd hanging out there due to cheap drinks and free entry. It's one of those rare venues in the city where the new breed of Parisian jazz players can experiment with new sounds in front of an audience of a similar age. The stage is narrow, but this is more of a musical laboratory than a concert hall. Here, bands mix jazz with contemporary influences, from pop to hip-hop, M-Base to Radiohead, and experiment with electronics, loops and drum machines. Les Disquaires is the place to go if you're looking for the next big thing in French experimental jazz. It also has funk and Brazilian bands on at weekends.

· 4-6 Rue des Taillandiers, 11th arrondissement, +33 1 40 21 94 60, lesdisquaires.com

Vincent Bessières, president of Paris Jazz Club

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