



BOB BROWN/TIMES-DISPATCH
Craftsmen Bruno Perrigouas (left) and Gilles Cheramy came from France to put the finishing touches on the bar top their company made for the Can Can restaurant in Carytown.

**CARYTOWN MAKES FRENCH CONNECTION ;
THOUGH A WORLD APART, WORKERS CRAFT
SHOWPIECE FOR RICHMOND EATERY; [City Edi-
tion] Janet Caggiano. Richmond Times - Dispatch.**

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Gilles Cheramy's commute into work this week spanned several time zones.

The craftsman traveled from Tours, France, to Richmond to put the finishing touches on a 50-foot zinc bar top manufactured by his company, L'Etainier Tourangeau.

"I wanted to come," he said with the help of an interpreter. "I love America."

Cheramy was working yesterday at the Can Can restaurant, which will open at the end of November in Carytown. The restaurant was modeled after a 1900s French brasserie.

"When you walk in, the bar is what you will see first," said Craig Love, general manager of the Can Can. "So the bar has to capture the feel."

Its elegant shape is highlighted by wings on each end. When completed, one side will be an oyster bar, the other a breakfast area. Only the 26-foot-long center area will have stools.

The bar was shipped to the site in three sections. Cheramy spent much of yesterday connecting those sections. He used a hot mallet (heated over an open flame) to melt sticks of zinc. As the zinc melted, it dripped into each seam and set, joining the sections together. Workers then hand-filed the seams until smooth.

"The seams will be invisible," Cheramy said.

The bottom part of the bar, made from oak, was constructed in Charles City. When the top arrived from France, restaurant officials kept their fingers crossed that the two pieces would fit together.

"It was so nice to have something from the next county and another country come together with no problems," said Walt Garde, project manager. "They work in centimeters and we work in inches. So when it arrived and it fit, we were all very happy."

L'Etainier Tourangeau is one of two companies worldwide to build such bar tops, Cheramy said. It took three workers 500 hours to complete the project. Cheramy will spend another few days on the finishing touches, from filing the sides to polishing the top.

"This is a special job," he said. "I like it because we work only with our hands, not machines."

His company has completed other bars in Washington, Charlotte, N.C., Las Vegas and Philadelphia.

"I expected something very attractive when it was done," Love said. "But I certainly didn't expect it to look as beautiful as it does."

The Restaurant Company is opening the Can Can at 3120 W. Cary St. The restaurant will seat 140 people in the front, another 60 in a private dining area and 40 on two patios.