Antoine B. Beauvilliers (1754 – 31 January 1817) was a pioneering restaurateur who opened the first prominent grand restaurant in Paris. Moreover, he wrote *L’Art du Cuisinier*. Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin considers him the most important of the early restaurateurs, as "he was the first to have an elegant dining room, handsome well-trained waiters, a fine cellar and a superior kitchen." Beauvilliers is described as a "portly figure, his triple chin, his broad, joyous face, and the light that sparkles in his large grey eye." He dressed fashionably and carried a sword. His success was enhanced by his ability to "cater to and flatter rich patrons", attending to them personally and helping them with items on the menu; he had a prodigious memory and could recall a patron he had not seen in 20 years.

Career

**Restaurateur**

Of humble parentage, Beauvilliers worked his way up from kitchen boy to become the chef of the Count of Provence, the future King Louis XVIII. Beauvilliers opened a restaurant called the *La Grande Taverne de Londres* under the *Palais-Royal, Paris*, in 1786. The restaurant was intended for a wealthy and aristocratic clientele; it had tables made of mahogany, crystal chandeliers, and tablecloths of fine linen, an extensive wine cellar, and elegantly-dressed waiters. Dishes on the restaurant menu included partridge with cabbage, veal chops grilled in buttered paper, and duck with turnips. The restaurant Beauvilliers became a rendez-vous of conservative political factions, in which Beauvilliers was implicated; in 1795 he was forced to close his establishment and to live away from the trade that was his life. When he reopened *La Grande Taverne de Londres*, at 26 rue de Richelieu, tastes had changed and he met with less success. The restaurant closed in 1825.

**Writer**

In this period of eclipse he wrote *L’art du Cuisinier* which was published by Pilet in two octavo volumes with a great number of illustrative engravings in 1814. It became a classic of French gastronomic literature. A second edition, with a supplement, appeared in 1821. An English translation, *The Art of French Cookery*, was published in London by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1824.