

DINE

Open-air restaurant brings Parisian flair to NuLu

Lennie Omalza

Special to the Courier Journal

Hotel restaurants aren't usually my go-to when choosing a place to eat—but I've been to Rosettes multiple times since it opened this past May. The eatery's Southern-inspired menu features so many dishes unlike anything else around Louisville, there's always something new to try.

This week, I caught up with the woman behind those culinary creations: chef and sommelier Ashleigh Shanti, a James Beard Award finalist, "Top Chef" competitor, and culinary director of Hotel Genevieve's food and drink program, which includes Bar Genevieve, Lucky Penny, Mini Marche, and the ground-floor restaurant, Rosettes.

"(Each outlet) is very different," Shanti said, "(with) menus (that) offer something different to our guests and local diners (so) they can get all of these really cool, unique dining experiences under one roof."

Rosettes reflects Shanti's spin on the Parisian theme that can be seen throughout the hotel. The space features arches and globe pendant lighting, as well as multicolored chair seats and light-pink glassware.

"And it's very feminine in the plating," she said. "It reminds me of this French, rustic... grandmother's kitchen. Hotel Genevieve is an incredibly feminine space, (and) Rosettes speaks to that."

When it came time to develop the menu, Shanti turned to her Southern style, incorporating Louisville touches along the way.

"We've been really intentional about ensuring everyone can have a great experience," she said. "It's quite an expansive menu. You can go in and have a drink at the bar, and have a small snacky bite—or you can have a full, course-out meal. (It's) kind of a 'pick your adventure.'"

Her nods to Louisville include a country ham & benedictine spread, served with pickled vegetables and crostini.

"And we've taken the traditional Hot Brown... and added these really cool Parisian and French touches," she said. "It's our version of a Hot Brown, (called) a hot madame. It's a mixture of a croque monsieur and a croque madame, with hot brown touches."

The dish boasts a croissant, turkey, mornay, bacon, and gruyère, with a fried egg and marinated tomatoes, and is available for breakfast and brunch.

One of Rosettes most popular dishes is the oxtail, an entree on the dinner menu. Made with French onion jus, taleggio aioli, and crispy garlic, Shanti said it's a dish she has introduced at several of her restaurants—and it's something she ate quite a bit during her childhood.

"It was really cool to put the Rosettes touch on it, because I certainly did not eat oxtail with taleggio aioli (when) I was growing up," she added with a laugh. "The roasted chicken with killed lettuce is another popular dish, (and) we've got this beautiful cheesecake on the menu. (We also have) a pain perdu for breakfast. It's been really great. (It) has buttermilk (chantilly) and citrus segments."

French toast is typically my breakfast and brunch go-to, and I'm a fan of Rosettes' pain perdu. The fines herbes and goat cheese omelet—served with petite salad or crispy potatoes—is a breakfast item I have yet to try, but Shanti says it's worth a taste.

"I've got to give props to the kitchen team," she said. "They make an amazing omelet... We have this really beautiful aerated goat cheese that goes in the middle of it, and it's a classic French-rolled omelet. It's just beautifully done—they do it perfectly every time."

She added that the omelet was something the team worked really hard on perfecting before the restaurant opening.

"I think that's something that guests can [rely] on having when they come into Rosettes—and [it will be] mind-blowing."

In addition to developing the menu and working with staff to ensure each dish is just right, part of Shanti's duties is making connections with nearby farmers to bring local produce into the kitchen.

"I identified some really cool farmers in the area, and they've made it incredibly easy to elevate this cuisine," she said. The businesses currently supplying Hotel Genevieve with some of its ingredients are Fischer Farms, Rootbound



Rosettes interior at Hotel Genevieve in Louisville's NuLu neighborhood. PHOTOS COURTESY OF NICK SIMONITE



A burger served at Hotel Genevieve in Louisville's NuLu neighborhood.



The Hot Madame breakfast at Hotel Genevieve.



A cocktail served at Hotel Genevieve.

Farm, Naked Greens, and Berry Farms. Louisville farmers markets also serve as a resource for fresh goods.

In a few months, Shanti and the team will be gearing up for Thanksgiving meals, which will be crafted for dine-in and carryout customers.

"We certainly will be doing something fun for that," she said, "making sure our guests get a really great Thanksgiving meal, and locals can take home things like roasted turkey or killed lettuce. We're going to have an expansive Thanksgiving menu."

Until then, Rosettes will continue to serve guests seven days a week, with separate breakfast, brunch, lunch, and dinner menus—which have recently been updated with additional items. I spied a chocolate ganache tart that wasn't available during my last visit, but

there are several other new offerings as well.

"We're (also) going to put a really nice tomato and watermelon salad on the menu," Shanti said. "The tomatoes in Louisville are looking incredible. We're expanding our menu; (we're) just really being inspired by all the great (local) farmers and producers."

She added that she will make it a point to change the menu seasonally, allowing farmers and purveyors to guide the way.

"Our team is just incredibly excited to be in the city and to allow people to experience dining in a way that is special," Shanti said. "(This is) one of those destinations where you walk in, and it really feels otherworldly. It takes you away (and makes) you feel like you're in a different place."

Rosettes

WHAT: This is a southern-inspired, open-air, Parisian restaurant on the ground floor of Hotel Genevieve.

WHERE: 730 E. Market St.

SERVICES: Indoor dining, outdoor seating, and catering; 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily

CONTACT: bunkhousehotels.com/rosettes, 502-586-7049

Know a restaurant that would make a great feature? Email writer Lennie Omalza at aloha@lennieomalza.com or Lifestyle Editor Kathryn Gregory at kgregory@gannett.com.