

# New Face of An Old City

ST ROCH MARKET

From seafood joints to rarified tiki bars, the number of restaurants in New Orleans has nearly doubled since Katrina. Let's dig in.

BY TRAVIS M. ANDREWS ~ PHOTOGRAPHS BY CEDRIC ANGELES

# On APRIL 10, 2015,

the 140-year-old St. Roch Market reopened after sitting empty for 10 years. Back in the 1960s, the market was a bustling center of commerce for the working-class St. Roch neighborhood, acting as both a small grocer and lunch counter. But as the middle class moved out to the suburbs, the number of vendors slowly dwindled down to one run-down Chinese restaurant that sometimes served po'boys. Then Katrina swept through, leaving the building abandoned, its walls moldy, and its cast-iron interior columns stained with rust. No food. No people.

Today, thanks to \$3.6 million of FEMA funding for the market alone, the space bustles once more.

On opening day, I walk between metal tables on a brick patio and through the market's front doors facing St. Claude Avenue—the thoroughfare splitting the Bywater and St. Roch neighborhoods. Inside are two white quartz counters over 100 feet long and 15 different stalls serving Cajun, Korean, and even Nigerian food. I pick up a pour-over coffee at Coast Roast Coffee and wander around, dodging grandparents and hipsters, tattooed artists and polo-clad Tulane students, blacks and whites, and locals and tourists gathered around the communal tables. I hear English, German, Spanish, and French.

This market is just one example of the new New Orleans.

Katrina wiped out much of the city's infrastructure and population 10 years ago, and since then countless man-hours have gone into saving it from being a modern Atlantis. But New Orleanians aren't just rebuilding their city; they're expanding it. Before the storm, the Big Easy housed less than 850 different restaurants. Now, that number approaches 1,500.

While Creole roots still influence everything from music to art to food, the city is embracing even more diverse tastes. One of the hottest new restaurants in town, the John Besh-backed Shaya, features Israeli lamb kabobs, house-made Baba Ganoush, and five different types of hummus.

There's progress, but prized customs remain intact. Dive bars and Besh restaurants alike still serve red beans and rice on Mondays. (It's tradition.) And brass bands still play on the corner of Frenchmen and Chartres streets on Saturday nights. Proud sons still take their mothers to the Windsor Court Hotel for afternoon tea—walking past the tower of freshly cut roses in the lobby to Le Salon for cucumber sandwiches and black currant-and-walnut scones. But now they can also sip wine and listen to live jazz while sitting in the backyard courtyard of Bacchanal Wine in the Ninth Ward.

We'll all continue dancing at funerals and taking our cocktails in to-go cups because our city remains a celebration of life.

Now, it simply includes more life than ever before.

dipping. 640 Carondelet Street; balisenola.com

## Shaya

Alon Shaya opened this restaurant with his mentor, chef John Besh, in February and serves food inspired by his native country, Israel. A wood-fire oven toasts the pitas, and a trio of decadent dips—including paddlefish caviar—costs just \$15. 4213 Magazine Street; shayarrestaurant.com

## Sac-a-lait

Following the success of Hot Tails, their Cajun restaurant in New Roads, Louisiana, husband-and-wife duo Cody and Sam Carroll moved to New Orleans to open Sac-a-lait. Try the gumbo with alligator sausage and frog legs or the chargrilled oysters kicked up with bacon and jalapeños. 1051 Annunciation Street; sac-a-laitrestaurant.com

## EAT

### Balise

La Balize, the name of Louisiana's first French fort, translates as "seamark." And true to form, the cold bar here stands out. You can't go wrong with its fresh blue crabs, oysters, raw wahoo with fermented chile peppers, or beef tartare served with a dill horseradish for



Stuffed eggplant at Shaya



The Chanteclair Room at Brennan's is covered with fanciful lattice and vibrant 19th-century murals.



Tastes of the city:  
oysters at Balise and  
Sucré's macarons.  
The outdoor scenes  
are from historic  
Jackson Square.



### Brennan's

At Brennan's, housed in a French Quarter mansion that dates back to 1795, servers in bow ties flambé their famous bananas Foster tableside, and dining rooms feature ornate trelliswork, pineapple wallpaper, and bird-cage chandeliers. The restaurant recently reopened after a protracted legal battle over ownership and hired a new chef to update the menu with dishes such as New Orleans BBQ Lobster baked in butter and spices, a rich take on a local delicacy typically made with shrimp. *417 Royal Street; brennansneworleans.com*

### Red's Chinese

This contemporary Chinese restaurant stirs in delightfully Southern twists: Red's laces its soy sauce with bourbon and fills ragoons with cream cheese and crawfish instead of crab. *3048 St. Claude Avenue; redschinese.com*

### Continental Provisions

Located inside the French Market, Continental Provisions offers sandwiches with house-made pâté and pickles or artisanal meats and cheeses—all served on baguettes from local favorite Bellegarde Bakery. *1100 North Peters Street, Stall 23; facebook.com/continentalprov*

### Salon by Sucré

Just above the French Quarter location of

Sucré—the bakery known for its airy, pastel macarons—the six-month-old Salon by Sucré serves bite-size cheeseburgers along with molten chocolate soufflés. *622 Conti Street; shopsucre.com*

## DRINK

### Beachbum Berry's Latitude 29

Jeff "Beachbum" Berry spent years researching his way to becoming a world-renowned tiki expert. Opening a bar—decorated with carved wooden masks and grass cloth on the ceilings—was the logical next step. Order a Mai Tai, a Zombie, or a Latitude 29—the bar's signature cocktail with passion fruit puree, rum, and house-made Madagascar vanilla syrup. Just be careful: The drinks are just as strong as they are sweet. *321 North Peters Street; latitude29nola.com*

### Barrel Proof

Based in a former warehouse and outfitted with warm cypress wood and reclaimed metal, Barrel Proof boasts more than 150 whiskeys—one of the largest collections in New Orleans—and its beer count (75 total) isn't far behind. *1201 Magazine Street; barrelproofnola.com*

### The Franklin

This dimly lit cocktail bar and farm-to-table restaurant specializes in small-batch spirits.

Barrel Proof pours over 150 kinds of whiskey.



Stake out one of the brown leather sofas that line the wood-paneled walls, and ask for an Isabelle, which mixes smoky mezcal and honeydew melon. *2600 Dauphine Street; thefranklinnola.com*

## SHOP

### Frenchmen Art Market

Strands of pretty cafe lights illuminate this three-year-old outdoor market that's open five nights a week. Shop from a rotating cast of 40 or so local artists selling handmade paintings, photos, jewelry, and more. *619 Frenchmen Street; frenchmenartmarket.com*

### Exodus Goods

Beyoncé may have recently bought a house in Uptown, but little sister Solange lived here before it was trendy and opened this fashion-forward boutique with three partners in 2014. The shop carries leopard-print sandals made in Kenya, Guatemalan bags in contemporary colors, and papaya-print clutches made right in New Orleans. *518 Conti Street; exodusgoods.us*

### Loomed

While exploring and living in Istanbul for a year, Molly and Paul Babineaux discovered pestamels, flat Turkish towels woven one by one on looms. The couple works with five

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### TROY "TROMBONE SHORTY" ANDREWS

MUSICIAN

MY NEW ORLEANS IS...

"Jumping onstage during the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival at the Fair Grounds Race Course. Jazz Fest has the best New Orleans has to offer, like sets from legends such as Allen Toussaint and Aaron Neville."

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