

CHATÓ BRASSERIE

The Chic Dining in Northshore

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Located on Manufacturers Road with a patio overlooking Renaissance Park, ChatÓ Brasserie is a welcome addition to the Northshore area. According to our capable server, *cható* has two meanings. It is an old Indian name for Chattanooga, as well as a twist on the French word *chateau*. This second meaning alludes to the backgrounds of restaurant owners Alex Canale and Chris Casteel, both classically French-trained chefs. Although the literal translation of *brasserie* in French is “brewery,” our waiter explained that in France, the term signifies a laid-back place to enjoy food and drinks—an accurate description of ChatÓ Brasserie.

Opened in May of 2011, the restaurant features floor to ceiling windows that allow diners to enjoy natural lighting during the daytime, accentuating the serene blues and browns of the dining room and the deep orange of the bar. Upon entering, diners can peruse the restaurant’s extensive wine offerings in two huge glass cases of wine bottles flanking the front. In the evening, ChatÓ Brasserie’s atmosphere grows elegant and romantic as the wine cases are lit from the inside, and the dining area is filled with the sounds of soft jazz and cooking from the large open kitchen.

After taking our seats, my dinner guest and I took recommendations from the wine and signature cocktail menu before looking over our food options. ChatÓ Brasserie’s menu is different from a typical restaurant’s menu. It is divided into

three categories based upon the size of each dish—small plates, medium plates and large plates. I asked Chef Casteel about the philosophy behind the menu and he explains, “We want our guests to be able to enjoy more than one dish, and

we don’t want to have to get a wheelbarrow out of the back and wheel them out when they finish their meal.”

Chef Canale made a stop at our table and explained how ChatÓ Brasserie came to be. “Chris and I met while working



The diver scallops with lobster risotto, foraged mushrooms, asparagus and caviar beurre blanc



Chefs Alex Canale and Chris Casteel

pear was balanced with blue cheese to create the perfect kick off to an exceptional meal. From the medium plate portion of the menu, we sampled the sweet corn bisque paired with a light and delicious blue crab spring roll. The fresh vegetarian soup was served at the perfect temperature with a lovely swirl of green watercress oil on top. We also tried the heirloom tomato trio—

my favorite dish of the evening—which featured three fresh tomato offerings, gazpacho, bruschetta, and Humboldt Fog cheesecake, a savory goat cheese and tomato dish.

From the large plate menu, we sampled the juicy “hot toddy” chicken as well as the diver scallops, which were fresh



ChatÓ frisée aux lardons (poached egg in a hole on a salad with bacon, tomatoes and red wine vinaigrette)

and cooked to perfection. The diver scallops and the Colorado lamb porterhouse are diner favorites and will remain on the restaurant’s menu indefinitely. However, ChatÓ Brasserie’s menu changes four times a year to ensure that only the freshest ingredients are used, including as much local food as possible.

“A little over two years ago, we struck up a late night phone call about moving somewhere and opening our own place. So, we started throwing out city ideas and I mentioned Chattanooga. Chris and his wife hopped in their car and drove here to check it out. They stayed the weekend and called me on Saturday to say they liked the location. After that, we all moved here. It took us about a year and a half to find the location and finalize the concept.”

From the small plate offerings, we sampled the Point Reyes blue and Bosc pear tarte tatin, which included bitter greens and walnut vinaigrette. The sweet

For dessert, we went with our server’s recommendation of the elderflower soufflé, a favorite among diners, and the lavender crème brulee, a unique and delicious twist on this classic dessert. We left the restaurant with full bellies (but not too full—no wheelbarrow needed!), satisfied palates, and plans to return to ChatÓ Brasserie as soon as possible. CS