

# New Gay Street spot c'est magnifique

Since The Grub Spouse has a real day job, I had to fly solo earlier this week as I landed for lunch at The French Market, a new casual eatery on Gay Street, across from Krutch Park.

The restaurant is adjacent to the lobby of the Farragut Building, but two of its walls (including the shared lobby wall) are nearly all glass, from floor to high ceiling, giving the space a bright and airy feel.

Roughly half the room is devoted to shelves of gift items like potted plants, wall art, fresh flowers, soaps, candles and other assorted knickknacks. Other displays set up near the main counter feature specialty foods like cheeses, teas, cookies, crackers and imported French petit fours.

Of course, I paid a little more attention to the dine-in menu, which revolves primarily around crepes and baguette sandwiches. Savory crepes are made with a variety of fillings, from a basic blend of imported Gruyere and Swiss cheeses to all-natural ham or turkey. There are also daily specials, and that day's entry caught my eye — roasted chicken and cheese with tomato and spinach. Other daily specials include smoked salmon with cream cheese, red onions and capers as well as turkey with avocado. All crepes are handmade on the spot, using batter imported from France.

For grins, I ordered a ham baguette to go. You can also get turkey or veggie fillings, and that day's special featured Brie with apple slices. Baguettes are made each morning with provolone cheese, mayo, romaine lettuce and tomato on a freshly baked roll. You can also get croissants filled with homemade tuna or chicken salad.

After placing my order, I took a seat at one of only four two-seat tables in the main room. Additional seating is found on the sidewalk patio, although the weather is making al fresco dining less hospitable these days. My order was up within just a few minutes, the crepe served steaming hot on my plate, the

## FRENCH MARKET

- **Food:** ★★★½
- **Service:** ★★★★★
- **Atmosphere:** ★★★★★
- **Overall:** ★★★★★
- **Address:** 526 S. Gay St.
- **Phone:** 865-540-4372
- **Restaurant hours:** 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays; 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Fridays; 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays
- **Seating:** First come, first served
- **No alcohol service**

chilled baguette already in a plastic to-go container.

I really enjoyed the crepe, which measured about 18 inches across prior to folding. It was loaded, and each ingredient was noteworthy — from the seasoned chicken to the melted cheese to the fresh tomato and spinach. My few nibbles of the baguette were not quite as remarkable, although the roll itself is authentically crunchy on the outside and soft on the inside.

Although I was already as stuffed as a crepe myself, I went ahead with my plan to try a sweet crepe as a dessert. Fillings include lemon juice and sugar, chocolate sauce, Nutella and Grand Marnier. Fresh bananas, strawberries or soft-serve ice cream can be added for an additional cost. I ordered a chocolate crepe, which was delivered to my table warm and topped with a swirl of soft-serve. I couldn't finish this likewise large pancake creation, but I savored every forkful I could manage.

The French Market is definitely a unique addition to the downtown work and social scenes, and with no item on the menu exceeding \$6, it's also an economical alternative. And while you may not confuse Gay Street with Gay Pa-ree, this quaint eatery will still have you saying "Ooh-la-la!"

RESTAURANT/LOCATION/PHONE	RATING/REVIEW DATE	THE BOTTOM LINE
<b>El Sazon Mexicano,</b> 2650 Alcoa Highway, Alcoa 865-681-8100	★★★★ Oct. 24	Good Mexican food and generous servings at a fair price.
<b>Papalina's,</b> 138 West End Ave., Farragut 865-966-5221	★★★ Oct. 17	This one-time Gondolier restaurant is afloat under new ownership.
<b>Kai Zen,</b> 6535 Kingston Pike 865-330-2508	★★★½ Oct. 10	This new Bearden sushi bar and Japanese restaurant is worth your brushing up on those chopstick skills.
<b>Miss Olivia's Table,</b> 1108 W. Broadway, Maryville 865-983-7711	★★★★ Oct. 3	Small-town hospitality meets savory homemade fare at this Maryville lunch spot.
<b>The Orangerie,</b> 5412 Kingston Pike 865-588-2964	★★★★★ Sept. 26	Don't let its colorful name fool you; there's no UT memorabilia to be found at this venerable fine-dining establishment in Bearden.
<b>Brickyard Bar-B-Que,</b> 7545 Brickyard Road, Powell 865-938-9222	★★★½ Sept. 19	The NASCAR action at this Brickyard is all on the big screen, but the barbecue is the real thing.
<b>Gunthor's Galley,</b> 3001 Knoxville Center Drive 865-522-3773	★★★★ Sept. 12	This new restaurant's seafood, service and sweets make it worth the trip to Knoxville Center.
<b>Bread of Heaven,</b> 1366 N. Wright Road, Alcoa 865-980-0117	★★★★ Sept. 5	The barbecue and home-style cooking at this family-run restaurant are truly heaven-sent.

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