

## Friends Open ‘NOLA Meets Downtown Biloxi’ Restaurant



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One Thirty One owners Ryan Bolton, left, and Chef Loren Gautier. Bolton and Gautier opened the restaurant together after graduating from Ocean Springs High School and University of Mississippi together.

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You can go home again, two friends from Ocean Springs discovered when they returned to the Coast and opened a fine dining restaurant in downtown Biloxi.

Launching One Thirty One Lameuse, between Biloxi City Hall and Hard Rock Casino, is something Ryan Bolton and Loren Gautier, both in their early 30's, talked about for years. They graduated together at Ocean Springs and both went to college at Ole Miss.

“It’s just something we always dreamed about when in college,” said Bolton, who studied business. Gautier decided to become a chef. He cooked for his classmates and friends, and Bolton said he jokingly told him, “I have the building, and you’re the chef.”

One Thirty One opened in 2021 at 131 Lameuse Street in Biloxi in the downtown where new restaurants and attractions are opening, and housing and vacation rentals are on the way.

“It ended up happening,” Bolton said.

“Him doing the front of the house and me doing back of the house.” Gautier said.

### FROM FL TO NEW ORLEANS TO BILOXI

First, they went their separate ways, Bolton to Florida to work in business. Gautier studied at the Culinary Institute of America Napa Valley in California, and in 2018, became the new Sous Chef at SoBou and W French Quarter in New Orleans.

They met up and decided to return to South Mississippi, work together and raise their families where they grew up. Gautier’s family owns The Place in Gautier. Bolton’s mom, Laura Bolton, owns the building where the restaurant is located.

It took a lot of remodeling to get the look of the “NOLA meets downtown Biloxi” they wanted, said Laura Bolton. The drop ceiling was removed to reveal the original tongue and groove ceiling. The 80-year-old wood floors were restored. Balconies installed on two sides of the restaurant overlook Lameuse Street, and the parade route.

They opened first as a wedding venue and then transitioned into a restaurant that also hosts events.

### MENU WITH UNIQUE NEW ORLEANS FLAIR

“We’re not going to be the typical restaurant,” said Gautier, who cooks from scratch. His dishes – and the experience of dining at One Thirty One – will always have some kind of twist or spice to it,” he said.

Take the Mother’s Day Jazz Brunch menu offered this weekend. Instead of the standard eggs Benedict, Gautier’s offering is a Benne-grit on a grit cake. Shrimp and grits and other favorites are on the menu, but for something different, the Caesar salad is spiced up with fried oysters, and chorizo cheddar beignets is a choice people won’t find on most menus.

The menu changes seasonally to deliver a fresh, five-star meal without a suit and tie, Gautier said. He wants people to feel comfortable walking in, he said.

At both lunch and dinner, the menu has a selection of small plates, like crawfish hand pies or duck poppers, and large plates. These also are something special, such as the Cajun Cubano made with pulled pork Fly Llama Creole mustard, house made pickles and pepperjack cheese on pressed French bread.

The BBQ Gulf shrimp is so popular with regular customers that some ask for it over pasta.

“It’s off the menu, but it’s a huge hit,” Gautier said.

The dinner menu adds roasted beer can chicken, Szechuan duck and Southern stuffed quail to the selections, and even the sides are unexpected – smothered greens or pimento mac and cheese.

### WINE DINNER, CHAMPAGNE BRUNCH, MUSIC

The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner Wednesday through Saturday and for brunch on Saturday and Sunday. It’s on the second floor, accessed by stairs or elevator. It also has space for private parties, with seating for about 100 inside and 40 outside.

Adding to the diverse menu are a selection of craft cocktails, like the New Orleans bourbon smash or blueberry lemon drop, plus fine wines.