

# TOQUE DE VILLE

GASTHAUS  
4812 BROWNSBORO ROAD  
899-7177



## Nibbles

DINING NEWS BITS

### Artemisia seeks Louisville's 'Best Nose'

You've no doubt heard connoisseurs say a certain wine has a "wonderful nose"; this refers to the olfactory qualities of the wine. And it takes a keen nose to pick up on the subtle nuances that make a wine, well, smell good. So, on Tuesday, July 19, Artemisia will host "The Best Nose in Louisville" competition to determine who has the sniffer extraordinaire. Gerald Tyrrell, one of the region's leading wine experts, will assemble a wide array of aromas — we're told it may include everything from spices to dirty socks — for participants to identify. As the most discriminating noses push forward through the competition, they will be asked to identify the aromas present in various wines. Finally, the contestant who correctly identifies the most aromas will be crowned "Best Nose in Louisville." The competition begins at 6 p.m., and afterward attendees can enjoy a special dinner and wine pairing for \$45 (not including tax and gratuity). For more info, call 583-4177. —Kevin Gibson

### Changes under way at Jazz Factory

On July 21, the Jazz Factory will say goodbye to its small-portion tapas room concept and will debut a new full-service dinner menu featuring specialties by Chef Jeff Jarf. Free, live jazz music will also be on the menu from 5-7 p.m. weekdays along with its regular nightly jazz entertainment. The new menu adds several full dinner entrees, while retaining most of the restaurant's favorites for light bites and late-night nibbling. Pianist Todd Hildreth, a Java Men founder, will provide early evening entertainment Tuesday-Thursday, while the West Market Street Stompers continue their Friday gigs. After June 21, patrons who dine from 5-7 p.m. weekdays will receive a \$2 discount on the cover charge for the evening show. On nights when there is no cover charge, early diners receive \$2 off on a dessert. On Saturdays, when the Jazz Factory opens at 6 p.m., patrons who dine before 8 will receive \$2 off on the evening entertainment. Call 992-3242 for more info. —KG

## At Gasthaus, potatoes — and male fantasies — done up right

Midway through a recent meal at the Gasthaus German Restaurant, my wife Mary commented, "This is like the perfect male fantasy: good beer, plenty of beef and pork on the menu, and a waitress who looks like Daryl Hannah in a dirndl who is ready to bring you anything you need."

Just at that moment, speaking would have interfered with my worshipful focus on a bite of bratkartoffeln. Otherwise, I might have observed that Daryl Hannah never really did it for me, that I prefer the edgy look of Franka Potente, that gal who sprints all over town in "Run Lola Run." Not that I have anything against dirndls, mind you.

But that bite of bratkartoffeln kept me from focusing on the niceties of traditional German garb.

I don't know what the Germans ate before the Spanish conquistadors brought the potato back from Central America, but I do know that nobody — nope, not even the Irish — treats them better. Take these bratkartoffeln, for instance: pan-fried potatoes shaped in thick flat ovals, flavored with chewy, smoky bacon and hunks of onion, crispy, moist. Or take the kartoffelknodel, a light, glossy potato dumpling a little bit smaller than a baseball, and infinitely more tender in the mouth.

Sure, I'm pandering to the stereotype by mentioning potatoes first. In fact, I had to put Mary in a headlock to get her to the Gasthaus in July. "Won't the food be too heavy?" she asked. "It's too hot."

"Pish," said I. "It gets hot in Germany, too. They have summer there, too. I think."

If your vision of German food is all smothered in thick brown gravies, well the Gasthaus will disabuse of all such notions. A note on the menu indicates that the chef's influences are a mix of French and German, and as far as I'm concerned that's a formidable alliance of continental cuisine. At Gasthaus, it translates into brilliantly engineered dishes, meticulous techniques, lovely sauces and a focus on house-made dishes prepared from hand-selected ingredients.

As for atmosphere, well, I felt as if I'd



Our writer's wife described the Gasthaus as possibly the ultimate male fantasy — "good beer, plenty of beef and pork and a waitress who looks like Daryl Hannah in a dirndl who is ready to bring you anything you need." What she didn't mention is that there's at least a little that appeals to the ladies, like this dessert.

stumbled into some Central European gingerbread house trimmed with red and white faux geraniums and scads of teddy bears. If your taste runs to knickknacks, you'll be in knickknack heaven. I don't care for knickknacks. But I do like that bratkartoffeln.

Pork, beef, chicken and veal dominate the menu (though a couple of vegetarian noodle dishes are available). Options include multiple interpretations of pork and veal schnitzel, bratwurst, a Hungarian-style goulash, stroganoff, a beef rouladen (braised beef wrapped around pickles, bacon and onion) and a variety of chicken dishes (including a summer dish that combines chicken with tomatoes, mushrooms, fresh basil and garlic).

You will find hints of dill in the most unlikely spots. For instance, a basket of

warm bread came to our table accompanied by a dish of butter that had been very nicely enhanced by a hint of pickle juice. A dinner salad (\$4.50) consisted of ultra-vivid greens as well as a pleasant mound of shredded carrots and another of cabbage; and, of course, the dressing was a sprightly dill vinaigrette.

Mary's chicken ragout (\$16.95) was a mélange of bite-sized chicken breast, asparagus, carrots, mushrooms and slivers of leeks, in a gently seasoned white sauce. The menu indicates that each entrée comes with a single side dish, but when our dirndl-clad server heard us mention that we wanted to sample some of the other sides, she quickly let us know that we could order split portions of two sides. For Mary, that meant those bratkartoffeln and spatzle, slender, tender, noodles (and plenty to share with me).

For me it was sauerbraten, long-marinated beef (seven days, according to the menu), fork-tender, aromatic, with the faint allure of vinegar, bathed in a sheen of translucent sauce. Put some of the finest sauerkraut in the world and a lovely dumpling alongside, add a bottle of Kostritzer Schwarzbier, a crisp black lager, and you have a meal that's perfect for all seasons. In addition to a short list of German beers, a handful of moderately priced German

wines are available (in the \$22-\$25 range for bottles, \$5-\$6 for glasses). Mary's glass of Schloss Castell Franken Silvaner was as aromatic as a spring pasture and dry enough to suit her as a table wine.

We finished up with a lovely fallen chocolate soufflé (\$7.50) constructed of bittersweet Belgian chocolate that took us out into the hot July night feeling as happy as could be.

Gasthaus is located at 4812 Brownsboro Road. Hours are 6-9:30 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Major credit cards are accepted. No smoking. The restaurant appears to be completely accessible for people using wheelchairs. For more info, call 899-7177.

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