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Breaking Bread

A farmer's market and four newly opened restaurants will leave you begging for seconds.

BY ERIN LENTZ



Brexi Brasserie

BASALT SUNDAY MARKET

Aspen is lauded for the organic produce and meats sold at the popular Saturday market, but now foodies have reason to venture to its neighboring town: the Basalt Sunday Market. This 16-week outdoor market runs from June 21 to October 4 and will bring lively summer vitality to Basalt's charming downtown. Featuring organic produce and fruits, fresh breads and desserts, wines, prepared foods and unique merchandise and arts, "the Basalt Sunday Market reminds you why you live in a small town," says spokesperson Kam Davies. "It's about getting back to the basics, to what matters: spending time with family, friends and the community." To the market we go. *Midland Spur and Lions Park, Basalt, Sundays 9 A.M.-2 P.M.; basaltsundaymarket.com.*

BREXI BRASSERIE

First, the name: It's decidedly French sounding, but it's actually a play on Lexi and Bryce, the children of Brexi owners and longtime locals Samantha and Craig Cordts-Pearce. Located in the ultra-chic Dancing Bear Residences, Brexi is the third Aspen restaurant from this power couple, who have also given us Wild Fig and Lulu Wilson. First impressions remind us of New York's Balthazar, but this newbie has quickly made its own statement. Created in collaboration with designer Shayne Smith, it has an inviting and hip interior. Sexy red accents and contemporary art complement classic black-and-white tile floors, a large zinc bar and distressed wooden chairs and tables. And with chef Aaron Bennett running the kitchen, the cuisine is as notable as the space. Favorites include local beef tartare with living

watercress salad, harissa aioli and quail eggs, and pan-seared sable with roasted root vegetables, toasted hazelnuts and an aged-sherry beurre noisette. *Très chic, indeed. 411 South Monarch Street, 970-925-2838.*

GISELLA

Aspenites might mourn the loss of Gusto's popular power-lunch menu, but now we have Gisella to continue our Italian love affair. Longtime locals Elizabeth and Luigi Giordani, along with co-owner Colleen Delia and manager Marcello Ferreira, are launching a new concept with a sexy, sophisticated space by Bloom Interiors and Jeffrey Halferty Design. Cuisine will remain focused on what the Giordanis have mastered: "Italian food at its best, with amazing flavors," says Elizabeth. Executive chef Jorma Cox will lead the kitchen. Gisella is open only for dinner, but we expect to see a few happy hour dinners, too. *420 East Cooper Avenue; 970-925-2838.*

JUNK AT THE RED ONION

At last, the anticipated reincarnation of the iconic Red Onion opens its doors, and we predict that it's worth the wait. Restaurateur Scott DeGraff led a painstaking renovation of the historic Aspen landmark, paying homage to the storied space with restored elements of its former self. The original bar has been refurbished (famed bullet holes intact) with 19th-century blue-and-white tiles on the floors and antique mirrors and tin ceilings channeling its Victorian past. The new interior bridges past and present with six plasma TVs, exposed-brick walls, penny tile, funky

chandeliers (each made from 300 beer bottles), a sleek new exhibition kitchen and an impressive menu by chef Chris Conlon, formerly of the Dallas and Chicago outposts of DeGraff's N9NE Steakhouse. "We'll serve American comfort food using fresh, local and seasonal ingredients," says DeGraff. Expect signature cocktails served in mason jars—a JUNK trademark—and both affordable eats and fine dining. While the classic burger is paramount, Kobe steaks and rare wine will impress a date. "It'll be fun, festive and definitely a social scene," says DeGraff. What really whets our appetite? JUNK food, oh-so-tasty after cocktails, served late at night. *420 East Cooper Avenue; funworldwide.net.*

THE RESTAURANT AT THE ST. REGIS ASPEN RESORT

The St. Regis Aspen Resort has shed its former Olives concept by Todd English, re-emerging with a face-lift and new focus. A contemporary interior includes freshly painted ochre walls and earth-tone accents; new artwork; Deco-inspired booths; and new table décor. But most notable is the new chef and menu. Adam Tanner has been promoted from sous chef to executive chef and will be serving contemporary American cuisine. The courtyard will be a hot spot for alfresco meals. "It'll be our own signature restaurant," says Frits van der Werff, St. Regis Aspen Resort's director of food and beverage. "We'll serve sustainable, organic products. The main focus is to bring a local clientele back, to lose the stuffiness while keeping with St. Regis expectations." *315 East Main Street, 970-920-7356; stregisaspen.com.*