

## Hot Spot

## ALL 'RADO, ALL THE TIME

The Colorado Room brings local pride to plate, pint and beyond. BY LISA POGUE

## BELLIED UP TO THE BEETLE-KILL

pine wooden bar, pint of Odell's Runoff Red IPA in hand, I ogle the chalkboard menu wall, pausing on the for-effect Rocky Mountain Oysters. Nah. Passing by the pesto chicken salad. Definitely next time, mushroom-gravy-doused cheese curd poutine.

Minutes later, I have a buttery, salty bison bahn mi sammy of braised buffalo brisket in hand, with pickled veggies, cilantro and spicy peppers. Popping devilish tater éclairs (fried balls of mashed potatoes rolled in éclair batter) dunked in brown sugar-bacon aioli, it's clear to me that Colorado Room proprietors Danny Shea and Justin Serr hit a delicious nerve with their new slow-cooked, quick-serve, local-food inspired eatery.

The two 30-year-olds from Parker met in high school; worked together at Old Chicago, the Denver ChopHouse, and Sing Sings piano bar; and spent a year poking around Denver for the ideal spot to birth a restaurant before landing on Fort Collins.

"We could see from other incredible and successful restaurants like D.P.



## SUMMER FORECAST

The Colorado Room's spacious front and back patios are prime sunny summer hangouts. Plans for the 1,400-square-foot back patio include:

- Supersized Jenga, cornhole and ladder golf yard games
- Stuffed burgers and ribs from the grill
- Porch punch cocktails
- Live bands and DJs
- Home-brewers beer fest

Dough, Pickle Barrel, CHeBA Hut and Uncle's Pizza that Fort Collins is the perfect place for our concept," Shea says. Their high-traffic spot on College and Laurel opened last November.

Pulling from casual- and fine-dining backgrounds, they homed in on the best of both worlds: quality food and brews in an unfussy, stay-and-hang-out setting. Guests order at the counter and help themselves to a table or bar stool, while the guys run food, refill drinks and make sure everyone's happy. "We want to be known as the place you want to hang out. We do not want people to order food, eat and leave as quickly as possible. This is not a 'turn and burn' type of place," Serr says.

Executive Chef David Richter runs the back of the house, plating the from-scratch,



locally sourced menu—using mushrooms from Hazel Dell or cheese from Cozy Cow Dairy, to name drop a few. Richter hails from the Cook Street School of Culinary Arts and Denver's acclaimed TAG Raw Bar, and his skill is evident in his gourmet take on cheesesteak with braised short ribs, caramelized onions, peppers and Gruyere sauce; the veggie caprese sandwich with oven roasted tomato and balsamic reduction; and those addictive tater éclairs.

The Colorado theme threads throughout. A state flag flaps outside, a local artists' market unfolds on the walls, six draughts pour rotating microbrews from big hitters such as Black Bottle Brewery, Fort Collins Brewery, New Belgium and Great Divide, while small-batch spirits from Leopold's, Stranahan's, Downslope and Breckenridge distillers line shelves. Even the owners' demeanor—laid back, work hard/play hard—all evokes Colorado.

Oh, and a portion of sales goes to local charity. "We are not only open to donating to local charities but would really like to directly impact the community by donating to schools, children's hospitals and other youth programs," Serr says. Community feedback is welcomed, he adds. **FC**

642 S. College Ave., 970-682-1163, [thecoloradoroom.com](http://thecoloradoroom.com)



## TAP INSIGHT

Special Colorado seasonals flow swiftly here. Follow @TheColoradoRoom on Twitter to keep up on