



MAISON DE LA LUZ IS
HOUSED IN A FORMER
CITY HALL BUILDING AND
FEATURES THE DECADENT
BAR MARILOU WITH ITS
SECRET ENTRANCE TO THE
HOTEL LOBBY ACCESSIBLE
ONLY BY GUESTS.

BY
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PHOTOS BY
SARA ESSEX BRADLEY
AND HAYLEI SMITH

LOUX

LA

It has never been so
easy to staycation
with sophistication
and style in the
Pelican State



SHAW CENTER FOR THE ARTS IS HOME TO THE LSU MUSEUM OF ART, THE MANSHIP THEATRE AND TSUNAMI RESTAURANT WITH ITS ROOFTOP VIEWS OF THE MISSISSIPPI.



BATON ROUGE

If you're lucky, the affable and obliging Bill Facey will greet you upon your entrance into the elegant Watermark Hotel. Facey serves as the hotel's bell captain, but around downtown Baton Rouge he's known as the "Mayor of Third Street."

Facey's happy to elucidate the wonders of the hotel, a 1927 Art Deco building that served as the headquarters for the

Louisiana Trust and Savings Bank, then a state office building in the heart of the Third Street Business District. After a loving restoration, the historic building now offers exquisite guest rooms, a conference room that contains the bank's original safe, fitness center with a boxing bag and dining options that include The Gregory, named for artist Angela Gregory of New Orleans, whose murals adorn the walls.

(facing page) Acadian Center for the Arts (left) Bill Facey at the Watermark Hotel (right) Watermark Hotel



There's so much more to explore in this unique hotel including original artwork, such as the bank founders outside the Founders' Room, each comical portrait containing a modern item. But visitors looking for romance may want to start with champagne and strawberries in their room or suite, then follow up with cocktails and fine dining in The Gregory.

Since the hotel is located in the heart of downtown, it's an easy walk to the Shaw Center for the Arts with its LSU Museum of Art, the Manship Theatre for live music, theatrical performances and special film showings, and the rooftop Tsunami Restaurant, the perfect spot for watching the sun set over the Mississippi River.

If rejuvenation is needed, visit the art-centric Healthcare Gallery and Wellness Spa. Guests

who visit for a variety of massages and skin care treatments may enjoy walls of artwork, with sales proceeds heading straight to the artists. The holistic spa hours are weekdays only.

SHREVEPORT

Arrive at the Remington Suite Hotel & Spa in downtown Shreveport in time for happy hour, and slip into one of the comfortable leather chairs in the lobby

African and African American diaspora with unique art pieces from West Africa. The [R.W. Norton Art Gallery](#) is a more traditional museum of art with landscaped grounds and walking trails.

LAKE CHARLES

Lake Charles has the distinction of being home to three upscale casinos — and two of the premier properties are located next to each other. Each offer luxury accommodations, exquisite amenities such as fine dining and spas, fabulous pool campuses with cabanas and swim-up bars for those hot summer days and, of course, a wide variety of gaming options.

The only problem is which one to choose.

“When it comes to our side-by-side resorts, I’d say that you can’t go wrong with either [L’Auberge Casino Resort](#) or [Golden Nugget](#) because they are each within walking distance, so you can easily get the best of both worlds,” said Kathryn Shea Duncan, media and public relations manager for Visit Lake Charles.

lounge for a specialty cocktail. Then head up to the Grand Suite with its spiral staircase leading to the second-floor bedroom. This pet-friendly boutique hotel includes a spa and beauty bar and complimentary breakfast, and if you choose the romance package the stay comes with gourmet chocolates, rose petals leading to the bedroom and the use of hotel robes.

Craft cocktail lovers may want to walk the three blocks to [Fatty Arbuckle’s](#), one of the city’s oldest standing lounges and named one of the “Best Bourbon Bars in the World” by [gobourbon.com](#). Next door is [Fat’s Oyster House](#) if you’re hungry.

“They [Fat’s] have a gator cheesecake that is to die for,” said Shalisa Roland, public relations and digital content manager for the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau, who regularly writes about the region’s foodways. “If you’re grabbing a drink at Fatty’s, you can still order food from Fat’s without ever leaving your seat.”

The [Logan Mansion](#), known for its spirited past (we’re talking ghost stories), now offers a [Prohibition Club](#), a modern speakeasy that requires a password to enter as well as a \$25 day pass or \$200 monthly fee if you wish to be a member. The Mansion also serves as an Airbnb for those who want to fully enjoy the Queen Anne architecture, enveloping porch or a ghost or two.

If art’s your speed, don’t miss the city’s many — and varied — art experiences. More an art center than gallery, [artspace](#) hosts exhibits and events featuring numerous Louisiana artists. [Southern University Museum of Art](#) focuses on the art and culture of the

(top) The Logan Mansion (bottom) Crying Eagle Brewery (facing page) Remington Suite Hotel & Spa



AT THE PET-FRIENDLY REMINGTON SUITE HOTEL & SPA IN SHREVEPORT, GUESTS CAN ENJOY COCKTAILS IN THE LOBBY LOUNGE, TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SPA AND BEAUTY BAR AND CAN CREATE THEIR STAY BASED ON VARIOUS PACKAGES.



VESTAL RESTUARANT IS A CHIC NEW HOTSPOT BY AWARD-WINNING LAFAYETTE CHEF RYAN TRAHAN NESTLED IN THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN LAFAYETTE.



Shop for innovative men's and women's wear, plus fun gift items, at [Genterie Supply Co.](#) on Jefferson Street or head over to [Parish Ink](#) for locally designed T-shirts, home décor and those masks for those who still need to don one. [Rock'n'Bowl's](#) second location in Lafayette offers live performances, food and drinks in addition to their unique bowling experience. Downtown restaurants making waves are numerous, so guests may choose from [Pop's Poboy's](#), [CENTRAL Pizza & Bar](#) or [Spoonbill Watering Hole & Restaurant](#) for craft cocktails and unique twists on Gulf Coast cuisine. New to town is [Vestal](#), owned and helmed by award-winning Lafayette chef Ryan Trahan.

(facing page)
Vestal (left)
Acadiana Center for the Arts (right)
L'Auberge Casino

Lake Charles serves as the heart of Sportsman's Paradise, surrounded by lakes, bayous and the Creole Nature Trail. [Grosse Savanne](#) outside Bell City can bring visitors into nature at its finest with its guided fishing and hunting packages. Visitors can utilize the 50,000 private acres and three lakes at Grosse Savanne or let guides take them on to Calcasieu Lake. Grosse Savanne provides transportation to and from fishing-hunting sites, fish and duck processing and anything visitors may have left at home. They sell ammunition for hunting as well.

Once back in town, enjoy a cold beer at [Crying Eagle Brewing Company](#), and maybe sign up for a brewery tour, then clean up for fine dining at [La Truffe Sauvage](#) or [Ember Grille](#) at L'Auberge or one of two steakhouses at Golden Nugget. In the morning, enjoy a late breakfast and relax by the decadent pool.

LAFAYETTE

Downtown Lafayette is hopping these days, with new retail, restaurants and additional residential opportunities. And every second Saturday ArtWalk dominates, with gallery openings, live music and more.

"The past two months have been insane," said Samuel Oliver, executive director of the [Acadiana Center for the Arts \(ACA\)](#), which participates in ArtWalk. "It's like a festival downtown."

[The Juliet](#) boutique hotel and [Buchanan Lofts](#) both offer unique accommodations in the heart of the city, but there's also [Flower Streets Cottage](#) through Airbnb where guests can enjoy a renovated cottage in the historic Saint Streets District, well within walking distance of downtown action, plus a stay includes use of two bicycles.

"It's a very hip urban restaurant that Lafayette never had," Oliver said of Vestal. "It's very very chic."

This summer the ACA brings the Billy Childs Quartet to town on July 6, followed by Jim Lauderdale with singer-songwriter Sara Douga on Louisiana Crossroads hosted by Lafayette's own musical artist Roddie Romero. Lauderdale met Douga when she received a scholarship to Lafayette's South Louisiana Songwriters Festival and Workshop (SOLO); she's since gone on to Nashville where she's producing albums.

"He [Lauderdale] was a big part of her making it," Oliver said. "And they're going to do a show together of stories and songs. And it will be a coming home for her."

So, here comes the hard part. Which to choose? ●