

# First Look: Find a taste of chef Shaun Doty's greatest hits at the Federal

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*Chef Shaun Doty's pork schnitzel with onion salad, peanuts, Italian parsley. Photo credit- Mia Yakel.*

The Federal, the new Midtown restaurant from longtime Atlanta chefs Shaun Doty and Lance Gummere, recently replaced the Crescent Avenue location of Bantam & Bidy, the duo's fast-casual Southern chicken chain.

The transformation, from a bright, order-at-the-counter cafe to a glossy, dimly lit bistro, where servers glide between tables to a jazz soundtrack, is surprisingly dramatic, starting with the bold, hand-painted sign above the door.

The menu — variously described as inspired by “French cuisine” and “the traditional American steakhouse” — can be seen as a return to Doty's fine dining roots, which include stints working under chef Guenter

**Seeger**, as executive chef at Mumbo Jumbo downtown, and chef/owner of Mid City Cuisine in Midtown and Shaun's in Inman Park.

Among the greatest hits collection, you'll find Doty's chopped chicken liver, Sardinian flatbread with simple salad, and signature pork schnitzel with onion salad, peanuts and Italian parsley.

Meaty offerings include classic steak frites, a 14 ounce dry-aged Kansas City strip, a 16-ounce Strauss grass-fed ribeye, and a 20-ounce Iowa ranch porterhouse, all cooked in cast iron. But there's also whole sea bass, smoked trout, and daily specials like ricotta ravioli with Lion's Mane mushrooms.

"I like bistro food, because it's what I grew up cooking," Doty said last week during a conversation about the Federal. "And I like the size of this space for that, because it's very small and intimate. I look at the restaurant landscape now and everything is very big and very conceptual.

"I just wanted to do something conceptually simpler. Sort of a mash-up of a Belgian or French bistro with the urban social component you'd find at a place like Minetta Tavern in New York. I like being part of the community day-to-day and this neighborhood and location seems right for that, with the hotels and residential and business density."

Right now, the Federal is only open for morning coffee, and dinner six nights a week. But Doty plans to offer breakfast, lunch and weekend brunch very soon. And those menus will fit with the larger plan, too.

"When I write a menu, I don't check off boxes, like I need a chicken or a fish dish," Doty said. "Everything usually has some sort history or it's some sort of souvenir from some experience I had or a place I traveled. Almost everything on this menu, I've made before. Things like the pork schnitzel, I have a real following for.

"If you're a chef, and you have one signature item, it's really great. I have that and things like the chopped liver and the steak frites that are a go-to for people. And that's very complimentary. So I don't mind playing 'Freebird' over and over. It's reconnecting with people and what makes them happy."

*1050 Crescent Ave., Atlanta. 404-343-3857.*

**More images from a First Look at the Federal.**





*Oxtail french onion soup with cave-aged Gruyere cheese. Photo credit- Mia Yakel.*



*Sardinian flatbread appetizer with simple salad, Vella Dry Jack cheese, argan oil. Photo credit- Mia Yakel.*





*The 16-ounce Strauss grass-fed ribeye with side of creamed spinach. Photo credit- Mia Yakel.*



*Chef/owners Lance Gummere and Shaun Doty (left to right) in the dining room at he Federal. Photo credit- Mia Yakel.*





*The dining room at the Federal. Photo credit- Mia Yakel.*

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