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# Roux & Lucia

By Danny Fairchild

I love having a bakery in my neighborhood. It feels more like a home. It makes every day feel like a lightly-autumnal day. Like sweater weather. Even when I'm not shopping there, it comforts me to know that someone somewhere nearby... is getting fresh rolls.

And it kind of makes me feel like I live in the kind of big-city neighborhoods you see in the movies, usually rom-coms. That's exactly how I felt walking home from Roux & Lucia one morning, right down to the fresh-out-of-the-oven baguette I had cradled under my arm. But 'cept in my case, it was a scene at the end of the rom-com where we see they'll live happily ever after because I love you, Annie!

Roux & Lucia definitely has that kind of romance about it. If you want to feel like the camera is panning in on you as you

meet your off-beat bestie moments before you meet the love of your life, Roux & Lucia will make you feel that way. Nobody guarantees you WILL meet the love of your life, mind you. It's just that Roux & Lucia will make you FEEL like you're just about to get your Nora Ephr-on. And if you don't meet-cute, who cares? Fresh baked goods are better than love, ANY day.

Refuse to go in for that flowery nonsense? No problem! If you want to feel like the snarky customer in line behind our protagonist, that's fine. Just don't be a jerk cuz this "movie" isn't about you.

Hell, if you just want to feel like an extra in this movie, standing in the background looking at your phone while waiting to order, you'll get the same incredible baked goods, regardless.

I went back Sunday morning to get coffee, breakfast, and a loaf of sourdough for the family, and they already recognized me. Granted, saying something upon your first visit like, "Hi! I'm going to write about you for *365ink*, what do you recommend?" is going to leave somewhat of an impression, but I ain't THAT pretty. The point is, on my second visit, they made me feel like a regular. Good, because I am.

And while, yes, Roux & Lucia has a definite "neighborhood bakery" vibe, especially since they're still finishing work on their market and cafe inside the old Milk House (again with the romantic location), it's easy to get to by just exiting Highway 20 at Bryant. Or taking Grandview Avenue. I wish I had a kid in Bryant School right now so could grab a cup and a pastry after drop-off.

Let's talk about the food.

When I described myself as walking down the street with a just-out-of-the-oven baguette under my arm, that wasn't imaginary movie magic. That was real life. The steam of it literally fogged my glasses at one point. And all the way home, I could just feel how crusty it was. I kept flicking it to hear the percussiveness. Mmmm. You know that scene in *Ratatouille* where Colette is teaching Linguini about how the best bread makes that crispy crackling noise as you tear it open? Well... that's a bit too discriminating for me, but it's not a BAD metric for judging bread. Point is, if you want that lovely sound, you will absolutely find it at Roux & Lucia. I'm not kidding, either. The Foley artists who worked on *Ratatouille* got it just

friggin' right. I know because I did a sound comparison between the movie and the baguette I got at Roux & Lucia. It's just a rom-com quality baguette, friends, taste-wise, too. I could have used a little more salt in the loaf I got, but I'm just like that sometimes. I'm just going to say it: It was the most perfect baguette I've had to date.

I was most excited to try the long-awaited Roux & Lucia because I knew it meant croissants for me. My favorite part about going to a new bakery for the first time is trying their croissants. Because first of all—what are you going to do, NOT order a croissant? Are you a fool? Even if croissants are something you only eat on special occasions, surely discovering a new bakery is a croissant-able occasion, yes?

Oh! Okay! Before I get in too deep here, let me ask you this: Are you like me, folks? Did you get a countertop rotating pizza oven over the holidays? Like a Pizzazz or similar? Consider Roux & Lucia just one more reason to use that thing because it's the perfect way to heat up the items that don't go home with you hot. Yes, you can microwave them and the world won't end, but putting them on the turntable and removing them



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once they get as warm as you want is the absolute perfect way to do it. Especially the quiche, which I'll get to in a bit. Not done gushing about the croissants.

Speaking of gushing croissants, let's talk about the chocolate croissants at Roux & Lucia. This is one you'll definitely want to heat up so you get the ooey-gooeyness of that chocolate going. I'm totally jealous of the laminations this bakery gets in their croissants. So flaky good. Like little pastry tornados pulling apart and flaking. No butter needed. Well... no ADDITIONAL butter needed. Croissants have plenty. Take the plunge with a big, deep bite that fills your mouth right before it melts on your tongue or pull off a piece and pop it down the hatch. Or however you do it. I don't like a lot of foreplay with my croissants. The shape of the chocolate croissant (or "pain au chocolat" if you wanna be that way) is traditional for this particular croissant. More rectangular than crescent. It'll be familiar to you, but even better than what you get at your typical drive-thru coffee spot.

Let's talk now about the "everything" croissant. Now... I went into this completely blind because I've never actually had the originator of this trend, the "everything" bagel. I just like to keep it simple with bagels. Plain bagel with plain cream cheese, please. I've kind of viewed this "everything" craze through the same lens I view "pumpkin spice." Not for me, thank you, but enjoy. But... maybe I've been wrong about "everything." Because when I tried the everything croissant at Roux & Lucia, I could see my entire life documented in croissants leading up to the moment the everything croissant hit my tastebuds. And even further back than that... to me as a young child tasting a "crescent roll" popped and baked from a canister. Are those croissants? No, of course not. But I'm talking about delicious memories here and truths that go deeper than facts and definitions. Even memories of all the great garlic breads get thrown in there because... really... if I want a proper description for the taste of the everything croissant at Roux & Lucia, it's this: It tastes like the best garlic bread

you'll ever have. And I say that knowing full well how good garlic bread can be.

The rotating pizza oven was great for the pastries, but it was even better for heating the little bacon and mushroom quiche I got. My hobbit-like affinity for mushrooms is well known, and my love of bacon is second only to Bryce's. Egg it all up and throw it in a pie crust? I'll be first in line. Even heated up, the crust holds up to eating it with your hands. And there's something so great about eating a pie with your hands. And it was so filling and hearty, I had to finish it for lunch. I ate it cold that time, and that works just fine, too.

Can't tell you about the bathrooms because, as I've said, there's still some construction going on. They'll also be selling ice cream, too. So... like... my neighborhood just got a new bakery AND a new ice cream place. I'm living the friggin' dream. ■

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