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Courtyard Nashville Downtown Plants Rooftop Garden For Fresh Herbs, Tomatoes

Bistro chefs at downtown Nashville hotel use their home-grown ingredients in several menu items

Nashville, TN – The [Courtyard Nashville Downtown](#) is anything but a garden-variety hotel.

The century-old high-rise in the heart of Music City boasts a completely reimagined lobby with cozy sitting areas and state-of-the-art technology. But what's on the roof three floors up makes it truly unique among other [hotels in downtown Nashville](#).



A new rooftop garden planted in early April is just about ready to bear its first bounty – something that will be music to the ears of diners at The Bistro – Eat. Drink. Connect.

General Manager Dennis Barber originally pitched the idea of growing basil, cilantro, rosemary, thyme, parsley, jalapeno and cayenne peppers and Romano and Big Boy tomatoes when he noticed that one of the restaurant's seasonal items required fresh herbs. The concept grew into a reality and took root immediately. Engineer Mike August

was tasked with gathering all necessary materials and planting the first seeds in April thanks to his “exceptional green thumb and love for gardening,” said Bistro manager Whitney Spanka. The downtown Nashville hotel currently has several large half-barrel planters, with more planned. Spearmint, peppermint and chocolate mint are next to be planted.

“We are very excited about our garden,” Spanka said. “Although we are still in the first month, we see great potential. Our culinary team loves to get creative with our chef's choice menus in banquets, and fresh herbs are an important part of that.”

The Bistro team is in charge of maintaining the garden and keeping all plants watered, with August and Lead Cook Michael Kinnard taking primary ownership of the project. If both of the employees are off, the cook of the day is responsible for caring for the plot.

Kinnard recently harvested the first round of herbs and has incorporated them in dishes created at The Bistro, including the homemade guacamole on the spring seasonal menu made with fresh cilantro. The downtown Nashville hotel also hopes to produce 20 percent of the tomatoes and 80 percent to 90 percent of the peppers it needs at the café-style eatery. The hotel is on target to meet the tomato goal.

“The tomatoes are getting bigger, and they’ve actually had to move two of the plants to their own planters to make room,” Spanka said.

The hotel plans to tout its fresh-grown herbs to visitors and diners as well as celebrate their successes internally.

[The Bistro](#) concept was introduced by Courtyard several years ago and has helped raise the standard for dining with menus featuring seasonal fruits, burgers, pizzas, salads and sandwiches made from the freshest ingredients. The casual restaurant sports a large communal table, where families or small groups of business travelers can gather for a hearty breakfast or dinner. Comfortable bar and table seating with warm red and brown colors invite guests to sip on freshly brewed Starbucks coffee or imbibe a number of craft beers and quality wines while gearing up for a busy day or unwinding at the end of a jam-packed strategic planning session.

Chefs at the downtown Nashville hotel also can cater special events held in the six meeting rooms with 3,226 square feet of flexible space. Menus include everything from appetizers to entrees for snacks, lunch or dinner with beer and wine available at all receptions as well.

About the Courtyard Nashville Downtown

The Courtyard Nashville Downtown is within walking distance of the entertainment district of Broadway and 2nd avenues and near landmarks including the Grand Ole Opry and Bridgestone Arena. The century-old high-rise in the heart of the city boasts 12 floors with 181 rooms and 11 suites along with six meeting rooms with 3,226 square feet of flexible space, a state-of-the-art lobby, onsite restaurant open for breakfast and dinner and fitness center. For information, visit www.marriott.com/BNADT.

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