

HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

Enjoy a Restaurant like No Other

Special People Run an Unforgettable Restaurant

Any successful business has successful people standing behind it. Ask Matthew Clancey, executive chef and general manager of Clementine. Clancey takes deep pride in the restaurant's employees and believes that the staff, a strong menu selection, interesting drinks, live music and a great atmosphere make Clementine unique and set it apart from other restaurants in Harrisonburg. And he should know.

Clancey and his siblings grew up in Harrisonburg, Virginia, in the 1970s. At a young age, Clancey traveled often to the Caribbean, Mexico and Ireland. These formative trips prompted his interest in food and restaurants. His life revolved around family, and Clancey was introduced to cooking at a young age by his mother.

"She was a stay-at-home mom when I was a little kid, so she did a lot of baking and cooking around the house," Clancey said. I always liked to eat, so I got involved with the cooking."

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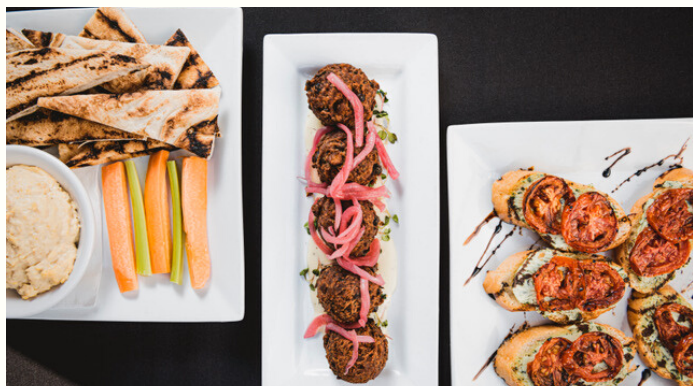


Image credited to Brandon Payne (Scrandom Media).

Clancey often cooks these appetizer creations of hummus with pita bread (left), falafel (middle) and bruschetta (right), are popular items on the menu.

In high school and at the beginning of community college attendance, Clancey never knew what he wanted to do when he grew up, until he found his passion for food.

“I was working at restaurants at the time and found an affinity for [cooking]. So instead of going for the four years bachelor’s degree, I went to culinary school,” Clancey said.

Clancey decided to attend the Culinary Institute of Charleston in South Carolina and got his first job at Red Sky Grill in Seabrook Island, South Carolina, after graduation. For the first time in a soon-to-be litany of interesting experiences, Clancey worked in a professional kitchen.

After a few years, he then moved on to become executive chef of the Cheat River Inn in Elkins, West Virginia; baker and caterer at Cook Hands Catering in Harrisonburg and executive chef at Jordan Hollow Farm Inn in Stanley, Virginia. Each job built off the other as Clancey learned by cooking basic American style to cooking French cuisine.

Clancey then made another big switch to be owner of South Atlantic Grill in New Smyrna Beach, Florida. This new chapter was Clancey’s first time as owner of a business.

He learned that in the restaurant industry, the owner, like the captain of a ship, is the last man standing. Staff members would work until their shift ended, but Clancey had to tend to problems and find solutions before the next day’s opening.

After many adventures and experiences, Clancey was drawn back home to Harrisonburg and became opening chef of James Madison University’s then new East Campus Dining Hall in 2009. At JMU, he learned the norms of running a business, training, staffing and corporate procedures.

Over the years, Clancey’s varied opportunities have enabled him to learn valuable cooking skills and to develop lifelong relationships in his profession. With his extensive résumé and array of jobs and titles, Clancey’s background stands solid in his ability to work anywhere.

He realizes now that Harrisonburg will forever be his home, as life boomeranged him back to the valley and its people.



Executive Chef and General Manager Matthew Clancey (left) and his Sous Chef Bill Bleecker take a break outside Clementine.

In 2014, Clancey accepted a job at Clementine and has been working at the café since then.

Clementine's customers receive the same quality services since it opened in February 2008: a wide array of food choices, open bar, live music and entertainment for patrons of all ages. Even better, everything is offered at very reasonable prices.

"Clementine's menu has always been eclectic, which gives me a lot of latitude with what [I am] able to do," Clancey said. "Mostly, we have been working with Southern food and Pacific rim (Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Thai), and we sprinkle in a little French, Italian and Spanish."

In addition to its great food and drink selections, Clementine also offers live entertainment. Weekly trivia, open mic and live jazz shows entertain customers who enjoy food and drinks in a friendly community atmosphere. Singers perform varying genres and play every few weeks. People can relax at their tables or get up and dance in front of the stage.

"There's really nothing like it in all of Harrisonburg, and such a unique experience [differentiates it] from larger venues," Clancey said. "We cater small and large parties; host live music, talk shows, [guest] DJs and, of course, offer food and drinks, both inside or out on the garden-like patio."

Clancey's many duties as manager of the restaurant take him away from his passion for cooking as there are a lot of other responsibilities. Clancey often finds himself doing paperwork and making calls, regrettably not spending as much time in the kitchen as he would like.

"When I first got here, I created the menu and babysat it for awhile to make minor changes," Clancey said. "After that, it was back to the office for more business-related work."



Image credited to Brandon Payne (Scrandom Media). Clancey serves his kale salad with bacon and endive.

The restaurant business is about time management and keeping good relations with staff and with each customer that comes along. The customers are the reason why Clementine is so successful and why Clancey thoroughly enjoys his work. It took years of practice and experimenting to show Clancey that his home is at Clementine, a stone's throw from where he grew up.

"Clementine staff is treated as one big family and the [staff] in turn treats our customers like family," Clancey said. "We always guarantee a great meal and hospitality. It was easy to come into an already greatly run and established business where staff and customers showed their constant support."

Currently, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Clementine is open for take out and delivery orders only. The kitchen offers a "limited" menu, which can be viewed on the restaurant's website. Despite the "limited" title, Clementine's many menu options remain favorites with loyal customers who can enjoy the foods they know and love.

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Image credited to Brandon Payne (Scrandom Media).

Clancey's creation of pita lamb fold-overs with shredded carrots, peppers and parsley.

“We’ve had to lay off a lot of our staff because of the virus and the financial burden it has cost the restaurant,” Clancey said. “Our staff [members] know if they need food to eat, they can come and get food off the menu. If they’re short on money for bills, we can help them out with that. If they’re short on cash to get necessary prescription medicine, we pay for it. It’s just kind of a thing we do.”

Clancey is confident that Clementine will reopen as soon as allowed. The restaurant can sustain social isolation for the next couple of months. Clementine will “deal with it as it comes.” Clancey hopes to re-hire all previous staff members as he can’t imagine Clementine without every single one of them.

This restaurant acts as a family, helping its members through thick and thin. Through the years, Clementine has been through life’s ups and downs. But as the experienced leader he is, Clancey is confident in getting Clementine back to providing delicious food and great entertainment for patrons as soon as possible.

The restaurant has become somewhat of a rather large family; a community, where “we take care of our Clementine family as best we can,” he said.

“I know it’s a long road ahead, but I believe there’s nothing we can’t handle,” Clancey said. ✕



Image credited to Brandon Payne (Scrandom Media).

Clancey often cooks these entrées of lamb pita-foldover with veggies (left), shrimp scampi (middle) and breaded chicken cutlet (right).

OPEN FOR TAKEOUT AND DELIVERY!

Visit our website at <https://clementinecafe.com/temporary-menu/>

Or call 540-801-8881

Live Music at Clementine

Clementine is a local restaurant located a mile away from James Madison University's campus and has been serving the Harrisonburg community for 12 years. The restaurant and bar, where customers can eat and drink, hosts live music. Clementine's live entertainment is one of the many reasons why the restaurant is so unique.

Clementine hosts all kinds of weekly entertainment including trivia nights, bingo, open mic. and live music. Patrons can enjoy food and drinks at their table while participating in games or listening to the music.

Derek Niver, Clementine's band booking director, works to schedule performances a few times a month. Singers and players of different genres and backgrounds travel to Clementine to perform. Patrons come to hear the types of music they love, or to hear something new! Niver recalls a performance from guitarist Jarekus Singleton.

"It was one of those acts where he started playing and everyone shut up and listened, and it was awesome," Niver said. "Even though it was a smaller crowd, attendees all went home and told their friends and raved about him. Every time we've had him back, he brings a pretty big crowd."



Singer Jarekus Singleton (middle) and his band perform on Clementine's stage.

Singers who recently came to Clementine include: Steven Bends, Tim Reynolds, Reina Del Cid and Jason Charles.

Clementine's unique setting is a great place for both dining and entertainment. A small stage positioned in the back of the restaurant provides great acoustics to people located anywhere in the room. An area sectioned off in front of the stage is designated for standing and dancing.

"I personally think that Clementine is a more intimate venue than a lot of venues you might think of," Niver said. "Our capacity is a little smaller, so I think, in that sense, it's a little more special because most of the crowd is probably seeing them for the first time. You can get pretty close if you want to be."

Clementine staff especially loves how attendees come together at the live entertainment shows. Patrons and staff can meet new people who share the same interests as themselves. Shows at Clementine are also a great way to connect with people outside of Harrisonburg, as people come to hear the music from all over Virginia!

Clementine recommends scheduling dinner reservations ahead of time to get a table. The restaurant offers a full-service bar as well as a vast food selection. The menu caters to varying pallets with options ranging from grilled salmon and filets to burger and chicken sandwiches.

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After the show, customers can walk downstairs and have some fun at Ruby's Arcade. Open until 1:30 a.m., this late-night bar is a perfect place to hang out and play games after the show. The arcade has many options including: bowling, pool, darts, shuffle board, ping pong and foosball. Customers are encouraged to venture to the bar once Clementine closes.

You can purchase tickets for shows at <http://clementinecafe.com/music> or through Facebook. Tickets cost \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. For more information about tickets, location and future events, call 540-801-8881 or email info@clementine.com. ✂



The Virginia Department of Health encourages patrons to wash their hands before eating



After Clementine closes, Ruby's Arcade provides a great locale for guests to eat, drink and play

Clementine's Food Cleanliness and Safety

Did you know that the U.S. Department of Health inspects restaurant's cleanliness once every six months? The government agency verifies that restaurants handle and prepare their food products properly. Clementine staff can proudly say that the restaurant has a good rating and is deemed safe for food consumption! Eating at poorly rated restaurants may lead to exposure to germs and bacteria which can lead to illness.

With the recent outbreak and spreading of the coronavirus, it is important to be familiar with ways to keep yourself healthy and safe. Next time you order take out or delivery, check the rating posted on the Virginia Department of Health website at vdh.virginia.gov. Take matters into your own hands and wash them before eating! ✂

Clementine is a restaurant located in the Culinary District of downtown Harrisonburg. The multi-purpose restaurant, which also serves as a bar and live-music venue, is a 20-minute walk from JMU's campus. Clementine offers weekly musical experiences of varying genres; a sit-down bar and a very extensive menu. Customers of all ages are welcome to enjoy food, drinks and entertainment. For more information about the restaurant, visit <http://clementinecafe.com/>.