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At the Red Room



THIS IS NOT YOUR standard campus cafeteria fare and it is not just for students either. The Red Room on the Collin College Preston Ridge Campus in Frisco is open to the public and the student-run restaurant is proving popular with the locals. Part of the Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Education, the Red Room promises “stellar hospitality and exquisite food.” / **See page 32.** 📷 Nick Young, CC

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The RED ROOM

*a higher degree
of fine dining*

WHEN ENTERING THE RED Room at Collin College's Preston Ridge Campus, the college's Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Education students make sure you are treated to "a higher degree of fine dining."

Guests are greeted with smiling faces and excellent service, have an open view of a spacious kitchen and are accompanied by soothing music and maroon walls that are complemented with artwork from Collin College students.

Throw in a pinch of stellar hospitality and exquisite food, and with The Red Room, located in PRC's Alumni Hall at 9700 Wade Blvd. in Frisco, you have one of Collin County's best-kept secrets.

"When we first opened in spring 2010, we had only regular classroom chairs and tables. But over time, and from the number of occasions we had the opportunity to run The Red Room, it has definitely evolved," Karen Musa, chair of the Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Education, said. "We have added a great ambiance—from seating and centerpieces to better china—and what we can present to the customer, which is awesome."

Bon Appetit

Prepped as a working educational lab, The Red Room is uniquely serviced by Collin College's Dining Room Service and A La Carte Cooking classes.

Service, which is open to the public, is from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays throughout the spring.



Collin College Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Education students Charlene Gladden (right) and Melissa Fink are among students from the college's Dining Room Service and A La Carte Cooking classes that work The Red Room from 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays. The Red Room is open to the public.

📷 x2/Nick Young/CC

Typically, around 20 to 40 guests are served during a service, according to Musa, adding that this unique situation allows students in both classes an opportunity to gain restaurant management, prep, cooking and food expediting experience.

More importantly, Musa continued, students learn the importance of communication between the dining room and kitchen, and how to market the restaurant and staff while delivering exceptional service.

"The quality of the food is excellent. 'A higher degree of fine dining' lends itself well," Musa continued. "Students at this stage have completed most of their culinary classes so the skill set should be pretty high."

An experience unlike any other

However, the challenge for the students who are running The Red Room

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involves not knowing what they are preparing or the quantity, a twist that allows them to get out of their comfort zone, Musa explains.

“If you are interested in culinary or hospitality, then Collin College is the place to be,” Charlene Gladden, a student in the Dining Room Service class, said. “With The Red Room, we have the opportunity to learn from top-notch chefs. Because of The Red Room, we, as students, are provided an outlet that inspires us to work toward ‘fine dining’ during every service.”

Depending on the day, The Red Room guests can look forward to English, Russian, American, French and buffet services, with a la carte and fixed (\$12 per person) menus.

Items currently featured on the menus range from a Roasted Leg of Lamb with Red Wine Au Jus and Steak and Guinness Stew to Southern Fried Chicken, along with desserts from Bombe Ceylon and Mascarpone Cheesecake to Honey



Desserts are a special treat at The Red Room on the Preston Ridge Campus of Collin College in Frisco.

Truffle Symphony.

“The Red Room provides an opportunity to learn real world experiences without the real world pressure,” Melissa Fink, a Collin College culinary student who plans to own her own restaurant one day, described. “The instructor talent at Collin College is phenomenal and the experience we get in The Red Room is invaluable. It’s a very nice environment, where you can get gourmet food at reasonable prices while providing an opportunity for students to gain experience and feedback toward helping us reach our goals as chefs in the future.”

As for what the future holds for The Red Room...“I would like to see us continue to grow the program,” Musa said, “and have a designated dining room with a designated kitchen where we can run more students and be open more than once or twice a week.” 📍