

A SWEET, SWEET SOIRÉE

story by **lyda cosgrove** *Kate Smith Soirée, a new locally owned bakery in Overland Park, specializes in macarons but also provides a variety of baked goods*

KATE SMITH SOIRÉE, a self-proclaimed “Luxe Boutique Bakery,” opened in downtown Overland Park on Feb. 14 — a fitting date for the bakery’s pink-filled aesthetic. This marks award-winning local business owner Kate Smith’s second bakery location, her first located in the Lenexa Public Market since 2019.

The chic bakery moved into the former Clock Tower Bakery building, and has been remodeled into an elegant, nearly unrecognizable new space.

Each interior detail incorporates some shade of pink, but in a classy way, not overboard Pinkalicious. The eye-catching pink flower-covered wall with a glowing “Stay Sweet KC” neon sign is sure to be a future photo-op in Instagram photos, and the rest of the interior elegantly follows suit: a cozy pink couch, tables with pink floral centerpieces, heart-shaped chairs and — though it may be temporary in celebration

of their opening — a huge pink balloon arch completes the fun and inviting look.

But front and center is the most important part of all: the “luxe” baked goods. Danishes, croissants and scones in at least four different flavors each, shortbread cookies, cinnamon rolls and the obvious star of the show in their own separate case — the macarons, almost all 16 of which were gluten-free, with the exception of a handful of novelty flavors like animal cracker and birthday cake. The bakery rotates their in-store selection with a total of 66 flavors, according to their website.

Smith’s specialty is her extravagant macaron cake towers custom-made for events. And for good reason too — she truly seems to have mastered the art of the chic French cookie. With flavors ranging from champagne to passionfruit to maple bacon, there’s truly a flavor for everyone, which is what makes their macaron pack options so appealing for an easy, shareable treat to bring to a get-together.

As if their colorful, boastful display of baked goods wasn’t enough, the bakery also takes custom cake orders, plus a full espresso bar menu.

I went with a 4-pack of macarons for \$9.50: champagne, lemon blueberry, chocolate hazelnut and cotton candy. Though I expected each of these distinct flavors to dazzle me, I was let down. Most of them felt just like biting into, well, sugar. The champagne tasted no different than that of a spoonful of sprinkles. Some of the flavors were there, but minimally. The lemon blueberry, with its vibrant yellow filling that I was certain would be a tart-filled bite, tasted about the same with only a slight hint of lemon — like sucking a lemon drop. Chocolate hazelnut and cotton candy followed suit, the latter only set apart by its even sweeter flavor — if that was even possible.

It only took a couple bites from each to feel a sugar overload in my mouth and a desperate need for water.



ABOVE Macarons, a cheesecake bar and the ambiance of Kate Smith Soirée.

I went back for a second try, choosing a rose petal macaron, for \$2.50 as a single, and the \$4 gluten-free cheesecake bar — maybe I’m just not a macaron person. With such a unique flavor to replicate, I thought the rose petal surely had to be somewhat distinct. But again, I could only taste that hint of rose ever-so-distantly, as if this sugary cookie was baked near a vase of roses somewhere in the room. It seems that macarons are more for the aesthetic anyway, which the bakery certainly nailed.

And as for the cheesecake bar, also on-brand with the pink theme, I was thrilled to even see it was an option, having never found gluten-free cheesecake before. It was equally as sweet, which I expected this time, but luckily balanced by the classic cream cheese tang. Still, it was just a bit too rich to get through more than three bites.

When I return, I’ll stick with a cappuccino and maybe one of their more savory options instead.

MACARON MANIA



Lyda’s brief explanations and ratings for each macaron

1 COTTON CANDY	2 MEYER LEMON	3 CHOCOLATE HAZELNUT	4 ROSE PETAL
“SUGAR OVERLOAD”	“BLAND”	“LACKING TARTNESS”	“PLEASANT”
★★★★☆	★☆☆☆☆	★★★☆☆	★★★★★