

# America's First Gluten-Free Hotel Sets Gold Standard

*The hospitality industry has reached a new milestone, with Louisiana home to the nation's first full-service, 100% gluten-free hotel*

MA, UNITED STATES, September 19, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Opened in May, [The Hotel Monroe is downtown Monroe's newest landmark](#), housed inside the historic 1881 Sugar Brothers Grocery building and the former Southern Hardware store. Painstakingly restored, the boutique hotel blends history with modern innovation.



The Hotel Monroe's Restaurant and Lobby

Local artists Jay Davis and Nick Bustamante have filled the property with hand-painted murals across guest rooms, restaurants, its rooftop bar, and event ballroom — rooting the hotel firmly in Monroe's cultural arts scene.

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*Co-owner, Christie Echols*

“The Sugar Brothers building was always about food and entertainment,” said Louisiana State Representative and hotel co-owner Michael Echols. “Now we’ve taken it one step further.”

The Hotel Monroe has become the first hotel in America [certified by the Gluten-Free Food Program \(GFFP\)](#) — and endorsed by the National Celiac Association (NCA) — for meeting its strict “Gold Standard” of fewer than 20 parts per million (ppm) of gluten in its food service.

“This achievement is a huge milestone,” said co-owner Christie Echols. “It shows our commitment to excellence and the well-being of guests who live with the daily challenges of gluten sensitivity or celiac disease.”

The stakes are high. Research cited by Satveer Kaur at the National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute shows that 8.4% of people suffer from gluten-related disorders — ranging from gluten “sensitivity” to full-blown celiac disease.

Even trace amounts of gluten can cause severe intestinal damage, which led the FDA to establish the 20 ppm legal threshold for gluten-free food in 2013.

Christie recalls the inspiration for their mission: “We saw guests sharing horror stories online about so-called ‘gluten-free’ hotel meals. That made us ask: what would it look like to do this right?”

Doing it right meant overhauling every part of operations. Supply chains were re-evaluated, with every vendor required to provide lab-backed proof of gluten-free compliance. Kitchens were upgraded with strict cross-contamination controls. Staff underwent specialized training.

Now, every dish served in the hotel’s Heirloom Restaurant, Star Bar, and Opera House Events is certified gluten-free — free from wheat, barley, rye, and common oats. Ongoing testing guarantees that all meals remain below the 20 ppm threshold.

There is one exception: certain bottled beers, bourbons, vodkas, and spirits that may contain gluten. These drinks are prepared and served separately, and gluten-sensitive guests are encouraged to consult staff when ordering.

“Putting the certification process in place was an invaluable learning experience,” Christie admitted. “But the most important thing is that our gluten-sensitive guests can have peace of



Hotel co-owner, Michael Echols



Gluten-free High Tea

mind.”

The recognition cements The Hotel Monroe as not only a leader in premium boutique hospitality but as a trailblazer for the entire industry.

“We’re not just meeting expectations,” said Michael. “We’re redefining them. Guests with gluten sensitivity or those with celiac tell us, this hotel isn’t just good news — it’s a safer choice and a breath of fresh air.”

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#### About The Hotel Monroe

Located in the historic heart of Monroe, Louisiana, The Hotel Monroe is a boutique property blending heritage, elegance, and modern hospitality. With its fully certified gluten-free food program, fine dining at Heirloom, rooftop experiences at Star Bar, and premier gatherings at Opera House Events, The Hotel Monroe is redefining what it means to travel and celebrate safely and stylishly gluten-free.

For more The Hotel Monroe information, visit: <https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/mlumrup-the-hotel-monroe/>

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#### About the Gluten Free Food Program (GFFP)

A gluten-free certification company endorsed by the non-profit, National Celiac Association, its program is utilized by food manufacturers and restaurants across the US, Canada, South America, Asia and Europe. Their trusted logo verifies restaurants food service down to a threshold of 20 parts per million (ppm). Uniquely, it is the only gluten-free certifier in the world that validates products from food manufacturers to the highest industry standard of just 5 ppm. As a value add they also offer their [gf-finder consumer website](#), with its comprehensive searchable gluten-free food products directory and gluten-free restaurant directory for gluten sensitives.

For more GFFP information, visit: [glutenfreefoodprogram.com](http://glutenfreefoodprogram.com).

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