

## DISH

*Insiders*



## TO LOVE, HONOR, MIX AND SHAKE

Spirited couple Derek Brown and Chantal Tseng add a few dashes of shared zest to their love potion.

*By Kelly A. Magyarics*

**IF YOU THINK THE NOTION** of encountering your soul mate in a bar is clichéd, take heart: It happens. A chance introduction at Adams Morgan's Toledo Lounge brought two of the city's hottest bartenders together when Derek Brown stopped in for a quick beer and met his future wife, Chantal Tseng.

Admittedly, when you share a passion for mixology, making a love match over a Sazerac or stout is no stretch. The pair became fast friends, mutual interests sparked mutual attraction, and a romance began. They could often be found contemplating their next chess move at Rocky's Cafe (where

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Brown worked), sipping wine at Arbor Restaurant and Wine Bar (where Tseng worked) or grooving on the dance floor.

Brown proposed by a little stone bench at the National Arboretum, and was over the moon when Tseng replied with a simple “OK.” The couple tied the knot in September 2008 at St. Thomas Apostle in Woodley Park, followed by a reception at the Josephine Butler Parks Center.

Tseng currently bartends at the historic Tabard Inn, while Brown works at The Gibson in the U Street corridor.

Both mixologists have garnered quite a loyal following, and Brown offers beverage training, management and design services through the website [better-drinking.com](http://better-drinking.com).

Though it's not all wine and roses—the drinks-minded duo can be quite competitive—they find that the benefits of marrying a colleague far outweigh the challenges. Mutual long working hours become much more bearable, they say, when followed by late nights unwinding together with one of their original cocktails. ★

## Derek and Chantal's Newlywed Picks



### BEST DATE NIGHT

The epicurean pair like to nosh at **Makoto** or **Kaz Sushi Bistro**. “Be adventurous in eating,” suggests Brown. “Getting to know another person depends on being able to rediscover yourself.”

### BEST PLACE TO STOCK YOUR NEW KITCHEN

The price tags at **Rodman's** in Friendship Heights fit a tight newlywed budget, but nearby **Sur La Table** boasts a larger and more consistent selection of culinary gadgets.

### BEST WEEKEND BRUNCH

Saturday mornings are spent on the patio of **Bourbon** in Adams Morgan, but Brown is also known to drop by the **Tabard Inn's** legendary brunch on Sunday mornings when Tseng is working—the only chance he has to see her all day.

### BEST WEEKEND GETAWAY

The bar stars frequently check out the drinks scene in **New York City**, and occasionally head to **Virginia wine country** for some grape research. “Yes, we live a tough life,” jokes Brown.

*Kelly Magyarics is a wine and spirits writer and wine educator working in the DC area. Check out her website, [trywine.net](http://trywine.net).*