

D.C.

Beltway Bandits

TRENDING WITH THE LATEST BAR SCENE STEALERS IN THE DISTRICT

by Kelly A. Magyarics / photos by Greg Powers

The election is over and the votes are in: The bar scene in Washington, D.C. is better than ever. The District's founding father of the well-made cocktail has opened up a rousing music-inspired bar; the Mixtress of effervescence, ice and all things nice behind the stick has one too; and the beverage director at a celebrity chef's Mexican small plates venue just loves to tinker with tequila and mezcal.

Rockin' and Rollin': TNT Bar

Half of the menu is inspired by his musical influences; the other half pays homage to the American bartenders whom **Todd Thrasher** calls friends. His spot inside the Arlington, Virginia location of fish and chips joint Eamonn's Dublin Chipper (named TNT Bar for his young son Trystan Noah) is where the renowned mixologist and sommelier really flexes his chops.

Rock 'n roll-inspired sips—created by jotting down lyrics or musicians on a white board and concocting recipes to match—include “The Cocktail Left on the Nightstand” (\$7), whose combination of smoked and charred Jack Daniels and cola mimics Slash's habit of extinguishing a cigarette in Jack & Coke after a hard night and consuming it in the morning. “Metal Surrenders When Oak Trees Meet Fenders” (\$11), a line from an Avett Brothers song, mixes Smooth Ambler Old Scout Bourbon, Massenez Crème de Pêche, Sorghum Pine Cone Water and both Angostura and house-made peach bitters.

The menu is rounded out with a listing of drinks from the country's most well-known mixologists, including Jim Meehan of PDT and Charles Joly of The Aviary. “I'm constantly changing and don't jump on the trends,” says Thrasher. “My philosophy has always been to make the best cocktail possible.”

Todd Thrasher, Beverage Director for the seven venues of the Alexandria, Virginia-based Eat Good Food Group, is smokin'.





Gina Chersevani concocts at her new location inside Hank's Oyster Bar.

All Aswirl: Eddy Bar

"Swirling liquors and turbulent mixers" is **Gina Chersevani's** mantra for her new bar, located inside the third location of D.C. bivalve haven Hank's Oyster Bar. Widely regarded as the District's "Mixtress" for her sublime tipples at EatBar and PS7, Chersevani now holds court behind a sleek, long white bar merging throwback and modern fixtures. The focal point is a carving station; each evening, Eddy Bar uses 200 pounds of freshly carved ice for cocktails, and about 150 pounds of ice per well.

"The benefits from the program are the quality of the drinks," touts Chersevani. "The challenge is there is one more thing to do for prep." Ice takes center stage in the "Forgetfully Fernet" (\$11), which combines Fernet Branca, Jameson Irish Whiskey, lemon, ginger and mint, served over a mountain of shaved ice. "PT-109" (\$10) demonstrates her fascination with effervescent elixirs by combining house made coconut cardamom soda with Bluecoat Gin and citrus; other bubbly beverages like vanilla cream and cranberry are available with or without a spirited addition.

Chersevani's Capitol Hill location no doubt influences her drinks philosophy, which she dubs the "political pirate." "My drink names are clever switches between a presidential story, a pirate's tale, and current trends all blended together with the appropriate seasonal ingredients."



Taha Ismail is Beverage Director at Bandolero, where tequila and mezcal are his muses.

Summoning Spirits: Bandolero

The design of this small-plates den run by **Top Chef** finalist Mike Isabella draws its inspiration from Mexico's Day of the Dead holiday; reclaimed metal gates, animal skulls, painted black walls and mismatched furniture comprise the loud, dark and cold elements of its ambiance. A back bar adorned with yellow tiles and mounted crates, and illuminated with LED lights, is the perfect spot to showcase the many varieties of tequila and her smoky, moodier cousin mezcal, skillfully used by Beverage Director **Taha Ismail**.

"They are such unique and flavorful spirits. I especially like to work with añejo and reposado because they have a smoother finish that needs to be highlighted," he says. His "El Dorado" (City of Gold) (\$11) shakes up Espolon Reposado Tequila with Cardamaro, St-Germain, lemon and five spice-infused syrup. The "Jesus Malverde" (\$12) mingles Fidencio Mezcal, Hellfire Bitters, agave, lime and cilantro, tempered with cucumber.

A selection of Margaritas—including one with habanero-infused tequila—is joined by classic cocktails, South American wines and Mexican beers, all of which pair with Isabella's designed-to-be-shared dishes such as suckling pig tacos with apple and habanero mustard (\$13) and snapper ceviche with charred mango (\$11). ■■

Inauguration Libations

POLITICS TAKE SECOND PLACE TO FLAVOR IN THESE D.C. AREA COCKTAILS

by Kelly A. Magyarics

On January 20, D.C.-area residents eagerly anticipating four more years can raise a triumphant glass, while those still dealing with crushing loss may require a potent cathartic shot. In victory or defeat, District bartenders are mixing, shaking and stirring cocktails inspired by the pomp and circumstance of the presidential inauguration—and the end (finally!) of election season.

At **Art and Soul**, Bar Manager Christian Eck's "Stayin' Put" (\$13) infuses simple syrup with blackberries—one of President Obama's favorite flavors—mixes it with peppery, D.C.-distilled Green Hat Gin, and tops the sip with celebratory bubbles. **Park Hyatt D.C.'s** "1600 Penn" stirs Knob Creek Bourbon, dry vermouth and a few dashes of Angostura Bitters with a reduction of BLiS Maple Syrup and porter from Alexandria, Virginia's Port City Brewing Company.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HAMILTON



PHOTO COURTESY OF PARK HYATT DC

Head Mixologist Taha Ismail of **Graffiato** was inspired to create his "Politics Schmolitics" (\$10) punch after observing two guests argue while watching the debates, then find common ground amid clinking glasses. For the bipartisan beverage, he mixes Chairman's Reserve Silver Rum and Gosling's Dark Rum with berry tea, Cointreau and orange and Angostura bitters. The "Perfect 44" (\$12), whose moniker refers to Obama's chronology in presidential history, is **The Hamilton's** version of a Perfect

Manhattan, eschewing sweet vermouth for blanc. And **Oyamel's** twist on a Blue Hawaii, the "Isla de Azul" (\$12) mingles El Dorado Demerara Rum, Del Maguey Mezcal Vida, blue curaçao, Kalani Coconut Liqueur, pineapple juice and coconut sorbet. ■■

Stayin' Put

courtesy of Christian Eck, Bar Manager, Art and Soul, Washington, D.C.

- ✓ 1½ oz. Green Hat Gin
- ✗ 2 oz. blackberry-infused syrup*
- ✓ 2 oz. Champagne
- ✓ Stick of berries, for garnish

✗ Add the gin and syrup to a cocktail shaker. Add ice and shake until chilled. Strain into a chilled rocks glass filled with ice, and top with champagne. Garnish with a stick of berries.

*For the berry simple syrup, combine 1 cup sugar, 1 cup water and 1 cup blackberries in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, and then simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from heat, let cool and strain out solids.

1600 Penn

courtesy of Park Hyatt Hotel, Washington, D.C.

- ✗ 2 oz. Knob Creek Bourbon
- ✗ ½ oz. dry vermouth
- ✓ ¼ oz. Port City Porter and BLiS Maple Syrup reduction*
- ✓ Dash Angostura bitters
- ✗ Cherry for garnish

✓ Add bourbon, berrmouth, reduction and bitters to a cocktail shaker. Add ice, and stir until chilled. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass, and garnish with a cherry.

*For the reduction, take equal parts port and maple syrup, add to a saucepan, and simmer until reduced by half. Let cool, and store in the refrigerator.

Perfect 44

courtesy of Samantha Withall, Beverage Manager, The Hamilton, Washington, D.C.

- ✗ 2 oz. F.E.W. Bourbon
- ✓ ¾ oz. Dolin Dry Vermouth
- ✗ ¾ oz. Dolin Blanc Vermouth
- ✗ 3 rye-soaked cherries for garnish

✓ Add bourbon and berrmouths to a cocktail shaker. Add ice, and stir until chilled. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass, and garnish with the cherries.