

The “Memories of Ice Pond” dish at Mirabelle is meant to evoke Executive Chef Keith Bombaugh’s fishing trips with his father.



PHOTO: UNDER A BARREL PHOTOGRAPHY

# A Toast to Sweater Weather

by Kelly Magyarics, DWS

Whether it’s intentional or not, steakhouses tend to emulate a masculine vibe with their hefty leather chairs, mahogany floors, and massive cuts of beef. Perhaps it’s not all that surprising, then, to hear that Bourbon Steak in D.C.’s Georgetown neighborhood had, until recently, only employed men as its head bartenders since its opening ten years ago.

That all changed when the restaurant hired crafty bar maven Sarah Rosner, and when a friend and I stopped by on a hopping Thursday evening to see what she’s added to the expansive drinks menu, we found fab cocktails influenced

with the restaurant’s new signature whisky from Virginia Distillery Company.

It’s not all island-inspired, however: I particularly loved the Secret Garden, her cross between a Martini and a Gin Sour with Beekeeper Gin, Lillet Blanc, lime, and lemon verbena. (Rosner totes fragrant bunches of herbs to work from the gardens she tends for use as garnishes.) And since we’re transitioning into the boozy-and-stirred time of year, sips like Don’t Trip (It’s Fall!) speak to the season with the inclusion of Martell VSOP Calvados, sweet and dry vermouth, allspice, and cardamom bitters. It’s obvious you don’t need a drop of testosterone to pump out killer tipples: “I am woman, hear me pour.”

A few miles away in the shadow of the White House, French-American restaurant Mirabelle recently unveiled a new culinary team led by Executive Chef Keith Bombaugh. His experiences growing up on the South Shores of Boston and ties to the mid-Atlantic inspire dishes like the “Memories of Ice Pond,” a composed starter of charred trout—meant to evoke fishing expeditions with his father—with shishito-umeboshi and blistered cucumber.

At the ready with corresponding pairings is General Manager and Beverage Director Jennifer Knowles, who has overseen the beverage program since the launch of the restaurant’s original menu. The acidity of the Venture 2013 Russian River Valley Chardonnay made it a perfect foil to the rich she-crab soup studded with molecular Sherry pearls, while the “Fallen Leaves on Venison” dish’s combination of loin medallions, lentils, and crispy shiso leaves and squash blossoms met its match in the 2015 Domaine Courbis Cornas.

We also saved some room for new drinks served from a tableside cart by Lead Bartender Zach Faden. His Pommeau J’Adore with Pierre Huet Pommeau de Normandie, Neisson Rhum Agricole Blanc, ginger, lemon, and Peychaud’s Bitters definitely helps get you in the mood for sweater weather. ■■

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The Tiki in the Highlands cocktail (left) at Bourbon Steak showcases whisky from Virginia Distilling Company. At right, the Mauna Loa Breeze is inspired by Head Bartender Sarah Rosner’s Hawaiian upbringing.

by the native Hawaiian’s upbringing. For the creamy yet clarified Mauna Loa Breeze, she infuses Bulleit Bourbon with macadamia nuts and stirs the spirit with orange curacao and orange and tiki bitters; Tiki in the Mountains, meanwhile, mixes Yellow Chartreuse, grapefruit, lemon, and cinnamon