

D.C. DESTINATION

HUNTER DOUGLAS, BAR MANAGER,
JAMIE LEEDS RESTAURANT GROUP,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

BY ALIA AKKAM

Hunter Douglas is the bar manager at Hank's Oyster Bar Dupont Circle and just-opened Hank's Cocktail Bar, part of the Washington, D.C.-based Jamie Leeds Restaurant Group.

BEVERAGE MEDIA GROUP: How does Hank's Cocktail Bar, an industry hangout that originated in Petworth and is soon to re-open in Dupont Circle, differ from the oyster bar, where guests eat lobster deviled eggs and sip libations like the I Dream of Pralines (pecan-cinnamon-infused bourbon, Licor 43, burnt sugar, ginger/orange bitters)?

HUNTER DOUGLAS: Hank's Cocktail Bar is our playground and a space to dive into some of the District's most exciting beverages, but both concepts share the philosophy of JL Restaurant Group by featuring the use of fresh produce and seasonal ingredients. Customers leave having experienced consistently well-made cocktails to fit their mood, and there is an opportunity to play and be overly adventurous, enjoy a slight variation of your favorite or stick to what you know and love in either place.

BMG: There are now four locations of Hank's Oyster Bar. How has the group's beverage vision evolved along with the growth of the JL Restaurant Group portfolio?

HD: JL Restaurant Group establishments now have regionally-recognized bar pro-

“The aim is to be playful while remaining grounded in classics.”

grams that are built on the success of our past initiatives. The aim is to be playful while remaining grounded in classics. For example, a few of the new menu categories at Hank's Cocktail Bar are “We Invented the Remix,” “Beertails” and “Size Matters.” We're serious about our cocktails, but want the atmosphere to be comfortable, social and a D.C. must-visit.

BMG: Eco-friendly measures are thankfully becoming more prevalent behind the bar these days. How are you responding to this shift?

HD: We're currently focusing on developing and implementing sustainable practices. I want to move beyond simply making cordials and adjusting acid in old juices to reconfiguring how we view everything from water usage to the products we carry to utilizing waste. One of the cocktails on the new menu, She Who Lives in a Shell, uses recycled oyster shells that are shucked during service and washed to infuse dry vermouth with a briny, mineral flavor. ■



• Upshur Street Familia

An unlisted ingredient in this cocktail is progress. Or perhaps nostalgia. Upshur Street was the previous location of Hank's Cocktail Bar, which relocated to the second floor of the Hank's Oyster Bar near Dupont Circle.

Ingredients:

1 ¼ oz Lunazul Tequila Blanco
¾ oz PAMA Pomegranate Liqueur
1 oz fresh Pineapple Juice
½ oz Lemon Juice
½ oz Ginger Syrup*
1 oz Dry Cider (Austin Eastciders Original recommended)
¾ oz Angostura Bitters

Method: Build all ingredients, except bitters, in tin and shake. Pour over a footed highball filled with crushed ice. Garnish with Angostura Bitters, an orchid, and dehydrated lemon.

***Ginger Syrup:** Peel ginger and blend with equal parts sugar and water by weight. Strain and refrigerate.

