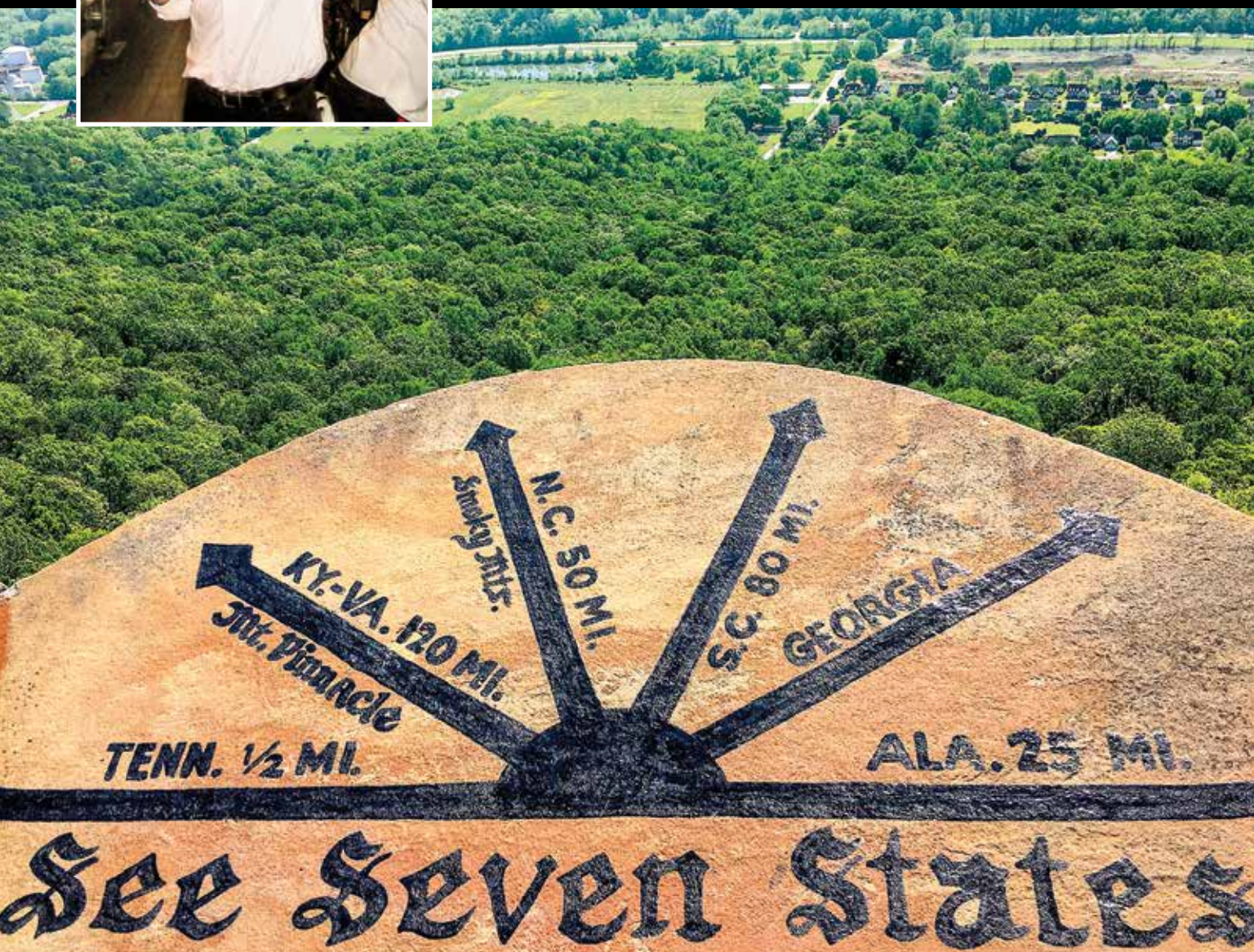


entertaining: SOUTHERN STYLE



Down-Home Goes Upscale

Chattanooga's Southern hospitality and artistic spark inspire home entertaining rooted both in tradition and transition.





N

o matter where you live, there's something so appealing about sitting yourself down on a porch with an ice-cold cocktail crafted with an American-made spirit, seasonal fruits

and herbs. And while you may actually be doing your entertaining in the mountains, a big city apartment, or in the suburbs, you can create a welcoming, down-home feeling anywhere with cocktails inspired by up-and-coming bars and restaurants in Chattanooga.

While old school Southern food and drink traditions are not going anywhere, enterprising chefs and bartenders in this all-American city in southeastern Tennessee are tweaking the rules and standards with fresh spins and colorful presentations.

"Chattanooga is a city of entrepreneurs, so innovation is part of the

fabric of the city," says Laura St. Peter, General Manager of the Chattanooga Whiskey Experimental Distillery whose spirits can be found on bars all over the region as well as their own storefront downtown. "Within the past six to eight years, the restaurant and cocktail scene has exploded."

"From what I've seen thus far, Chattanooga seems to be roughly where Boston and Cambridge were six years ago," observes Alex Howell, Bar Manager at **Easy Bistro & Bar**. "More and more restaurants and bars are embracing quality cocktails, and the city itself seems more curious to try new things and explore the different drinks and ingredients that each bar is offering. The wider availability of new and different ingredients greatly expands the creative side of bartending, and makes the whole endeavor a lot of fun for everybody. The rise of craft distilling and all the interesting flavors

specific to the South really sparks my own creativity, and it always feels great to support another local small business."

"There has always been a craft cocktail scene in Chattanooga," counters **STIR** bar manager Darius Carey, who credits Chattanooga Whiskey for helping fuel the cocktail scene in town and being involved with the local bars. "However, in recent years, we have seen many restaurants and bars open up with a craft cocktail focus. While already established businesses have added some elements of craft cocktails to their menu selections, we see ourselves in the forefront of the Chattanooga region and surrounding areas."

To bring a touch of the new country sophistication to your table, take a few cues from those breathing new life into their town's nightlife. Every drink is an invitation to relax, slow down, and connect with others...whether the

setting is the **Chattanooga Whiskey Co.'s** in-house bar, Easy Bistro's glamorous and contemporary lounge, STIR at the **Chattanooga Choo Choo Hotel** (the city's former main train depot), on show night at the **Songbirds Museum** performance space bar, or the **Back Inn** in the city's Arts District (which conducts its wine tastings in a very laid-back conversational way).

"The South is notorious for hospitality, and a big part of hospitality is creating a comfortable environment where everyone feels like they are at home," says St. Peter. "One entertaining tip that's still in place is batching up a delicious, easy-to-drink cocktail that everyone can serve themselves. Think bourbon lemonade over crushed ice during the summer, and spiced bourbon eggnog during the holidays."

Howell says that the key to a cocktail during the late summer is an escape from the heat, which can be switched up as temperatures drop with spicier and more savory ingredients. He also maintains that any cocktails you choose for entertaining at home should be batched ahead of time and served in a beautiful pitcher or punch bowl. The argument here is that it allows one to be more hospitable to guests by interacting with them rather than standing at the bar mixing everyone's drink.

"Our approach is about achieving a good balance of tart, refreshing, and dry drinks that also complement the food offerings," says Howell. "Over the summer, we use a lot of different fortified wines, rhubarb, cucumber, and lower alcohol spirits to create the menu. That said, I think the keys to any drink are simplicity and keeping things refreshing. Sherry is versatile throughout the year, and our Sherry Cobbler is amazing, easily made at home, and is endlessly variable."

Back at STIR, Carey explains that most of the permanent cocktails are influenced by the original recipes found in old literature, which often means only few ingredients will be involved.



"In the South, American whiskey (including Bourbon and Tennessee whiskey) plays a major role in what we do here at STIR with our craft cocktail program," he says.

"Start with the classics, and keep it simple when trying to mix things up. Too often, bartenders overly complicate drinks and lose the focus of what the drinks are supposed to be about...the

spirits. Adding too many ingredients with powerful flavor profiles can take away from the essence of the cocktail. Ice is also very important, and dilution rate is one of our focuses here at STIR."

Carey also points out that the type of ice used can make or break a cocktail. Although most homes will not have special ice machines or access to the type of artisanal ice found in bars,



anybody can make their own with the right preparation. He suggests purchasing a Lewis bag and hand crushing your own ice for cocktails that need that extra water content. Better home and kitchen stores sell large cube trays and spherical ice molds for dense cubes for drinks with little water desired.

St. Peter points out southern culinary traditions revolve around local and seasonal produce, as the South always has fantastic produce to offer with its longer growing seasons. “My modern cocktails are based on classic cocktail recipes with a twist of the South. Think Southern Peach Manhattan made with

muddled peaches, or an Old Fashioned with local apples or pears.”

The **Back Inn Cafe** at the city’s Bluff View Art District, likewise, taps into this with its on-site herb garden, which is readily integrated into the food and cocktail programs. Another way to experience the various harvests through Chattanooga’s year is through tasting and pairing fruit wines by **Tennessee Mountainview Winery** with seasonal dishes. Another, of course, is to go back to basics and update the recipe with whatever is hitting the market.

—ELYSE GLICKMAN

Where to Sip

Chattanooga Whiskey Company

chattanoogawhiskey.com

Easy Bistro

easybistro.com

Back Inn Cafe

bluffviewartdistrictchattanooga.com/back-inn-café

The Flying Squirrel Bar

flyingquirrelbar.com

STIR

stirchattanooga.com

Terminal Brew House

terminalbrewhouse.com/beers-n-brewing

Morris Vineyard/ Tennessee Mountainview Wine

morrisvineyard.com

Songbirds Event Space

events.songbirds.rock

CHATTANOOGA DISTILLERY OLD FASHIONED

CHATTANOOGA DISTILLERY

MAKES 1 DRINK

- 2 oz Chattanooga Whiskey 1816 Reserve
- 1 sugar cube
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters
- 2 dashes orange bitters
- 1 large ice cube
- 1 Luxardo cherry, for garnish
- 1 orange peel, for garnish

1. In an Old Fashioned glass, saturate sugar cube with bitters; muddle into a slurry.
2. Add large ice cube and whiskey; stir to incorporate.
3. Garnish with orange peel and Luxardo cherry.

SUMMER DAYS

CHATTANOOGA DISTILLERY

MAKES 1 DRINK

To make raspberry simple syrup, heat 1 cup sugar with 1 cup water and 1/2 cup mashed

raspberries. Heat until sugar dissolves, cool, strain and chill.

- 2 oz Chattanooga White Whiskey
- 1 oz raspberry simple syrup
- 2 oz pineapple juice
- 1 oz lime juice
- Lemon peel for garnish

1. In a Boston shaker, shake ingredients together.
2. Pour into a Collins glass over ice.
3. Garnish with lemon peel.



ROSEMARY PALOMA

THE BACK INN, BLUFF VIEW ARTS DISTRICT,
CHATTANOOGA, TN

MAKES 1 DRINK

- 1 1/2 oz Avión Reposado Tequila
- 1/2 oz fresh lime juice
- 1 oz grapefruit juice
- 3/4 oz rosemary-infused simple syrup
- 3 oz La Croix Grapefruit Soda
- Rosemary sprig, for garnish

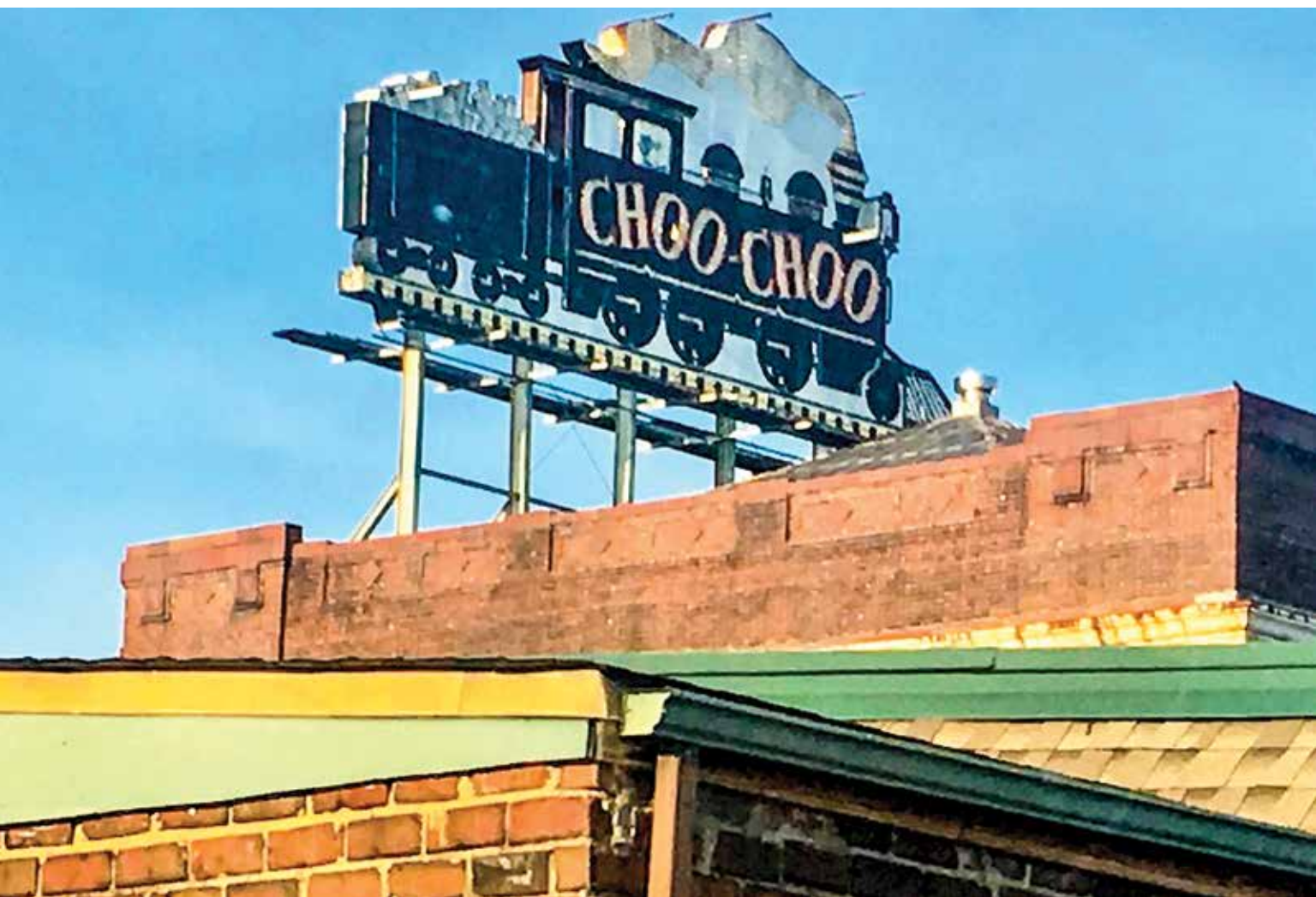
1. In a Collins glass, combine tequila, lime juice, grapefruit juice and rosemary simple syrup.
2. Add ice, top with grapefruit soda and stir.
3. Garnish with rosemary sprig.

MS. BEAUREGARDE

FLYING SQUIRREL

MAKES 1 DRINK

- 2 oz cucumber-infused gin
- 1/2 oz Crème de Violette
- 3/4 oz lemon juice
- 1/2 oz lavender syrup





cucumber wheel, for garnish
lavender sprig, for garnish

1. In a Boston shaker, combine ingredients, add ice and shake.
2. Double strain into a Collins or rocks glass $\frac{3}{4}$ filled with ice.
3. Garnish with a cucumber wheel or lavender sprig if desired.

MOUNTAIN MULE

STIR

MAKES 1 DRINK

- 2 oz Tennessee Moonshine
- $\frac{1}{2}$ oz fresh ginger syrup
- $\frac{1}{2}$ oz fresh lime juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ oz sugar cane syrup
- Ginger beer
- Mint, for garnish
- Seasonal fruit of choice, for garnish

1. Fill a copper mug or julep cub glass with ice cubes.



2. Add moonshine, ginger syrup, lime juice and sugar cane syrup; stir.
3. Float ginger beer on top; fill to the brim.
4. Garnish with mint and seasonal fruit of choice.

SHERRY COBBLER

EASY BISTRO

MAKES 1 DRINK

- 3 oz Fino sherry
- 1 oz muddled seasonal fruit of choice
- ¼ oz simple syrup
- ¼ oz lime juice or lemon juice
- orange wheel, for garnish

1. In a Boston shaker, combine ingredients.
2. Fill shaker with ice; shake vigorously, then strain into a highball glass filled with fresh ice.
3. Pierce an orange wheel with a straw and insert both into the drink.

VERMILLION CLUB

EASY BISTRO

MAKES 1 DRINK

- 1 ½ oz Don Q Cristal Rum
- ½ oz Olmeca Altos Silver Tequila
- ¾ oz Tempus Fugit Gran Classico
- ¼ oz Orgeat syrup
- ¼ oz lime juice
- 1½ oz ginger beer
- Peychaud's bitters

1. In a Boston shaker, combine all ingredients except ginger beer and bitters.



2. Do a quick integration shake, then strain into tiki mug or snifter.
3. Add ginger beer.
4. Top with crushed ice. Add a few dashes of bitters to the top of the ice.

THE SEERSUCKER COCKTAIL

EASY BISTRO

MAKES 1 DRINK

- 1 oz Amontillado sherry
- 1 oz Dolin Blanc
- ¾ oz David Nicholson Bourbon
- ¼ oz turbinado syrup
- 2 dashes peach bitters
- mint sprig, for garnish

1. Combine all into a double Old Fashioned glass.
2. Add ice; stir.
3. Garnish with mint sprig.

WATERMELON OLD FASHIONED

FLYING SQUIRREL

MAKES 1 DRINK

- 1½ oz Chattanooga Whiskey
- 1 oz watermelon juice
- ½ oz simple syrup

- 2 dashes Angostura bitters
- 1 orange peel, for garnish

1. Fill a rocks glass ¾ full with ice.
2. In a mixing glass, combine whiskey, watermelon juice, simple syrup and bitters. Stir to combine. Strain into rocks glass.
3. Squeeze orange peel to express the oils, then drop into glass.

GRAPEFRUIT MARGARITA

FLYING SQUIRREL

MAKES 1 DRINK

- Black lava salt, to rim glass
- 1½ oz grapefruit-infused tequila
- ¾ oz triple sec
- ½ oz fresh blood orange juice
- ¾ oz fresh lime juice
- lime wedge, for garnish

1. Rim glass. Run lime wedge around the rim of margarita glass; dip rim into a plate or shallow bowl of black lava salt. Set aside.
2. In a Boston shaker, combine grapefruit-infused tequila, triple sec, blood orange juice and lime juice. Shake vigorously.
3. Fill rimmed glass with ice. Pour margarita mixture over the rocks.
4. Garnish with lime.