



Drinks



First Look: Cocktails and Pintxos at Toro New York



Note: First Looks give previews of new drinks and menus we're curious about. Since they are arranged photo shoots, we do not make critical evaluations or recommendations.

According to beverage director **Caitlin Doonan**, guests who order a drink at the just-opened Chelsea spot, **Toro New York**, should expect to find a celebration of Spain in their glass. "It's about taking what you would traditionally find and have in Spain and ratcheting it up for a New York audience—being aware of modern techniques and styles but really wanting to celebrate the traditions of the culture," she explains.

"Cocktail-wise, the list was really inspired by Chef Ken [Oringer] and Chef Jamie [Bissonnette]'s recent trip to Barcelona," continues Doonan. "That's why we have the whole gin & tonic list—the drink is huge in Spain and specifically Barcelona tapas culture." Currently the list includes four variations, like the herb-driven **Atencion Gratuita**, and the **Montana Fizz**, which head bartender **Matthew Durgin** describes as a drink that's "all about being refreshing."



Durgin behind the bar.

Cocktails like the **Madeira Cup** also salute tradition, featuring spirits that Spanish settlers would have brought with them from the Old World—Port and Madeira—and one that they would have found in the New—rum. Port, Madeira, and sherry are not only a prominent part of the cocktail list but on the drink menu as a whole. "Sherry is obviously something wine geeks have been into for some time," says Doonan, "but we've tried to put together a list that is more accessible. Toro is all about being inclusive and having fun—that's why we have the three big communal tables, and we offer to serve wines by the bottle in a porron." Echoes Oringer in reference to the food: "You could come by for some quick pintxos and a cocktail or stay for dinner."

Fans who've visited the Boston original shouldn't expect this outpost to be a complete replica—on the cocktail list only two drinks, the **Verdad y Amor** and the **Nantucket Mule**, are repeats. "We want it to feel like the same vibe but not be a copy of Boston," says Doonan.

Head over to the slideshow for a look at some of the cocktails—all \$15—and snacks at Toro New York.



Atencion Gratuita

"This is a more savory, herbaceous take on a gin and tonic, because of the herbs and the more malted-style gin," explains Durgin. Featuring Bols Genever, housemade thyme syrup, lavender bitters, and Fever-Tree Bitter Lemon tonic, Durgin says this riff on the classic cocktail is intended to "mimic the Basque herb garden."



1682

"This is our lighter stirred, more aperitif-style drink," says Durgin. "It's got more backbone for people who like stirred, boozy cocktails but it's lower in alcohol, which makes it more food-friendly," he notes. The addition of French aperitif Bona also helps in this endeavor, he explains. "It's got a really nice herbal profile and it's immensely mouth-watering. It always makes me hungry whenever I drink it," says Durgin. The Bona is joined by a combination of Dolin dry vermouth, dry orange curacao, both Abbott's bitters and Bittermens New England Spiced Cranberry bitters, and a cranberry garnish.



Txipirones

Oringer says that this item from the "Tapas a la Plancha" section is one of his favorite dishes on the menu. "It's so simple but really good. The baby squid are really tender and we serve them with a farm egg and migas, along with some fried garlic, herbs, and pimenton."



Montana Fizz

"In terms of the variations between the four different gin & tonics, this one is all about being refreshing," says Durgin. "The Nuestra Casa is more about spice, the Todo La Noche is more citrusy, and the Montana Fizz has a more herbaceous profile," explains Durgin. He opts for "juniper-driven" G'Vine Nouaison gin in this cocktail, layering it with slightly bitter Byrrh Grand Quinquina, housemade lemongrass syrup, and Schweppes tonic.



Madeira Cup

A take on an "old Cobbler Cup," this fruit-forward, shaken cocktail references the restaurant's fortified wine program. "We were trying to keep in mind the historical context of these spirits—thinking about Spanish settlers coming to the New World and what they would have had with them (Port, Madeira) and what they would have found there," explains Durgin. El Dorado Demerara rum, Blandy's Rainwater Madeira, and Niepoort Ruby Port form the base of this tribute, which also stars a housemade magnolia shrub, lemon, and fresh blackberry. "The Madeira and Port are rich and deep but still in balance with the rum and citrus," says Durgin. "It's a drink with a little more body and depth while remaining food-friendly and fresh."



Higado Frito (\$9)

Chef Oringer, who is known for Boston restaurants including Clio and Uni, calls these tempura-fried chicken liver-stuffed sage leaves "a good quick snack to order with a drink while you wait for your friends."



Escoces y Especia

Durgin calls this sherry-based daiquiri variation a little homage to the "D.T.O." That is, the "Daiquiri Time Out." Durgin says, "Rum is really big in the Boston bar and restaurant scene, and the Daiquiri became this kind of bartender's handshake. You'd ask for a D.T.O. and basically it's what you drink while you're looking over the menu and thinking about what you want to drink." Durgin's ode combines dry La Cigarrera Manzanilla sherry with a lavender and sage honey syrup, Drambuie, and lime juice.