

## Going Out Guide

By Fritz Hahn  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
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### Savoring summer cocktails at Alexandria's Majestic, Estadio, the Gibson

As the lazy, hazy days of summer begin to fade, the drink menus at local bars also begin to change. Before you know it, we'll be tasting Oktoberfest beers and, from there, sipping Irish coffee and hot toddies around a roaring fire.

All the more reason, then, to savor refreshing, warm-weather drinks on sultry nights. Here are a few options I'll be enjoying as often as possible for the next few weeks.

#### Tiki Time cocktails at the Majestic

911 King St., Alexandria. 703-837-9117. <http://www.majesticcafe.com>.  
Tiki Time cocktails: \$9.75 each.

On a trip to Hawaii last year, Todd Thrasher, the rum-loving mixologist at Old Town's Restaurant Eve, PX and Majestic Cafe, found himself let down by tiki drinks.

It wasn't that the old-school fog cutter cocktails and mai tais at Don the Beachcomber in Kailua-Kona didn't taste right. "All the flavors were there," Thrasher says. But he and his wife were disappointed that the recipes were "a bastardization" of the originals, especially at a bar named after the man who invented many potent tiki drinks in the 1930s. "They're not using fresh fruit juice. [The drinks] are loaded with high-fructose corn syrup."

Back in Alexandria, Thrasher decided to re-create some favorite tropical drinks for the Majestic's summer drink menu but do them his way, with fresh juices and house-made ingredients. Take his version of a piña colada, which is not strictly a tiki cocktail but is very much of the same era. You won't find overly sugary syrups or mass-produced coconut-flavored liqueur in this breezily refreshing version -- just rum, coconut water, fresh coconut cream and pineapple juice. After one sip, you can practically feel the breeze blowing off the beach.

"It's nice and light instead of being cloying," says Misha Von Elmendorf, the owner of the nearby Misha's Coffeehouse, who stops in frequently for tiki drinks after work and favors the piña colada. "I used to drink this stuff in college. It's cool, it's fun. Let's bring it back, you know?"

The menu, which will be available until the first day of fall, is stocked with Don the Beachcomber originals, including the Missionary's Downfall, a vacation in a glass with rum, pineapple, mint and a shot of apricot brandy. From a different tiki bar-- Los Angeles's Tiki-Ti -- comes the wonderfully Polynesian Ray's Mistake. Passion fruit, guava and pineapple juices, coconut milk and dark rum are suitably tropical. The "mistake" -- a shot of gin -- adds depth to the taste.

But the most iconic of the Majestic drinks is the Zombie, a fruity mix of rums, Cointreau, papaya and lemon juices, grenadine or almond-flavored orgeat syrup served in a bowl big enough for two and topped with a burning well of overproof rum. It's hard to miss the festively colored and flaming ceramic vessels, whether they're on the bar or being carried through the dining room.

The only change from the originals, Thrasher says, is that he dialed down the alcohol because "tiki cocktails were so boozy. I changed them for the sake of not getting people so messed up that they can't enjoy the food and drinks."

Imagine: Tiki drinks so good you'll want to taste every last drop. What would Don the Beachcomber think?



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