

# DECOR MAINe

| ARCHITECTURE ART DESIGN EXPERIENCE FOOD SUSTAINABILITY |

OCTOBER 2021

**THE  
CHILDREN'S  
MUSEUM &  
THEATRE OF  
MAINE DEBUTS**  
on Thompson's  
Point

**A K'PORT  
GETAWAY GETS A  
CONTEMPORARY TWIST**

## Black, White & Neutral ALL OVER

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Rockport's  
Rocky Coast*

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Future for Portland's  
Fore Street**

**PLUS!**

**STYLISH  
SHOPS ACROSS  
THE STATE**



Magnus on Water's  
craved cocktails are  
mixed by bartender  
Brian Catapang in a  
comfortable-chic interior.



# FAIR AND FORAGED

MAGNUS ON WATER FORGES A NEW PATH WITHIN THE FOOD INDUSTRY, CHASED BY SMOOTH LIBATIONS AND COMMUNITY-CENTERED CUISINE

BY HEATHER CHAPMAN PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURYN HOTTINGER

**WHAT IS EVERYONE CRAVING AFTER A YEAR OF** pandemic-induced isolation? Resoundingly, community and comfort. And maybe a cocktail or two. Which begs the question: If humanity longs to share neighborly fare after a big upheaval, why were the nation's food service workers among the first to be let go?

To the four-strong team at Magnus on Water—a hip cocktail bar and restaurant in downtown Biddeford—the answer is incredibly clear. “Historically, this has been a

very transient industry. You can't have an expansive and respected career in food service if you aren't provided with the same wages and opportunities for growth as those following other career trajectories,” says Brittany Saliwan-chik, overseer of wine and hospitality at Magnus on Water. “This [service] is what we do and love, and it's hard work. It should be valued, respected, and fostered.”

As you settle into Magnus's intimate dining room, bar, or outdoor patio, you can prepare for a meal (or drink)

Landscape architect Richardson & Associates worked with the Magnus on Water team to create the outdoor spaces. Hardscaping by Salmon Falls. *opposite, bottom right* Slide up to the sleek indoor bar for drinks and good company.



Brittany, Brian, Julia, and Carmen worked with architect Kaplan Thompson and contractor Warren Construction to bring the restaurant to life. *above, right* The patio includes uniquely edible vegetation for a truly foraged feel.



that *feels* just as good as it tastes, prepared by a cared-for staff earning above the Maine tipped minimum wage plus pooled tips (a percentage of those tips are allocated to back-of-house hourly staff, a Magnus on Water promise since day one, but a practice that is rapidly catching wind state- and nationwide)—a vast improvement over the industry standard, which is half that. Whether you're an employee, a Mainer, a Bid-

deford resident, or a traveler just passing through, Magnus translates the intangible. "You really feel seen, heard, and individually appreciated here," explains owner and Managing Partner Carmen Harris. A feeling that, although appearing effortless to dining patrons, was painstakingly planned. Family photos belonging to Brittany, Carmen, Director of Beverage Brian Catapang, and coowner and Managing Partner Julia Russell add



warmth and context to a customer-facing gallery wall. Intentional design choices—like ultracozy plush seating instead of metal stools—invite patrons to stay as long as they like. Even the bathroom features motifs of inclusivity and belonging through a selection of art, including work by Derek Fordjour, Simone Yvette Leigh, and Jacob Lawrence. “We want to root visitors in a very strong sense of place from the moment they arrive and allow them to feel as if this can be *their* place, too, no matter who they are,” Julia says.

A sensation that holds up outside as well, where the patio—surrounded by native and, uniquely, edible landscaping—lets guests feel as though they are snacking, sipping, or dining in their own backyard. Whether you’re looking for after-dinner cocktails with a friend, a sit-down dinner with wine, or a light snack, the folks at Magnus welcome you, just as you are. With a menu derived from the latest hyperlocal fare from the farmers market and an atmosphere that is snug enough to call home, you’ll be thankful for those plush seats as you order round two and tuck in. ■



*top* Sitting at the well-stocked and incredibly comfy bar equals sitting pretty. *above* Enjoy a meal on the patio, which offers a backyard feel plus elevated fare. *opposite* Magnus on Water offers health, dental, and vision benefits to all staff members. ■



# Spicy Mezcal Margarita

Brittany, Julia, Carmen, and Brian conceived of Magnus on Water over a round of flavorful mezcal-based margaritas, and, during the pandemic, the team made a bottled version of it to keep their business afloat. Yet another riff on the original Ashes + Pears-inspired drink the four shared in 2018, this recipe utilizes a tincture made from dulce seaweed foraged—in true Magnus on Water fashion—from nearby Biddeford Pool.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1½ ounces Banhez mezcal
- ¾ ounce lime juice
- ¼ ounce St. George spiced pear liqueur
- ½ ounce 2:1 Pasilla chili syrup
- ¼ ounce Aperol
- 10 drops habanero dulce seaweed tincture
- 3 drops grapefruit peel tincture

Combine the mezcal, lime juice, liqueur, syrup, Aperol, and both tinctures in a chilled cocktail shaker. Shake well and serve in a coupe or rocks glass over 1 ice cube. Garnish with a lime wedge. Makes 1 cocktail.

## FOR THE PASILLA CHILI SYRUP

- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 cup water
- 5 whole Pasilla chilies

In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, bring the sugar, water, and whole chilies to a boil, stirring occasionally. Once the sugar is completely dissolved, remove the saucepan from the heat and let it sit at room temperature until cool. Transfer the mixture to the refrigerator to steep overnight.

Strain the mixture into an airtight jar through a fine-mesh sieve.

## FOR THE HABANERO DULSE SEAWEED TINCTURE

- ¼ cup dried dulce seaweed (you can find this at your local Whole Foods)
- ¼ cup dried whole habanero chilies
- 1 bottle (750 mL) Everclear 151 Proof (or other high-proof liquor)

Combine the seaweed and chilies in a Mason jar with enough Everclear to cover them. Seal the jar and let it sit at room temperature, undisturbed, for 3 weeks.

## FOR THE GRAPEFRUIT PEEL TINCTURE

- ½ cup grapefruit peels
- 1 bottle (750 mL) Everclear 151 Proof (or other high-proof liquor)

Put the grapefruit peels in a Mason jar with enough Everclear to cover them.

The Spicy Mezcal Margarita features home-made tinctures using local ingredients.



Seal the jar and let it sit at room temperature, undisturbed, for 2 weeks.



## BARTENDER'S NOTE

Brian concocts the habanero dulce seaweed tincture and grapefruit peel tincture in-house. If you're feeling adventurous, follow the recipes at left. Otherwise, you can replace the tinctures with grapefruit bitters and habanero bitters easily sourced from your local grocery store or market (just add a pinch of salt to your cocktail if you do to replace the dulce seaweed).