



Style

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STYLE

[ABOUT TOWN] EPICURE



Brendan Dorr

raising the bar

Brendan Dorr, head bartender and mixologist at B&O American Brasserie, has put Baltimore on the spirits map again by winning the national Bärenjäger Bärtending Competition. Judging was based on taste, appearance, creativity and overall delivery, and Dorr won with his "El Oso," a cocktail consisting of Bärenjäger honey liqueur, Partida Anejo tequila, Luxardo Maraschino liqueur, Bitter Truth Jerry Thomas "Own Decanter Bitters" and garnished with a dehydrated orange wheel on the bottom of the glass. Says Dorr, "It's kind of like a traditional Old Fashioned—a little reminiscent, but you get everything, taste everything. It's all integrated." Dorr is no stranger to competitions (he won the Regional World Cup for 42 Below Vodka, helping to put 42A on the drink map with The Queen Bee—vodka with yuzu, honey syrup and elderflower syrup). And his creative cocktailing helped the B&O bar debut to rave reviews with his Horsecar, made with blueberries and thyme. His background is as artistic as his drinks. "I went to Peabody and got a degree in classical music, singing as a tenor," he says. Maybe he'll serenade you the next time you ask for an El Oso! 2 N. Charles St., 443-692-6172 —S.G.F.



Chicken potpie at Tark's Grill

cold comfort

Tark's Grill is known for its "comfort food" and big portions. And perhaps the most popular comfort food on the menu is executive chef Roger Shugars' chicken potpie. Stuffed with sautéed carrots, celery and onions, green peas and mushrooms, reduced with homemade chicken stock and finished with heavy cream, well, *hello!* It's a perfect meal for a cold day for those seeking a little inner warmth. A pear salad or butter-nut squash and apple salad are *au gout* light sides. And what to drink? A light fruity red Poppy pinot noir or a white sauvignon blanc should do nicely. 2360 W Joppa Road #116, 410-583-8275, tarksgill.com —S.G.F.

GIFT IDEAS

greek love

Zoe's Chocolate Co. is a third-generation chocolatier, whose roots started in Patras, Greece, but segued to the Mid-Atlantic in the early 1900s. In fact, the Tsoukatos family started the business in Baltimore, rolling around a small pushcart filled with homemade, hand-rolled chocolate confections. From there, they opened two shops—one in Waynesboro, Pa., and another in Frederick, Md. And it's been at these shops where perhaps the last of the dying art of homemade candy canes can be found. Says daughter Zoe, "We do everything from pulling the taffy on a hook that's been passed down from my grandparents, to using the old gas burner we've been using since the beginning of time." The factory line has everyone in the family rolling the taffy. "We pull the taffy down, some of us twist the colors in, others snip the taffy off, and that's how we make the canes," says Zoe. "One of the stipulations given to me and my brother was that we had to keep doing our candy canes if we were going to stay in the family business." And for those who want to try Zoe's chocolate, highly recommended are the Penelope's Pomegranate, the Dionysus Baklava and the Aegean Pistachio. 121 N. Market St., Frederick, Md., 301-694-5882, zoeschocolate.com



taste of summer

Christmas in July? Sometimes. June at Christmas? Always. **L'Esprit de June**—the world's first Vine Flower Liqueur—received the 2010 Gold Medal from the Beverage Tasting Institute (with a score of 95 out of 100, expect this liqueur to stay around). Add some to champagne to bring in the New Year, pour it on the rocks for a cool taste of French luxury or mix it up in a martini. And for wine lovers—add a dash to your favorite glass just to mix things up. Made in the heart of the Cognac region of



France, L'Esprit de June captures the essence of French vineyards. During the month of June, the grape vines explode with fragrant flowers—blooms that last for less than a week. L'Esprit de June captures this fragrance with a blend of vine flowers from Ugni Blanc, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and other grapes. An added benefit? The bottle is beautiful enough to give anyone as a gift. \$30 at Baltimore-area liquor stores.

