

The Enthusiast

WHAT TO BUY, WHERE TO EAT, WHAT TO DRINK & MORE

SIPS

KEY IS IN THE BUBBLES

BY LISA WEISSTUCH
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

On Nov. 14, Tokyo's metropolitan train system's management issued a public apology for a train leaving a station 20 seconds ahead of its scheduled time during that morning's rush hour. If you needed an illustration of how precision is the keystone of Japanese culture, there you have it. That exactness is the *modus operandi* that lead bartender James Cleland has captured in his precision-engineered highball on offer at Uni, Ken Oringer and Tony Messina's izakaya in the Eliot Hotel. More a ritual than just a drink in Japan, bartenders have various ways of putting their personal stamp on highballs, a seemingly unfussy combination of whiskey and soda water. Cleland enhances the basic combo with flourishes like bitters and green tea liqueur, but that's not what makes it stand out. The key is in the bubbles, he says, so he opts for a sparkling spring water instead of club soda. The softer, gentler bubbles give the drink a velvety mouthfeel. It's precisely what you don't expect.



LIZA WEISSTUCH FOR BOSTON GLOBE

OOLONG! THAT'S GOOD Makes 1 drink

1 ¼ ounces bourbon
1 ounce Cheongsian Green Tea Liqueur
¾ ounce falernum
2 dashes orange bitters
Premium sparkling water, to top.

1. In a Collins glass over ice, pour bourbon, liqueur, falernum, and orange bitters, in that order.
2. Top with premium sparkling water.

Adapted from Uni

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QUICK BITE



PHOTOS BY JOSH REYNOLDS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Lolita changes the channel

BY DEVRA FIRST
GLOBE STAFF

Where to Lolita Cocina & Tequila Bar, a Fort Point follow-up to the Back Bay Mexican restaurant and nightclub.

What for Subterranean revelry. New menu items. A short walk down a long pier (the restaurant is located right on the water, where there will eventually be a patio).

The scene Head down a flight of stairs beside a brightly lit convenience store to find yourself strolling beside the channel. The cold wind blows over the quiet water. Then open the doors to Lolita and leave the calm behind. The rooms are dark and loud with laughter, packed with people. A young after-work crowd is gathered at the bar, winter coats piled on the floor. Couples tuck into tacos at intimate tables. Couches are filled with women looking artfully bored, nodding to the music; a Drake lookalike camps out by a street art-inspired mural. The restaurant goes on and on (it's twice the size of the Back Bay branch), bar spilling into lounge spilling into dining room. Red chandeliers are overhead, stained glass windows hang above the bar, and the word "baños" is spelled out in red neon script. "Oh god, I feel like my mom," says a 20-something as she lights up her phone to read the menu in the dark.

What you're eating Hot queso dip, pumpkin-seed hummus with chiles and cotija cheese, grilled street corn. A spiced-up take on shrimp cocktail; a version of the chilindrina, a Mexican snack, made with tuna tartare. Guacamole spiked with lobster or bacon, or straight up. Tacos, nachos, and blue-corn quesadillas with various toppings. Plates that range from turkey taquitos to flaming chorizo to Mexican-style



Stained glass windows and red chandeliers dominate the decor at Lolita Cocina & Tequila Bar in Fort Point, where you can find spicy tuna chilindrinas (left).

fried rice. For dessert: churros, tres leches, and chocolate flan.

Care for a drink? There's wine if you like, but this is a tequila bar. Along with plenty of riffs on the margarita, you'll find dozens of blanco, reposado, añejo, and extra añejo tequilas (available in flights, too), along with mezcal.

Overheard Tequila appreciation, margarita-related debate, bar banter. "It's your lucky day," a man tells a new arrival who manages to snag the rare bar stool. A customer sips her cocktail: "I love it," she says. "We are very happy you love it!" her server exclaims. "What was up with that?" a woman asks her friend after an iffy encounter with a fellow pa-

tron. "Something was up with that," the friend confirms. Opinions differ on the best way to order a margarita. "I'm all into sea salt. I'm into that. I'm obsessed," one person declaims. "You like the skinny one that doesn't have all the sugar?," says another in disbelief. "I like the sugar!" A date continues waterside after dinner: "It's like its own city down here," one lovebird marvels to another as they lean against the railing taking in the view.

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TABLES

OPENINGS, CLOSINGS, AND CHATTER FROM THE RESTAURANT SCENE



KEITH BEDFORD/GLOBE STAFF

Openings: The Back Bay gets a bit spicier with **Citrus & Salt** (142 Berkeley St. at Stanhope Street), the newest from chef Jason Santos (**Abby Lane, Buttermilk & Bourbon**). Santos is known for his daring flavor combinations: Enjoy crab and cactus chowder with tequila and tortilla strips; blowfish tails; sea scallop ceviche with banana "dippin' dots"; and a soft-serve sorbet of the day. It's slated to open Nov. 30.



Luke's Lobster opens a 20-seat Seaport branch on Nov. 29 (53 Northern Ave. at Fan Pier Boulevard). The seafood shack also has branches in the Back Bay and Downtown Crossing. Feast on wintery items like lobster mac and cheese, lobster and gruyere grilled cheese, and crab and gruyere grilled cheese, plus lobster, crab, and shrimp rolls, washed back with blueberry lemonade.

Meanwhile, **Bodega Canal** debuts across town near TD Garden (57 Canal St. at Market Street). It's the newest project from Nicholas Frattaroli, who runs neighborhood hangouts **North Square Oyster** and **Ward 8**. This is your place for post-game tacos: braised bacon, buttered lobster, crispy chicken, and tempura fish, plus group-friendly apps like tamales and guacamole.

Down the block, **City Winery** has debuted after a slight delay (1 Canal St. at Market Street). The concert venue features live music, an operational winery, and a Mediterranean menu that includes wine-infused pizza.

FASHION

KU DE TA: FROM SOUTHIE TO 'BURBS

BY KARA BASKIN
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Dedham's Legacy Place is home to a number of national chains like Amazon Books, Athleta, Sephora, and a spacious Whole Foods. But now it's going local, with women's boutique Ku De Ta.

The South Boston shop, run by friends Nicole Cronin and Heather O'Connell, focuses on designer brands at modest prices: Alex and Ani, Free People, Joe's Jeans, Mother Denim.

Cronin opened the original shop in Southie 11 years ago, playing on the French phrase "coup d'état."

"Our tagline was 'A fashion revolution starts here,'" Cronin says. She lived in South Boston at the time and noted the lack of shopping options then.

"I thought: Someone has to take a chance here. There are so many girls like me who just want to grab a top and go out for the night. I got a lot of support from the South Boston community," she says.

She hopes the same is true in Dedham, because many of her customers have since moved to the 'burbs. It opened in mid-November.

"A lot of the women who shopped in the city have

Ku De Ta opened earlier this month in Dedham's Legacy Place. The original shop opened in South Boston 11 years ago.

moved on. They're coming in and saying, 'Oh my God, I'm so happy to see you again!'" Cronin says.

In addition to attractively priced denim — the shop is known for its \$109 Rolla's jeans — Ku De Ta hosts ladies' night out parties. The two-hour private shopping soiree comes with 20 percent discounts, wine (of course), and free appetizers, plus styling advice.

"We always give honest feedback," she says. "You don't want to convince a customer to buy something. They'll get home; they won't like it; and they



MELISSA OSTROW

won't come back."

Cronin also prides herself on helping shoppers retain individuality. Ku De Ta only orders six of every item, so the chances of bumping into someone with the same outfit at a party are slim.

"It makes us different from cookie-cutter stores," Cronin says.

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ARAM BOGHOSIAN FOR GLOBE/FILE

In other pizza news, **Flatbread Company** now has a Brighton branch (76 Guest St. at Arthur Street), at the new Boston Landing complex. The combination restaurant-slash-bowling alley has nine bowling lanes, a 25-seat bar, two floors of dining, and plenty of pizza (gluten-free available) with fun toppings: chicken with mango barbecue sauce, black beans with lime sour cream, and taco pizza topped with tortilla chips.

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