

# Getting fresh

Drinks can be just as creative and nuanced as the meal they accompany at these trendy restaurants.

BY NATHAN GUNTER

"Lately, I've been messing around a lot with peaches," said Kyle Fleischfresser, bartender at Ludivine, 805 N. Hudson.

Fleischfresser's philosophy — and that of Ludivine — is to use what is in season and available from local farmers and ranchers to create a unique and seasonal dining experience.

This bleeds over into cocktails. Hence the peaches; they've been ripe lately. He's also been using a lot of fresh basil.

"When cocktails were first invented, they didn't have mixes," Fleischfresser said. "A lot of different cocktails came out of the local geography and what was available at the time. Nobody had a pre-made margarita mix that they threw into a blender."

He recently created a drink he called An Evening at the Purring Kitten Saloon — "Every time I make a whiskey drink, I try to find a Western name for it" — which mixes freshly muddled peaches, fresh basil and bourbon, shaken over ice with a splash of tonic water.

"When you go into a restaurant that's not a chain, you expect everything to be put together from stuff that's fresh and not pre-made," Fleischfresser said, "so why wouldn't you expect that out of your drinks?"

Meredith Baird creates the drinks menu at 105 Degrees, 5820 Classen Boulevard in the Classen Curve development. She agreed with Fleischfresser.

"Cocktails are just like food," Baird said. "The flavor combinations and profiles can be equally complex to any dish. It's important that the ingredients



Cocktails with fresh ingredients are available at 105 Degrees.

have the same integrity."

105 Degrees' bar menu also is seasonal, and all drink ingredients are fresh. Highlights of the recent summer menu included the Southern Belle (made with fresh mint, strawberries, lime, sake and prosecco) or the mint julep (made with mint, maple syrup, lime, sake, cava and barrel-aged bitters). For something fit to refresh a table, 105 Degrees offers a carafe of its sweet tea made with black tea, agave, lemon and sake, or its tropical sangria, made with pineapple, mango, orange, cucumber and white wine.

"People prefer something fresh and made by hand, rather than put

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—Meredith Baird

in a bottle and poured into a glass," said Brad Jackson, general manager at Mickey Mantle's Steakhouse, 7 S. Mickey Mantle Drive in Bricktown.

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Mickey Mantle's recently unveiled a new line of signature cocktails featuring fresh ingredients and unique recipes. The most popular of these have been the Garden of Eden (which mixes Stoli Citros, fresh lemon, lime and grapefruit juices, simple syrup and fresh basil, shaken and served over ice) and the Rosemary's Blushing (a mix of Grey Goose Citron, lemon and cranberry juices, lavender syrup and fresh rosemary, garnished with a fresh sprig of rosemary).

For the brave, Mickey Mantle's rolled out the Choose Your Heat, which Jackson warns "takes the right kind of person."

The customer is offered the choice of *reposado* tequila or Grey Goose vodka (Jackson prefers the tequila — "Who doesn't?") with lavender syrup, simple syrup, lime juice, fresh raspberries and one seed from a habanero pepper, garnished with a slice of the pepper.

"For those who want a little more warmth, we'll throw in another seed," Jackson said. "But I don't recommend it. It's perfect just how it is."

Jackson noted that, while Mickey Mantle's may have a reputation for attracting the oil tycoon types who stop in for a single-malt scotch on the rocks, the new line of signature drinks have been favored by a trendier crowd. All the ingredients come from a local produce supplier.

"None of these are drinks that you're going to have 10 to 12 of," he said. "They're all very unique and very fresh." **OKG**