

No Cocktail Menu? No Problem!

First rule of drinking at Boston's drink: Don't ask for a cocktail menu at this Boston hot spot

Deborah Abrams Kaplan | June 26, 2014



Don't embarrass yourself by asking for a cocktail menu at [Drink](#) in Boston. You'll feel like an idiot. There is no cocktail menu. Instead, tell the bartender what type of spirits you like, and throw in a few extra ingredients like rosemary, citrus, ginger, jalapeno or cucumber. Or that you like your cocktails set on fire. Then sit back (well, there's a good chance you'll be standing) and watch the bartender get to work.

You won't see the liquor bottles on shelves behind the bar, though there are large work islands. The surfaces hold pots of herbs, bowls of limes, lemons, oranges and grapefruits and tall, old-fashioned citrus squeezers. Using these elements, along with dark brown medicine bottles holding bitters doled out by dropper, and clear glass bottles with freshly made mixers, they'll whip something up for you. And they'll place it on the empty spot on the white rectangular napkin, next to the water glass carefully placed before you upon arrival.

If your drink requires ice, you might see the bartender walk over to the 50 pound clear block, carefully choosing just the right implement to carve, shave or chisel your ice into the right shape for the job at hand.

The craft cocktail bar with its generic name has been collecting awards since it opened in 2008, and the word has gotten out. Just like you don't want to ask for the bar menu, don't come asking for a plain gin and tonic, or a rum and Coke. And don't bother asking for a popular glass of wine

that you can get anywhere else. Their specialty is the art of the cocktail, and their wine list (yes, they have a good one) is curated with lesser known but high quality vineyards. Then again, since you don't know the wineries, maybe you are better off asking for a dry white wine with fruity afternotes.

The bar favors smaller groups and they limit the number coming in at any given time. The bartenders are entertaining to watch, so try to get a spot there, as it zigs and zags into five separate seating areas. The building is a former warehouse, and the decoration industrial chic. Bartenders look like they could have been serving during the prohibition era in terms of their dress and mannerisms. They're serious about their concoctions.

As for food, do ask for a menu. You can get light bites up to a burger. Options range from sour cream and onion chips to Peekytoe crab crostini with sauce gribiche, fava and lemon, to tarte flambee with bacon, maitake and fromage blanc. And personalized charcuterie platters.

No matter the time of day, it's likely to be dark at Drink. After all, you're mostly underground, with a few windows behind the bar showing the sidewalk and feet of those walking by on Congress Street, in the Seaport area. Without knowing it's there, it's easy to pass right by. The sign outside is subtle, and there's no sign inside pointing the way. Go downstairs to the unmarked door for Drink, like you're heading to a secret speakeasy. Or go or upstairs to Sportello, its brightly lit full-window companion restaurant with similar funky zig-zag seating and an open kitchen. Both are part of the Barbara Lynch Gruppo empire.



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