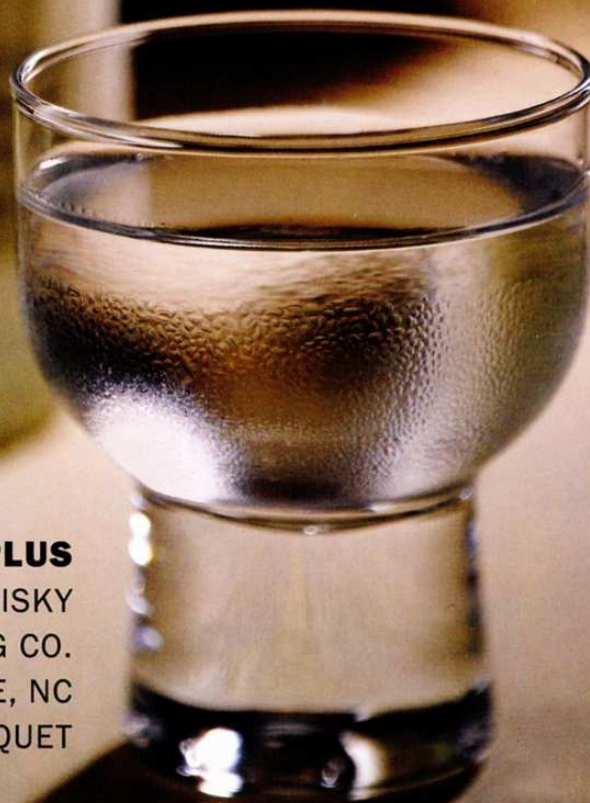


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Drink Imitates Art

At Boston's Eastern Standard, Naomi Levy cultivates creative cocktails

Naomi Levy may have studied art in college, but her true calling goes back to middle school, when she'd make dinner menus and drinks for her family. "The restaurant industry is where I was meant to be all along," Levy says. The Maryland native has worked in hospitality ever since her first job at a local Ruby Tuesday, but it wasn't until she helped open Hungry Mother in 2008 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that she got serious about cocktails.

In January 2010, Levy joined Eastern Standard in Boston's Kenmore Square neighborhood, where she got her chops as a bartender. This past summer, she took over as bar manager and has cut down the cocktail list from 55 to 22 drinks (\$10 to \$13). "The new menu stays true to the feel of the restaurant, but it's a natural evolution," Levy says.

Eastern Standard's drinks list is now divided into three sections: "Rediscover," "Redevelop" and "Redefine." The first features classic cocktails, the second offers riffs on classics and the third highlights more innovative concoctions like The Phoenix, made with Bols Barrel Aged genever, Santa Maria al Monte amaro, burnt sugar syrup, lemon juice and lemon ash. "My inspiration for cocktails mostly comes from food," Levy says. "I had a



Naomi Levy of Eastern Standard in Boston aims to transport her guests through exotic ingredients and flavors.

salad in New Orleans with this aromatic vegetable ash. So I thought, 'Why not put an ash in something that people are inherently going to have right next to their nose?'"

Levy also created the Vélo, which means "bicycle" in French. Meant to be a more leisurely take on the Sidecar, the drink comprises Pierre Ferrand 1840 Original Formula Cognac, St-Germain elderflower liqueur, Henri Bardouin pastis liqueur, lemon juice, tarragon syrup and Peychaud's bitters. "It's like riding your bike through the hills of Provence," Levy explains.

The drinks menu also has two regularly rotating featured sections—one that focuses on seasonal ingredients and one that pays tribute to a person or place of historical significance like New Orleans. In addition, Levy oversees Eastern Standard's beer list, which offers a dynamic selection of rare, small-production and unique brews (\$5 a 12-ounce can to \$53 a 750-ml. bottle). While Boston is primarily a beer town, Levy has seen a shift in consumers' willingness to try more cutting-edge cocktails. "Would we ever surpass New York City, Chicago or Los Angeles?" she says. "I don't know. But when it comes to hospitality, I think Boston sets the standard."

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Amber Drea

Naomi Levy's Recipes



The Phoenix

INGREDIENTS:

1½ ounces Bols Barrel Aged genever;
¼ ounce Santa Maria al Monte amaro;
1 ounce burnt sugar syrup¹;
¾ ounce lemon juice;
1 egg white;
Lemon ash².

RECIPE:

Combine genever, amaro, syrup, lemon juice and egg white in a mixing glass and dry shake. Add ice, hard shake and double strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with lemon ash.



Vélo

INGREDIENTS:

1½ ounces Pierre Ferrand 1840 Original Formula Cognac;
½ ounce St-Germain elderflower liqueur;
¼ ounce Henri Bardouin pastis liqueur;
¾ ounce lemon juice;
½ ounce tarragon syrup³;
1 dash Peychaud's bitters.

RECIPE:

Combine all ingredients in a pint glass. Add ice, shake and strain into a cocktail glass.

¹Combine 2 quarts white sugar and 2 cups water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Add ¼ teaspoon lemon juice and cook down until the sugar is a very dark caramel. In a separate pan, combine 1 quart water and 1 tablespoon vanilla extract, bring to a boil, and then stir into the caramel. Strain through a fine mesh chinois.

²Lay leftover juiced lemons on a baking sheet and bake at 400 degrees for six to eight hours or until completely burnt and hard. Pulverize the lemon "charcoal" first in a food processor and then in a blender. Strain through a fine mesh tamis to remove large chunks.

³Combine 1 quart white sugar, 1 quart hot water and ½ cup torn fresh tarragon and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Let sit for 20 minutes and then strain.