

GRAB BAG

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COLUMBIA BAR

The Rye Witch

By RYAN HUME

After a long wait, Jim Defeo's new location-eponymous restaurant opened mid-August in the corner slot of the historic Carruther's Building on Commercial Street, kitty-corner from the Liberty Theater in the space once occupied by Clemente's. Judging by the foot traffic alone, making the public wait still has its advantages: The place was already packed after just opening at 5 p.m.

The dining room has been thoroughly renovated with a careful eye toward the building's Art Deco past. The space feels refined but not restrictive, and the atmosphere was pleasantly loud and jovial. Much of the floorplan has been dedicated to a new, large, horseshoe-shaped and marble-topped bar that dominates the view from the restaurant's entrance.

And, of course, with a new bar comes a new bar menu.

The drink menu was created by bar manager Laura Cherau — though curated may be a better word to describe her approach. Cherau admitted that many of the signature cocktails that landed on the menu are culled from the most memorable cocktails she has encountered in her travels on this earth.

The Rye Witch finds its depth through the chemistry of mixing rye whiskey with sherry — a combination that doesn't immediately come to mind, but

as both the spirit and the fortified wine find their character while being aged in oak barrels, they actually end up being fast friends when poured into a glass together.

The addition of Strega, an Italian herbal liqueur heavy on the orange, plays into the sherry's sweetness, and what you get is a complex new take on the Old Fashioned, one that is sure to comfort the soul on nights of heavy autumn rain.



SUBMITTED IMAGE

The Rye Witch is a new take on the Old Fashioned.

Ingredients
 2 1/2 ounces of Bulleit Rye or another rye whiskey
 1 ounce Amontillado Medium-Dry Sherry*
 1 ounce Strega liqueur
 4 dashes Fee Brothers Orange Bitters
 Ice
 Orange peel twist for garnish

Directions
 Pour the rye, sherry and Strega into an old fashioned glass. Shake in the bitters, stir, then top off with ice. Garnish with the orange peel.

* Amontillado is a medium-dry variety of sherry wine named after the Montilla region of Spain. The brand Carruther's employs is Sandeman.

—Recipe courtesy of Laura Cherau, the bar manager at Carruther's, Astoria, Oregon

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