

ISSUE 5 2025

life

M A G A Z I N E

THE
GUILD
PROPERTY
PROFESSIONALS

HOME DESIGN TRENDS
Sofa Styling

ROOM DESIGN
In the Boudoir

ESCAPES
A Thread Through the Ages

PROPERTY HIGHLIGHT
Tomorrow's Homes Today



A DARK HORSE

CURATED COCKTAILS MEET CLASSIC BAR FOOD AT THE MILESTONE HOTEL & RESIDENCES' RECENTLY REOPENED STABLES BAR. ANDREW SNAPE TAKES A GOURMET GALLOP.

Kensington and Knightsbridge in London are synonymous with old-money wealth and traditional style, exemplified by Harvey Nichols, Harrods and Kensington Palace. Sharing the space and flying the flag for Victorian and art deco style is The Milestone Hotel and Residences on Kensington High Street. This old-school luxury hotel offers traditional style dining in Cheneston's Restaurant, but another old friend has recently been brought back into the family.

After a major refit and revamp, the hotel recently reopened the Stables Bar and Hideaway, bringing a popular haunt back to prominence and providing an extra-special nightspot that concocts some of the finest cocktails in the city.

The refit pays homage to the building's origins as the stables for the original mansion house, where horses and carriages waited for the wealthy residents to make their regular sojourns into the West End for dinner, drinks and a show. The bar is tucked away in the depths of the hotel, far from the street noise, but it's far from being a dull and lifeless venue. The music is light and the staff are friendly, led by Bar Manager Angelo Lo Greco and Senior Bar Supervisor Victoria Micaela Saenz.

This is not some modernist jazzy alternative to the tradition of the rest of the hotel. Deep, dark wood panelling delivers a warm, calming feeling that almost begs you to speak in hushed tones, and the dazzling shelves behind the bar present every spirit, aperitif and mixer you can imagine,

ready to mix into any cocktail you may desire, and many you couldn't begin to imagine. This feels like the kind of place where, back in the day, a big, fat cigar would've been compulsory, but those days are long gone.

Lining the walls are homages to its original use. Panels display original art works by Belgian artist Elie Lambert, including *Picnic at the Races*, *Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace* and *July Course, Newmarket*. This would be a perfect stopover to and from Royal Ascot, suited, booted and hatted up.

Innovation is at the forefront of the bar, but tradition is still in its heart. The menu is replete with fascinatingly named drinks, such as Kaos,



Zen Vibration, Society of Exploration and Dragon Prince, but if you want something familiar, the bar staff know it all.

I ask Angelo which cocktail he recommends, and he immediately points to the Rooster, which has easily the most unusual ingredient list I've ever seen: Dorito's chilli heatwave-infused Tapatio Anejo, lime, Aperol and pizza cordial. Even stranger is its origin story. It was conjured up one night in Victoria's deep slumber – literally dreamed up. Angelo took her dream inspiration and crafted the drink, adding a little twist of his own. Voilà! The Rooster. A sublime drink that tastes like a liquid pepperoni pizza. It's amazing.

I need something to soak up what I foresee will be an extensive selection of drinks, so I go old-school with the wagyu and brisket beef smash burger with Emmental cheese and special burger sauce, accompanied by rosemary chips at Angelo and Victoria's insistence. Not only do they know their cocktails, they also know their chips. Perfectly crispy on the outside and lightly puffy on the inside, the hint of rosemary brings a deeper flavour – and the burger is one of the best I've ever had. It is cooked medium, utterly juicy, with a sauce so lush that I suspect they'll hold the recipe close to their chests. It's that good.

My next choice is my exam question for them – a Vesper Martini. Invented by James Bond in



Casino Royale, this martini variant is made with three measures of gin, one of vodka and half of Cocchi Americano. It's not a well-known aperitif. Angelo, however, doesn't even blink and immediately sets about mixing. When it's delivered, I'm in for a surprise. Instead of the usual strip of lemon peel, it's garnished with an ice-cold imitation bullet. The flavour is fabulous, but the presentation still has me saying "wow".

I'm not a big whisky fan, but in these surroundings I feel obliged to sample an Old Fashioned. A favourite in the 20s and 30s – and of Don Draper from *Mad Men* – The Milestone Old Fashioned uses Lakes No1 Whisky, orange oleo saccharum (lemon syrup), angostura bitters and is finished with a healthy dose of oak smoke in a glass jar. The ice is branded with the hotel's moniker, filled with a dash of cherry syrup. More than any other, this drink clearly belongs here.

The cocktail bar status doesn't mean other tipples are neglected. There is a full menu of reds, whites, champagnes, beers and sodas. I finish my evening with an ice-cold Bavarian lager, which refreshes my palate like a long drink of water, before heading merrily into the West End, like they did in the good old days – but without the horse and carriage.

The Stables Bar epitomises the high society feel of The Milestone Hotel, while remaining down to earth and welcoming. It's unpretentious, but shameless in sticking to the highest of standards. After a day of shopping in Knightsbridge and Kensington, this is the perfect place to wine and dine.

For more information about dining and drinking at the Stables Bar, see www.milestonehotel.com

