

Pardon me, boy, I'd like a

Whiskey Bramble

BY EMILY CRISMAN

STIR, the new restaurant set to open at the Chattanooga Choo Choo in mid-November, is introducing the Scenic City to artisanal ice, a concept popularized in Japan that has become increasingly trendy in the States in the past few years.

Each of the specialty cocktails at STIR will feature ice that is hand-cut from a 300-pound block into eight shapes meant to fit the glass in which they are served, says Gary Crunkleton, a 20-year veteran of the bartending scene who developed STIR's bar concept. Purified water is frozen from the inside out using a special process that decreases air pockets, resulting in ice that keeps drinks chilled while retaining the flavor profile of the spirit, he explains.

"There's always been somewhat of a cocktail culture in Chattanooga, and I'm excited about working in a town that's known for

people who appreciate quality and finer products," says Crunkleton. "I'm building on that and adding cocktails across the board — not only great cocktails with great spirits, but also something new that's never been done in Chattanooga."

At tastings last month, the Whiskey Bramble — a mix of bourbon, cherry Amarascata (Marasca cherry jam), lemon juice, orange blossom water and sugar cane — emerged as a crowd favorite. Crunkleton says he was inspired by the Bramble, a popular drink in London in the 1980s blending gin, lemon juice, sugar syrup, crème de mure and some

type of seasonal fruit.

"I've taken a drink from England and exposed it to American roots found in bourbon and whiskey," says Crunkleton, adding that the bourbon in the cocktail will come from one of six micro-distilleries in the state, keeping with the restaurant's commitment to using only fresh, locally sourced ingredients.

The drink's cherry base, melding sweet and tart flavors, pairs well with the aged whiskey, he says. Like a traditional Bramble, the drink is served with crushed ice, which at STIR is made using an antique ice shaver. **CM**



GARY CRUNKLETON, A 20-YEAR VETERAN OF THE CRAFT COCKTAIL SCENE, IS THE MASTERMIND BEHIND THE INNOVATIVE BAR PROGRAM AT STIR, THE NEW RESTAURANT OPENING THIS MONTH AT THE CHATTANOOGA CHOO CHOO.

WHISKEY BRAMBLE

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 OUNCES BOURBON
- 2 BARSPoons OF CHERRY AMARASCATA
- 1 OUNCE LEMON JUICE
- 2 DASHES ORANGE BLOSSOM WATER
- 1 OUNCE SUGAR CANE SYRUP

DIRECTIONS:

MIX INGREDIENTS AND SHAKE WITH ICE. STRAIN INTO A JULEP CUP OF CRUSHED ICE AND GARNISH WITH LEMON.

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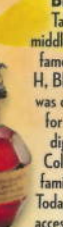
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