

din din for Brunch

Last weekend, Courtney Sproule of din din, an eclectic supper club and catering company, invited me to attend her latest food foray, a brunch series partnered with artisan distillers from Portland's Distillery Row. In a series of six brunches, held each Saturday and Sunday from May 15–30, Sproule has created four-course menus to pair with cocktails created by a different distillery each week. The first week featured New Deal Distillery, coming up next week is Highball, and for the final week House Spirits will offer up the brunch pairings. The brunches are being held in a vacant loft in the Milepost 5 Building where creative types live, work and, in Sproule's case, entertain.

On Saturday, my experience began with a Hot Monkey Bloody Mary in the building's lobby where resident artists display their work. Our group of 20 enjoyed the morning cocktail paired with steamed oysters topped with minced salami, crème fraîche, piment d'Espelette, and fried asparagus tips. Next we moved into the dining space where two long tables were set with mismatched vintage white linens, colorful cloth napkins, and wild flowers. The first course was served—a delicate squash brioche tart with foraged ramps accompanied by a cocktail called The Princess of Whales, an outrageous concoction of New Deal's Mudpuddle chocolate vodka, aquavit, and Madeira topped with sparkling wine.

The main course exhibited one of my favorite brunch concepts—last night's leftovers with an egg on top (though, of course, Sproule's version wasn't leftover). She slowly braised beef short ribs and served them over creamy polenta with sorrel salsa verde. The plate was deemed brunch-worthy with the addition of a poached duck egg—oozing a brilliant orange yolk which created a sauce over the polenta. The Rhubarb Bloom cocktail—rhubarb simple syrup, mint, lime, and gin—counterbalanced the richness of the plate.

The final course saw more of New Deal's Mudpuddle chocolate vodka, both in the cocktail and dessert. A souffléed sweet omelet filled with Freddy Guys Oregon hazelnuts doused in the chocolate flavored vodka made for an exceptionally sweet finish. After a few high-octane sips of “The David Bowie” cocktail featuring the Mudpuddle, bourbon, and orange peel, I decided it was time to sober up with a cup of Kenyan pour over coffee from Heart Roasters, who were on hand brewing.

Find out more at facebook.com/dindinportland.