



Best Innovative Independent:

THE MONARCH BAR

Migrating to Success

A West London-style cocktail bar has landed in Kansas City. The Monarch Cocktail Bar & Lounge welcomes the cocktail-curious and the drinks connoisseur in a space with global cosmopolitan appeal.

Opened in August 2017, The Monarch was designed by architect David Manica, in collaboration with the team led by bar manager Brock Schulte. The open center bar is approachable from all sides, with no back bar to obstruct the sight lines of the space. The main area seats 24 at the bar and up to 50 on intimate banquettes along the mirror-glassed walls.

Then there's the all-season Monarch Terrace and the Parlour Room, an inner bar open by reservation or invitation-only with its own distinctive menu of rare, curated spirits. Guests can choose tableside bar cart service for classic, stirred drinks or seasonal drink creations.

"We put a lot of effort and capital in designing and executing a remarkable ambiance that entices those who walk through the doors," Schulte says. "And once here, we do everything we can to make them feel welcomed and appreciated time and time again."

SPIRITOUS JOURNEYS

What about the drinks? Each new cocktail menu is inspired by the migratory patterns and flight paths of indigenous Monarch butterflies from around the world.

Guests can take a spirit-filled journey along the Pacific Coast with the Monarch favorite, the West Coast Migration (St. George green chile vodka, Sombra mezcal, riesling, lime, passion fruit, honey and Dogfish Head Seaquench Ale).

The Mid-America-inspired Louisiana Purchase (Monarch Private Barrel Jefferson's Ocean Aged at Sea Bourbon Voyage 14, Infinity vermouth, Monarch Amer Picon, salted cardamom "Iron" bitters), is a play on the Manhattan, but this is no typical Manhattan.

"We use liquid nitrogen to super-chill the glass and dump it out in front of the guest, and

Top, The Raven cocktail in The Parlour at The Monarch mixes Foursquare Criterion rum, Jefferson's Ocean Cask bourbon and pineapple Campari, and is presented in a custom chalice.

The Monarch's King Palm cocktail, right, is made with Rieger & Co. Midwestern dry gin, kefir whey, coconut water, cinnamon, lemongrass and red wine.



as it sublimates on the floor, it disappears and again excites the guest's senses," Schulte explains. "We then pour a pre-bottled, frozen and undiluted cocktail into the glass and spray bitters on top of it using an atomizer."

It starts off being a cold and gripping cocktail and then warms and opens up, he adds.

Cocktail prices range from \$13 to \$21 on the main menu and \$27 to \$45 on The Parlour menu, which uses "a variety of spirits that most bars would never even contemplate putting in cocktails," Schulte notes. "Our intent here is to show guests how great spirits can make the best versions of a cocktail."

NEGRONIS OF DISTINCTION

The Negroni has become the inspirational cocktail of focus for The Monarch. The Italian classic is featured on each new menu with up to six "Negronis of Distinction" included.

Why? "Kansas City drinks a lot of Old Fashioned- and Manhattan-style cocktails," Schulte says. "We chose the Negroni as a cocktail style to gain recognition in balance."

Monarch bar staffers are always trying to incorporate a new spirit into Negroni variations, Schulte notes, with anything from Scotch, mezcal, rum and Cognac. "And when correctly balanced, the Negroni can really let a main spirit shine."

Schulte and his team intend to keep pushing the boundaries of flavor, educating each other and having fun while showing guests new experiences.

Above all, he adds, The Monarch aims to "show and participate in as much of a hospitable environment as humanly possible."—MD

