

BEHIND THE BAR



Owner/Bar Manager Mark Fucile

Serving Up Authentically Vermont Fare

The Bistro at Ten Acres • 14 Barrows Road, Stowe • (802) 253-6838 • tenacreslodge.com

It sounds almost too perfect: A red 1820s farmhouse with brilliant white trim, wide pine floors and a pair of 120-year-old maple trees out front sits directly across from a dairy pasture with the Green Mountains serving as a stately backdrop.

But the Bistro at Ten Acres, in Stowe, is the real-deal.

The restaurant, which opened in 2012, looks about as Vermont as anything in the Green Mountain State. And it tastes that way, too. When the doors open each day, it celebrates the best of the region with an unquestioned credibility.

“Let’s call it ‘authentic New England,’” Owner/Bar Manager and self-described Trash

Hauler Mark Fucile says of the Bistro’s style. “The food kind of reaches around the globe. It’s not just American – we do a lot of seafood and we’re not afraid to take flavors from around the world. So in that respect it’s a little different, a little unique. And we’re always looking for something nobody else is doing in town with our food and our cocktails.”

To match what he calls the Bistro’s “A-level” food offerings, Fucile and his wife and co-owner Linda Hunter worked to create an equally impressive bar program.

“I wasn’t a bartender until we bought this place five years ago,” he says. “I was panicked behind the bar. But what we ended up doing was creating a cocktail list that was made up of these 12-14 cocktails long, and a friend of mine showed me recipes using a fruit press.”

That, he says, made all the difference. “You squeeze fresh fruit instead of using premade syrups,” Fucile says. “We make a margarita with fresh lime juice that’s out of this world.”

Visitors to the Bistro at Ten Acres can expect cocktails built with premium liquors – most of which are locally-produced. The house martini is crafted with Green Mountain Distillers’ Organic Vodka; if someone orders a drink with rum, they’ll get a drink made with Smuggler’s Notch Rum.

“The cocktails end up being a very good value,” he says. “We don’t overprice them,



Mark Fucile believes the secret to their tasty cocktails is their use of just-freshly-pressed fruit juices.

Written by Bill Burke | Photography by Matthew Thorsen



The Bistro at Ten Acres Margarita

- 1 whole fresh lime, squeezed
- 1 ounce agave
- 2 ounces of Cointreau
- 1½ ounces Hornitos Reposado Tequila

Mix everything into a shaker. Shake, and then serve with salted rim, if desired.

they're 16 ounces, and they taste damned good. They take a little longer to make, but we've become known for them."

The Bistro has also carved out a niche for itself among whiskey aficionados. Linda is from Scotland, so half of the top shelf is loaded with great Scotch. Mark is a bourbon fan, so the other half is taken up with notable bottles of America's native spirit. (Pro tip: There's a bottle of Pappy Van Winkle 12-year on the shelf at press time.)

How did you become a bartender?

"I was managing online sales and inventory for a car dealership in Burlington and I was completely bored. My wife was also bored with what she was doing – managing finances for a company in Scotland out of our basement. We thought, 'wouldn't it be neat if we bought bed-and-breakfast?' And now we live upstairs from one. We wanted a change in life, and it happened. I'm thankful, I'm living it."

Why Vermont?

"I'm from Rhode Island, and I've seen both sides of the coast two times. I came to Vermont in the 1990s to go to college at Castleton State. I recognized that Vermont was quite different and I wanted to stay and be a part of it."

What do you like most about tending bar?

"It's the people, honestly. I had no idea I'd be behind the bar and end up making friends with the guests who come in. They enjoy the experience the first time, come back again

and we might pick up the conversation where left off last time. Stowe is a vacation town, so there are a lot of time shares. We see the same people, the same week, four times out of the year, and they've gotten to know my wife and myself. We get to know them and their kids, and it doesn't always feel like a customer type relationship as much as people coming into my home and we're just helping them enjoy their evening by pouring drinks and serving them some food."

Share a behind the bar secret.

"If someone asks you a question and you don't know the answer, you make up an answer and say it with confidence. Just look them in the eye and say it confidently."

What is the signature cocktail at the Bistro at Ten Acres?

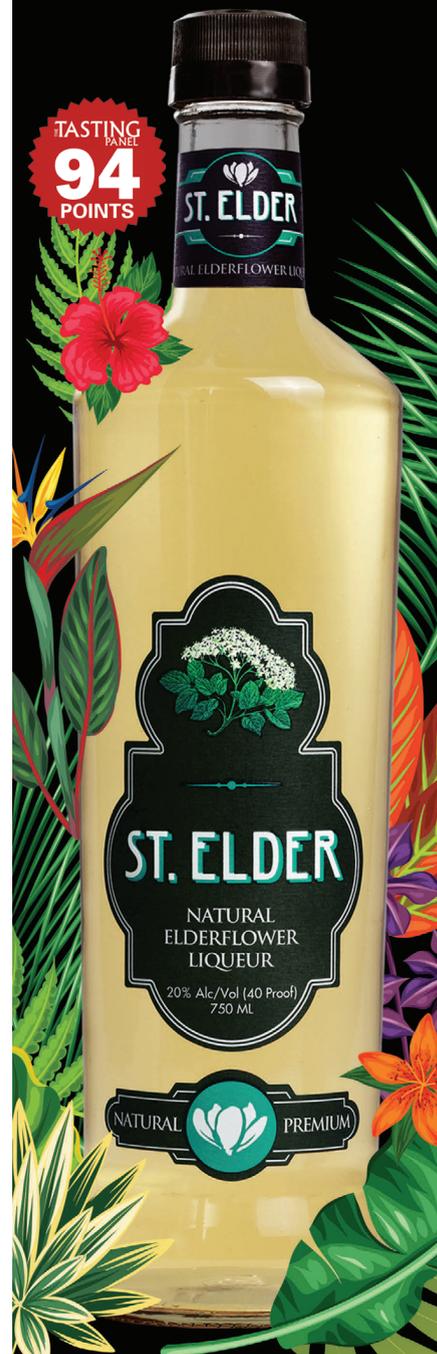
"I think we're best known for our margarita. When people sit down at the bar and watch me cut a lime in half and then push it through the fruit press, add the agave, the Cointreau, the Hornitos and then shake it and pour it out right in front to them – it's more than them just drinking the drink. They're seeing it being made. People will watch cocktails being made all night through that fruit press. People are not used to seeing agave going into margarita. I'd say we're most known for that."

At the end of a shift, I...

"Breathe a sigh of relief. At the end of the shift I'm usually very happy and looking forward to the next day." ☺

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