

## BEHIND THE BAR

Bartenders/Owners Jamie Persky and Mark Rosman



## Happy to be the Oddball

### Plate Owners Offer Welcoming, Intimate Alternative

**M**ark Rosman and Jamie Persky like to do things a little differently.

Take, for example, Plate – the couple's 91 Main St. restaurant in Stowe. While some travelers to the Green Mountain State may stop for a bite expecting a mom-and-pop eatery, Rosman and Persky thought they'd offer guests an alternative.

"We put a lot of effort into being the oddball – which I think has worked out," Rosman says. We've been doing it for four years, which is a good sign. But there are those who come up and it's not what they're expecting. They want that small town vibe, and we're not that. Once we fill up, it's very city-like, and it was designed to be that way."

Plate has a tangible West Coast feel and California-influenced menu that fills a need for the couple, who moved east from Los Angeles. Offerings rely heavy on locally-

**“We came to the stop sign at the Green Mountain Inn and decided right there to move here.”**

sourced vegetables and dishes with vegan options and an array of salads. It's a marriage (both literally and philosophically) of a West Coast sensibility and Vermont flavors. The result, they like to say, is "California inspired, Vermont made." And that vibe, it seems, is contagious.

"The fun part is that the people who come to work for us get that feeling," Rosman says. "That's why they love working for us. Turnover has been very low, which is great because of the atmosphere my wife and I created."

Even the couple's decision to move to Stowe 15 years ago came about rather unconventionally. The pair decided to leave city life behind and toured New England looking for just the right spot. They visited Rhode Island and Connecticut before heading north and traveling along Route 100 into Stowe. As the car rolled to a stop at the intersection of Main Street and the Mountain Road, the future became clear.

"We came to the stop sign at the Green Mountain Inn and decided right there to move here," Rosman says. "It all happened very quickly but it was a great decision."

Step inside the welcoming restaurant and the urban feel becomes apparent. The restaurant's 45 seats are embraced by brick and warmth. The bar is an "eating bar," where diners

Written by Bill Burke  
Photography by Matthew Thorsen



### Early Riser *courtesy Jamie Persky, Plate*

2 ounces vodka  
1 ounce grapefruit juice  
1 ounce lemon juice  
1 ounce simple syrup  
3 dashes green hot sauce  
Celery

Muddle the celery in a rocks glass and then combine the vodka, grapefruit juice, lemon juice and simple syrup in a shaker. Shake with ice and then pour into the rocks glass.

can interact with mixologists and chefs as they prepare meals and whip up creative cocktails.

"There's a lot of activity going on," Rosman says. "There are seats at the kitchen bar, so people can talk to the chefs and watch them cook. If they want anything special or off board, they can discuss and be included in the process."

Rosman and Persky often find themselves behind the bar, mixing drinks and pitching-in.

### What was your first night behind the bar like?

**Mark:** "It was nerve-wracking. I was hired because I had lot of restaurant experience, went to culinary school, could pull a beer and make a martini, but that was the extent. The manager said, 'we'll teach you everything.' I started listening, making, remaking and it all worked out."

### Share a behind the bar secret.

**Mark:** "It's just enjoying your job, your life and understanding what it's all about. We have a very close-knit family atmosphere here as far as everybody is willing to help everybody. A chef and I were talking last night about how, before leaving kitchen, everyone will check to see if anybody else needs help. There's a lot of hugging and high fives and thank yous."

### What do you like most about working behind the bar?

**Mark:** "I like the interaction with people the most. We've been here now for 15 years, and

we have a lot of people who come in that we consider family. I'm interested in seeing those people every week and talking to them. It's a great community here, and it's because of the people here. It's really nice coming from a big city where people come and go – so many of them it becomes a blur. Here you see people over and over and you build relationships that are that much more meaningful. I like to keep that up. Then on other side of it, being a tourist town, it's great to meet new people from all over the world."

### What advice would you give aspiring bartenders?

**Jamie:** "Just be real. There's always something going on, and it's hard. It's a hard job. In our case, every seat is vital to us. People don't come in just to eat, we don't have a television – which is a calculated move – but it makes a huge difference. It's a very social bar, and 95 percent of the people that come in for a drink also eat. I like to say keep your eyes open and don't get stressed out. Make eye contact and put people at ease. That's a big thing. I would say don't try too hard, and don't be slick. You don't need to be tossing bottles around and trying to do tricks. For us it's all about being genuine." ☺

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