

BEHIND THE BAR



Molly Gellar



A Positive Place

Positive Pie 87 South Main Street, Hardwick • (802) 472-7126 • positivepie.com/hardwick

Mixologist Molly Gellar has been made to feel right at home since arriving at Positive Pie in Hardwick a little more than a year ago.

Gellar, 29, found her way to the Northeast from the Rocky Mountain State, where she attended the University of Colorado, Boulder. Upon her arrival to the East Coast, she spent some time working on a farm in Maine, and then followed a close friend to Burlington before landing behind the bar at the South Main Street restaurant. And while it may have been a circuitous route, in the end it was a windfall for the northeastern Vermont establishment.

"She's charismatic and does really well with our local customers," Positive Pie Assistant General Manager Gabrielle Hopkins says. "She can spark a conversation with almost anybody and get them excited about different cocktails or drinks or food that they might not otherwise be interested in."

Positive Pie sees some tourist traffic at its Hardwick location – it's not too far from Stowe and Smuggler's Notch – but it has a strong, year-round clientele made up of locals. And that's what makes the spot feel like home.

"I think having that group of locals is what makes me comfortable here," Gellar says. "I

know families, I know their connections, what they do for work, I know their likes and dislikes. So when I have a full bar of people, getting to know and feel comfortable chatting with them, asking them about their days and families – that's definitely comforting for me."

That same clientele can also surprise Gellar with an occasional unexpected request.

"I had a woman order a Sazerac from me," she says. "It's not odd, but it's a super old-fashioned cocktail. I'd only made one before, many years ago, because it's not something people normally order anymore."

Gellar fell back on her training – which began years ago, ("My mother is also a bartender," she says) – and whipped up the cocktail with just a quick glance at the finer points in the recipe.

What makes your bar program special?

"It's really about being fresh, fun and flavorful. It changes about two to three times a year based on the flavors people would expect in season and any produce that's in season at that time – just making it fun. We just rolled out a new cocktail menu, and it is completely different from summer menu other than we kept one or two cocktails on that are popular. I think the novelty of having new drinks to try, people enjoy that, and something that feels more wintry, people want different flavors in winter than in summer."

What's a unique cocktail you are known for?

"I think right now what we're known for is a cocktail called the Hardwick Mule, which is new on our winter cocktail menu. It uses a local

gin from our town here, Caledonia Spirits' Barr Hill, and we use their Tom Cat Gin, which is barrel aged in bourbon barrels so it has a nice combination between a gin and a bourbon taste. It's a small, local distillery and we like supporting them. We use ginger beer from the Maine Root company, fresh squeezed grapefruit juice and we make a candy grapefruit peel in-house for a garnish which adds something different to it as well."

Share a behind the bar secret.

"The biggest thing, I think, is that I always try to put myself in the shoes of the customer. I take care to make things the same way I would make them for myself. I like to keep in mind that I'm mixing cocktails the way I would want to drink them. I do that and it keeps the quality of everything quite high."

What's your favorite part about working behind the bar?

"What I really like about this bar in particular, is that we have such a small, local community. As someone new to the state, it's been nice getting to know people in this town. In the winter when there are not as many tourists, I can look down bar and know the names of everyone there. It's a nice way to connect with the community." ☺



Hardwick Mule

- 1½ ounces Barr Hill Tomcat Gin
- 1 ounce ginger beer (Positive Pie Hardwick uses Ginger Brew by Maine Root)
- 1½ ounces grapefruit juice
- 1 dash grapefruit bitters
- Candied grapefruit peel for garnish

Fill a mule mug with ice, pour in the Barr Hill Tomcat Gin, ginger beer and grapefruit juice. Add a dash of grapefruit bitters, stir it up and garnish with candied grapefruit.