

# Whatever It Is, It's a Hit for The Drop

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*On the left tray: Bailey's & Roasterie Coffee and Absolut lemondrop martini. On the right tray: Bacardi mojito with lime zest and Gran Marnier-Godiva truffle.*

## BY OWEN MORRIS

Depending on who you talked to at the release party last night, The Drop's new liquor concoctions are either really fancy Jell-O shots, the next big thing in avant-garde bartending or a proprietary secret. Perhaps all three. Trying to label them as a shot, a drink, or a solid does not suffice. The Drops, as they are called, are unlike any liquor vehicle I've ever tasted.

That news should make The Drop owner Eddie Crane very happy. Crane, who in addition to the Martini Corner bar also owns Blanc Burgers + Bottles, has been working ten months to make sure the Drops would be in a category by themselves. They are his baby and like most new parents, his expression last night was a combination of relief and anxiety. As he explained, the road to the release party was a strange one.

"I wanted to think of alcohol extraneous to a beverage. My inspiration was the American pothead. Marijuana is not something they just smoke. It's THC, brownies and trying to find different ways to consume it ... so I tried to think of a way to make alcohol into a solid. I turned to liquid nitrogen. I made chocolate martini dippin' dots, cosmopolitan sorbets that you could spoon, but the idea was very unpractical. Too expensive and hard to use. I was like, There's got to be some way."

Crane had an epiphany while watching the Discovery Channel's *MythBusters* in October. By the next day, he had created the first Drop: a Bacardi mojito with lime zest. Getting the mojito right on the first try gave him the enthusiasm to pursue the idea even if the other flavors were a much bigger struggle. Chef Kristen Montgomery says that trial and error meant several Drops such as a bananas foster and a sparking grape syrah did not make the final list.

Six Drops flavors did. In addition to the Bacardi mojito, I tried an amaretto Di Saronno with shaved almond and a Bailey's & Roasterie Coffee. The crunchiness of the almonds with the smooth amaretto texture felt odd in my mouth and rather off-putting. But party attendee Leo Dickson disagreed and thought the almonds and amaretto perfectly accompanied each other. As for the Bailey's & Roasterie, there was no arguing with Katie Griffin, who declared it "absolutely incredible."

The majority of last night's partiers didn't seem to care about the flavors themselves so much as supporting the cutting-edge. Crane has spent a lot of money and time perfecting these Drops and the turnout showed an appreciation for that.

For those tempted to think this was just some Midwest yokels getting excited about nothing, Crane had these parting words: "It used to be everything moved in from the coasts but not anymore. With technology, I can see what somebody is doing in Spain and be doing it the next day. There's no barrier anymore. When I had this idea back in October and looked into it, I found only one other place that was thinking about things like this."

Judging from Crane's success last night, expect followers soon.