

*GOOD & CHEAP | The Drop Bar and Bistro*

## **A drop of deliciousness**

**New Martini Corner spot has great salads and panini, but bruschetta is the star of the show.**

By LAUREN CHAPIN  
The Kansas City Star



A different concept has moved into the space that didn't fly in Martini Corner, that swank corner of bars and restaurants at 31st and Gillham.

The Drop Bar and Bistro opened in mid-October where the Buddha Bar once held court. Besides serving an inspired menu of cocktails, the Drop serves some terrific food.

Eddie Crane and Ernesto Peralta, former bartenders at the Capital Grille, are partners in the Drop. Chef Josh Eans, who most recently was at 40 Sardines and at Seeger's Restaurant in Atlanta before that, has a short menu of starters: salads, paninis and bruschetta platters.

I checked out the Drop during a lunch, when my dining companion and I were the only ones there. I tried two of the four salads: the arugula citrus and the Wedge. Both were yummy.

The arugula, just a smidge overdressed with a bright, citrus basil vinaigrette, was prettied up with fennel, orange and grapefruit segments and toasted pine nuts.

The Wedge was an upscale version of a traditional steakhouse salad. Instead of bacon, this one had crispy fried pancetta slices, and instead of fresh tomatoes, this Wedge was served with oven-dried tomatoes that had been steeped in olive oil.

The Roma panini was a light, summery sandwich of Roma tomatoes, smoked mozzarella, torn basil and basil pesto pressed between two slices of thin, crispy focaccia. It had just the right amount of filling, giving the sandwich balance and heft.

The most fun thing to eat was the bruschetta, a great deal for two or three to share. Customers pick four of nine toppings. I chose marinated white bean; goat cheese, fig and pistachios; roast beef and Gorgonzola; and salami and peppadew.

Eans grilled thick slices of bruschetta, layered on the toppings and cut each slice into four. In total, my order came with 16 generous pieces, a great and economical appetizer or snack for two or more people.

The toppings were all good fun: compatible flavors, filling and satisfying. The white bean was scented with truffle oil and flavored with lemon zest, and the roast beef was topped with pickled red onion. The salami and peppadew one gave me a spicy buzz. Peppadews, a cheery red South African pepper that is both sweet and spicy, are new to Kansas City; the Drop is one of the few local restaurants I've seen incorporating them on menus. They're pickled in brine because they're not imported fresh; Eans simply draped them over slices of salami. But my favorite was the goat cheese, fig and pistachio nut. I ate it last, sort of like a dessert.

The Drop does sweets, too, including a fluffer-nutter panini, a chocolate panini and fresh-baked cookies served with a cold glass of milk. The chocolate panini was a ciabattina filled with Nutella, sliced bananas and fleur de sel griddled until the chocolate oozed and the bananas softened. It was as good as it sounds.

With Eans', Crane's and Peralta's resumes, I expect the Drop is here to stay.

The Drop Bar and Bistro: 409 E. 31st St., (816) 756-DROP, thedropbar.com. Hours: 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Monday through Friday, 5 p.m. to 1 a.m. Saturday and 5 to midnight Sunday.

---

**menu sampler**

roma panini | **\$8**

arugula citrus salad | **\$7**

bruschetta sampler | **\$12**

chocolate panini | **\$4**