

## OPENINGS

# First Look: The Interval Bar & Long Now Salon

BY VIRGINIA MILLER | JUNE 11, 2014



The Interval opens Sunday, June 15, right next door to Greens in Fort Mason. By day, it's a cafe, serving Sightglass coffee and Samovar tea, and workspace and museum for the Long Now Foundation, a leading nonprofit in the world of thought and long-term thinking. By night, it's a bar and salon, aiming to stimulate discussion and community and helmed by bar manager Jennifer Colliau (Slanted Door Group, Small Hand Foods). Beside drinks with a historic and futuristic context, another exciting part of the project coming soon is limited-edition gin and whiskey barrels distilled by

St. George Spirits and Lance Winters, who is also involved in the project.

You feel intellectually stimulated just walking into the space. High ceilings are lined with the essential books needed "to restart civilization" — eventually to exceed 3,000 — and a twisty staircase. The Foundation's much-discussed, Swiss-designed chalkboard robots will soon be assembled, able to write on a large chalkboard hanging next to the bar with another to assist behind the bar(!). Morphing light artwork behind the bar changes slowly, so that it's never the same configuration twice. You'll find seats at the bar, a communal table and two high-backed booths, as well as an intimate, booth-lined room gazing out across the Bay at Golden Gate Bridge.

We snagged a first taste of some of Colliau's thoughtful drink creations, grouped into eight sections of about five-six cocktails each, including an entire martini menu, a menu of variations on the Brooklyn (a whiskey-based classic drink made with dry vermouth and maraschino), a teetotaling/temperate menu with nonalcoholic offerings, and more, outlined in our slide show below. The museum and cafe is open daily from 10 AM-5 PM. Bar hours run 5 PM-12 AM. 2 Marina Blvd, Fort Mason Building

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The first section of the menu, **Welcome Drinks**, lists ready-to-serve, bottled and draft cocktails. There's a carbonated gin and tonic (using Colliau's Small Hand Foods Tonic Syrup), a Tom Collins on draft and, pictured here, a Decanted Mother-in-Law. This classic recipe is bottled and chilled, served in various portion sizes, and it packs a bracing punch. Combining Four Roses bourbon, Luxardo maraschino liqueur, Cointreau, Amer Picon (a bittersweet French apéritif with a unique orange flavor) and Angostura and Peychaud's bitters with a bit of filtered water, the drink is decanted



allowing the orange to open up with bitter layers alongside sweetness and oak from the bourbon.



A genius section is **Drinkin Around the World**, which honors drinking traditions from various countries. We love ponche de granada, a tradition all over Mexico of aging fresh pomegranate juice and sugar with either

tequila or mezcal, typically served room temperature with spiced pecans. Colliau has been aging her ponche since December, and it is spiced, soft and lovely. She will continue to age portions at varying lengths of time so that eventually there can be vertical tastings comparing what age does to the drink. Here, it is served in clay cups custom made by Atelier Dion in Oakland alongside spiced pecans from Greens next door.



Another tradition from the **Drinking Around the World** section, this one comes from Belgium and Holland. *Kopstootje* (pronounced kop-stow-ch meaning "little head butt") is a tradition of drinking an overflowing shot genever (the predecessor to gin with a malt base) in a tulip glass, while bending over and slurping from the shot glass. Typically, you then toast sip and follow with a beer. Colliau uses Belgian genever, Diep 9, adhering to a tradition of partnering the genever with raisins soaked in brandy and spices — here it's boozy, golden raisins, happily keeping pace with the

genever's botanicals and grain notes.

Here's the bar, where Colliau and crew welcome customers with an array of cocktails. Interesting note: Colliau stirs cocktails with a thermometer, ensuring the best chilled temperature with each drink.



The view, gazing at the bar and stairwell from the back booth.



Colliau's La Floridita daiquiri menu tributes the famous bar in Havana, Cuba, Ernest Hemingway's beloved hangout. All five of the historic, classic versions of a daiquiri are represented, each using differing rums to attempt to match original flavor profiles from Cuban rums as best as possible. We tried the # 2, a lush, gorgeous version using Pampero Rum. The rum's toffee, chocolate and spice notes are illuminated by lemon, orange and Cointreau, instead of lime and sugar.



Walls of books and a twisting staircase gaze down over the bar.



One of our favorite drinks one of the (seemingly) most simple. Under the **Welcome Cocktails** menu section is the Plymouth Gin Navy Strength gimlet. Colliau combines her lime oleo-saccharum (essentially

simple syrup infused with lime zest's essential oils) with fresh lime juice to create the classic profile a gimlet was meant to have when it was typically mixed with gin and lime cordial. It's a bright refresher that shows off what a gimlet was meant to be.

Two mini booths lead to a large booth in an intimate back room with million-dollar views gazing out across the water at the Golden Gate Bridge.



Constantly changing art behind the bar is never the same image twice.

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**PLACES MENTIONED**



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4.5	4.5	4.3
FOOD	DECOR	SERVICE