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Specialties of the House

By A.K. Carroll



Papa Taught Me (with limoncello vodka, pisco and elderflower) Photos A.K. Carroll

house wines and \$3 bottled beers, with two widely-distributed brands and a rotating local third that might be Anchor Steam one week and Lagunitas the next. Though the discounted drink menu offers a little something for everyone, you may be tempted to turn to the full list of cocktails, where you'll find familiar favorites and innovative newcomers, ranging from fruity and floral to boozy and complex.

Scaled down to a modest 8-10 items, there's nothing skimpy or sparse about the appetizer options on The Park's happy hour menu, any of which can stand up beside your favorite beverage. A \$3 chef's slider (mine was swordfish topped with pickled fennel and carrots) paired with a right-sized three-ounce shooter of the soup du jour is more than a tiny taster; it's a satisfying snack that will give you some idea of what may be in store should you choose to stay for dinner. Other happy hour eating options include sweet potato fries, blistered peppers, marinated olives, togarashi popcorn and crispy chicken skewers.

Whether you're out on the patio nursing a cocktail and browsing the web, up on a brass-studded bar stool rehashing the latest office drama over a martini, or snuggly sinking into an armchair, sipping swallows of a soup shooter, you're sure to find a selection to compliment any occasion for happy hour at The Park Bistro and Bar. Step out and step up your evening with a little hint of luxury.

When: 4:30-6 pm, Monday-Friday

This week, in the Hunt for Happy Hour, we visit The Park Bistro and Bar for a rebooted sampling of the best this boutique bistro has to offer.

A rustic bistro with a contemporary twist, the sleek leather seats, outdoor fire pits, high-topped tables and cozy stone fireplace of this bar and lounge create an atmosphere that is classic and relaxed, providing a sophisticated space that invites visitors to feel at home and allows locals the luxury of a vacation. Both the food and beverage offerings of the happy hour menu represent the quality and character of the entire selection and are prepared with the same attention to detail that you'll find throughout the menu.

After 25 years, The Park has brought in fresh blood in the form of bar manager Kyle Tran. Formerly of The Aviary in Chicago, Tran plans to shake things up, curating an ever-evolving cocktail menu that blends tradition and innovation in its flavors, technique, ingredients and execution; expansive enough to appeal broadly. Seasonal sangria goes for \$6 a glass and is made with red or white wine and a fresh selection of fruits. New to the menu are novel sipping options in the form of bottled cocktails, made and bottled in house and ranging from a grapefruit and tequila Paloma to an orange-infused vodka cream soda. At \$8 a bottle, they're a little something special, allowing you to pop the top to refreshment after a long Indian summer day. Happy hour specials also include \$5

Where: Lafayette Park Hotel, 3287 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette

Drinks: \$8 bottled cocktails, \$5 house wine, \$3 bottled beer

Food: \$3-5 appetizers

Recommended: Daily Slider and Soup Shooter, bottled Paloma



Heads or Tails (with banana, allspice and rum)



A grilled swordfish slider with pickled fennel and carrot and a soup shooter with Brentwood roasted sweet corn with bacon

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