

Home-Cooked Cocktails

At Billy Sunday in Chicago, Stephanie Andrews sparks joy, one drink at a time

For Chicago native Stephanie Andrews, hospitality comes naturally. “I’ve wanted to work in a kitchen since 5th grade,” she says, noting that she often made meals from her mother’s Betty Crocker cookbook with a friend. “I loved the happiness it brought to my family and friends when we cooked them something delicious. My desire to recreate those feelings has only gotten stronger.”

After working as a line cook during and after college, Andrews’ interests turned to cocktails, and she landed a job at The Aviary in January 2012, training under bar manager Micah Melton. During this time, she enjoyed many a post-shift drink at the bar Billy Sunday. “It was a favorite watering hole of mine—the vibe, food, cocktails, and barkeeps were unmatched in the city,” she says. She got friendly enough with the staff that when the bar was hiring a few years later, the manager asked if she’d be interested in a bartending position. “I nervously and excitedly said yes, and the rest is history,” she says.

That was in June 2015, and since then Andrews has moved up to beverage director and come into her own as a cocktail creator—though she remains humble. “I’m still learning constantly from my team and everything I get to work with on a daily basis,” she says. And there’s plenty to work with at Billy



At Billy Sunday in Chicago, beverage director Stephanie Andrews crafts cocktails with a focus on vintage spirits like aged amaro.

Sunday, which specializes in vintage spirits, particularly amaro. “We have the largest amaro collection in the country, with bottles that date back to the 1930s,” Andrews explains. “I love learning and telling the stories of these vintage spirits—it’s like tasting a piece of history.”

Billy Sunday’s cocktails (\$11-\$14) include twists on classic builds, plus unique seasonal offerings, with plenty of amaro throughout. Andrews’ Amaro Daiquiri (\$13) comprises Braulio and Sfumato Rabarbaro amari, lime juice, and house-made gomme syrup, while her Finnish First (\$13) features Kyrö Koskue gin, Cardamaro Vino amaro, Eden Heirloom Blend ice cider, St. George Pear brandy, and dried black trumpet mushrooms. “I love making ingredient-driven drinks,” she says. “There’s nothing better

than pairing an in-season fruit or vegetable with a spirit and watching it sing.”

Andrews’ background in the kitchen is apparent in her cocktails—and her desire to recreate happy memories of serving meals to her loved ones has translated well to her current role. “The best part of my job is the look of joy on a guest’s face after their first sip that says that cocktail is exactly what they needed.”

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Sally Kral

PHOTO BY (TOP) ANNA NAPHTALI

Stephanie Andrews’ Recipes



AMARO DAIQUIRI

INGREDIENTS:

1 ounce Braulio amaro;
1 ounce Sfumato Rabarbaro amaro;
¾ ounce lime juice;
½ ounce gomme syrup¹;
Dehydrated lime wheel.

RECIPE:

In a cocktail shaker, combine amari, juice, and syrup. Add ice and hard shake. Double strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with a dehydrated lime wheel.



FINNISH FIRST

INGREDIENTS:

1½ ounces Kyrö Koskue gin;
¾ ounce Cardamaro Vino amaro;
½ ounce Eden Heirloom Blend ice cider;
¼ ounce St. George Pear brandy;
½ ounce dried black trumpet mushrooms;
Preserved rye grass.

RECIPE:

In an ice-filled mixing glass, combine gin, amaro, cider, brandy, and mushrooms. Stir to chill slightly, then strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with preserved rye grass.

¹Combine 32 ounces water and 2 tablespoons gum arabic in a pot, whisking constantly. Bring mixture to a boil, then add 6 cups sugar, whisking vigorously. Turn off heat and let sit for 20 minutes to cool. Store in a non-reactive container for up to 1 month.