

# Bring It On Home

Jacyara de Oliveira returns to Chicago with El Che Bar and La Sirena Clandestina

**B**orn and raised in Chicago, Jacyara de Oliveira dove into the world of bartending early. “I have a tendency to lean in hard to new things and working in bars was no different,” she says. “At 21, I landed a job at the best bar in the city—The Drawing Room—working with some of the best bartenders in the world. I decided then and there that I was going to continue down this career path.”

Since starting out as a barback at The Drawing Room in 2010, de Oliveira has made a name for herself. As part of the opening team for Chicago’s acclaimed Sportsman’s Club, she managed the bar while racking up accolades—including Miss Speed Rack Chicago, a “Rising Star Mixologist” recognition from Food & Wine, and a Jean Banchet Award for Best Mixologist. But in 2016, she made a big change, leaving her hometown to embark on a cross-country bicycle tour from New York City to Seattle, where she landed a bartending gig at Rob Roy and went on to become Miss Speed Rack Northwest in 2017.

Despite settling in to Seattle well, Chicago kept calling her name. “I couldn’t shake the feeling that I was in the wrong place,” she says. And so in November 2017, she returned to the Windy City to work with John and Nicole Manion, the husband-and-wife team behind El Che Bar and La Sirena Clandestina. “I’ve always enjoyed these bars because of the focus on



At El Che Bar and La Sirena Clandestina, bartender Jacyara de Oliveira pays homage to South American drinking culture.

the drinking culture of South America,” de Oliveira says, noting how much she enjoys working with international spirits.

In de Oliveira’s new position, she manages two similar but distinct bar programs. “Both include a focus on Latin spirits and Italian bitters, a particular characteristic of the Argentine and Southern Brazilian culinary tradition,” she says. “La Sirena focuses mostly on the spirits, while El Che focuses on the bitters.”

Both programs are well within de Oliveira’s bartending style, which favors slightly bitter, but ultimately refreshing cocktails. “I try to build drinks that people can enjoy without exhausting their palates,” she explains. The venues feature complex, layered drinks with tropical flair in the

\$8-\$14 range. At El Che Bar, the Empress of Mars (\$13) blends Yzaguirre Blanco vermouth, El Buho mezcal, Pernod absinthe, house-made rosemary syrup, lime juice, Bar Keep Lavender bitters, and Fever-Tree tonic water, while at La Sirena Clandestina the Tree Pose (\$13) comprises Leblon cachaça, Small Hand Foods Pineapple Gum syrup, Chareau aloe vera liqueur, Hamilton’s Pimento Dram liqueur, and tomatillo and lime juices.

“These venues are dedicated to paying respect to their places and cultures of origin,” de Oliveira says. “I can’t imagine a more beautiful way to do that than by raising a glass.”



Sally Kral

## Jacyara de Oliveira’s Recipes

### TREE POSE



**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1½ ounces Leblon cachaça;
- ¼ ounce Chareau aloe vera liqueur;
- ¼ ounce Hamilton’s Pimento Dram liqueur;
- ½ ounce Small Hand Foods Pineapple Gum syrup;
- 1 ounce tomatillo juice;
- ½ ounce lime juice;
- Bunch fresh cilantro.

**RECIPE:**

Combine cachaça, liqueurs, syrup, and juices in a rocks glass over crushed ice. Swizzle lightly to chill and combine, and top with more crushed ice. Garnish with fresh cilantro.



### EMPRESS OF MARS

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1½ ounces Yzaguirre Blanco vermouth;
- 1 ounce El Buho mezcal;
- 3 dashes Pernod absinthe;
- ¾ ounce lime juice;
- ½ ounce rosemary syrup<sup>1</sup>;
- Dash Bar Keep Lavender bitters;
- 3 ounces Fever-Tree tonic water;
- Rosemary sprig.

**RECIPE:**

Combine vermouth, mezcal, absinthe, lime juice, syrup, and bitters in a cocktail shaker with ice. Quickly shake to chill and combine ingredients. Strain into a Collins glass over fresh ice and top with tonic water. Garnish with a rosemary sprig.

<sup>1</sup>Combine equal parts water and sugar in a saucepan. Add 1-3 sprigs of fresh rosemary that have been charred by a lighter flame. Heat the ingredients over medium and stir until dissolved. By the time the edges start to simmer, the liquid should be completely clear, not cloudy. Immediately remove from heat and strain.