

# A Big Easy Institution

At Brennan's in New Orleans, Lu Brow brings contemporary touches to classic cocktails

The famed French Quarter restaurant Brennan's is an integral part of New Orleans' culinary and cocktail legacy. Founded in 1946 by Owen Brennan, the venue is known for its classic Creole cuisine, tableside presentations, and extravagant multi-course breakfast, and is credited with inventing Bananas Foster and the Bloody Bull cocktail. Brennan's has remained family-owned over the years, and was purchased out of bankruptcy in 2013 by Ralph Brennan—Owen's nephew—and his business partner Terry White. Following renovations, Brennan's reopened in 2014, with much of what made it an institution—including its signature bright pink façade—kept intact, though new style elements were added throughout the interior to achieve a classic-meets-contemporary feel.

"When I learned that Brennan's would be experiencing a rebirth and remodel with the Ralph Brennan Restaurant Group, I knew it was time for a new chapter," says Lu Brow, who was a hospitality veteran at that point, having worked for the Commander's Palace restaurants for more than 13 years. She leapt at the chance to work at Brennan's and has served as lead bartender ever since. "I have so much respect for what the Brennan family name represents in this city," she says. "It's been an honor to be part of a new era in the restaurant's history."



At New Orleans restaurant Brennan's, hospitality veteran Lu Brow takes an innovative approach to classic cocktails.

Cocktails (\$12-\$24) at Brennan's feature traditional recipes—including different variations on the Sazerac, a New Orleans classic—as well as seasonal selections. "Our beverage program is classically focused, but with the vibrant reopening there came an opportunity to bring an innovative approach to some of the cocktails," Brow says. "Brennan's also tends to attract a celebratory crowd, so it's my goal to help guests toast to any occasion with an exciting and memorable cocktail." Her NOLA-groni (\$15) is a take on the classic Negroni, comprising the locally produced Euphrosine #9 gin, Peychaud's aperitif, and Plymouth Sloe gin. Her No Thyme For Puns (\$13), meanwhile, mixes El Jimador Silver Tequila, lime juice, and a house-made thyme orange syrup. "I've found there's nothing better than the aroma

and beauty of a fresh herb to complement a cocktail—it's become a signature component in many of my drinks," Brow adds.

Though she's been in the hospitality business for more than 25 years, Brow is still inspired daily by the legacy of Brennan's and the family behind it, noting, "Not only is it one of the greatest families associated with hospitality, but the Brennans have also been an incredible agent for positive change and progress in New Orleans."



Sally Kral

## Lu Brow's Recipes



### Nola-Groni

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 ounce Euphrosine #9 gin;
- 1 ounce Peychaud's aperitif;
- ½ ounce Plymouth Sloe gin;
- 1 large orange peel swath.

**RECIPE:**

Twist orange peel over a large double rocks glass. Rub peel inside glass to distribute oil and drop in glass. Then, combine gins and aperitif in the glass. Add ice and stir well.



### No Thyme For Puns

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 2 ounces El Jimador Silver Tequila;
- ¾ ounce lime juice;
- 1 ounce thyme orange syrup<sup>1</sup>;
- Half an orange wheel;
- Thyme sprig.

**RECIPE:**

In an ice-filled shaker, combine Tequila, lime juice, and syrup. Shake well, then pour into a large rocks glass. Garnish with half an orange wheel and a thyme sprig.

<sup>1</sup>Fill a plastic container with 1 cup granulated sugar and 1 cup very hot water, and stir well. Add half an orange, thinly sliced, and ½ cup fresh thyme, and stir again. Allow ingredients to steep for approximately 30 minutes. Strain well and keep refrigerated.