

# Culinary Cues

At Columbia Room in Washington, D.C., JP Fetherston seeks inspiration from the kitchen

JP Fetherston has been on the team at Columbia Room, the Washington, D.C. venue owned by bartender and restaurateur Derek Brown, since it opened in 2010 as a ten-seat room in the back of Brown's other bar, The Passenger. In 2015, The Passenger closed and Columbia Room moved a few blocks away. In its current digs, Columbia Room features three distinct spaces: The Tasting Room, Spirits Library, and Punch Garden. As partner and beverage director for Drink Co.—the hospitality group that owns Columbia Room—Fetherston oversees cocktail creation for all three spaces. The Tasting Room offers a 4-course menu (\$85) that pairs cocktails with dishes created by head chef Johnny Spero. For a course of Cape gooseberries, tomato, sugar-cured cucumbers, and elderflower, Fetherston pairs his Flavor Spectrum Cocktail, comprising Cappelletti Pasubio Vino amaro, Tempus Fugit Gran Classico bitter liqueur, acidified orange juice, rich simple syrup, and house-made salted matsutake mushroom tincture.

“My cocktail style aligns closely with the overriding focus of Columbia Room,” Fetherston says. “We emphasize classic recipes and proportions, but we’ve evolved to utilize techniques and ingredients that have more of a culinary bent.”



JP Fetherston (above) utilizes culinary techniques when creating cocktails at Columbia Room in Washington, D.C.

The Spirits Library is a more straightforward cocktail bar, offering an extensive spirits list and an à la carte drinks menu of Featured Cocktails (\$14-\$16), Highballs (\$15-\$17), and Old Fashioneds (\$15-\$16). Fetherston's Marsh Market Cooler (\$15), one of the bar's Featured Cocktails, blends heirloom tomato-infused Fords gin, Mancino Secco vermouth, fresh Granny Smith apple juice, rich simple syrup, house-made horseradish tincture, and Bittermens Orchard Street Celery Shrub. The Punch Garden, meanwhile, is a year-round covered outdoor space, where punches and pre-batched cocktails (\$14-\$16) are served in a more informal setting.

Columbia Room earned the recognition of Best American Cocktail Bar at the 2017 Tales of the Cocktail Spirited Awards, and it has been deemed the best cocktail bar in D.C. by several publications. “We live in a remarkable time for cocktails and cocktail bars, but Columbia Room is able to elevate itself because of our unique service,” Fetherston says. “The element of thoughtfulness in our service and our menus allows me to create and learn.” **mw**

Sally Kral

## JP Fetherston's Recipes



### Flavor Spectrum Cocktail

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1½ ounces Cappelletti Pasubio Vino amaro;
- ¾ ounce Tempus Fugit Gran Classico bitter liqueur;
- 1½ ounces acidified orange juice<sup>1</sup>;
- ¼ ounce rich simple syrup;
- 2 droppers salted matsutake tincture<sup>2</sup>.

**RECIPE:**

Combine amaro, liqueur, juice, syrup, and tincture in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake and double-strain into a Korin tea cup.



### Marsh Market Cooler

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1½ ounces heirloom tomato-infused Fords gin<sup>3</sup>;
- 1 ounce Mancino Secco vermouth;
- 3 ounces fresh Granny Smith apple juice;
- ¼ ounce rich simple syrup;
- 2 droppers horseradish tincture<sup>4</sup>;
- 2 droppers Bittermens Orchard Street Celery Shrub;
- 2 cherry tomatoes.

**RECIPE:**

Combine gin, vermouth, juice syrup, tincture, and shrub in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake and double strain into a highball glass over fresh ice. Garnish with two cherry tomatoes on a cocktail pick.

<sup>1</sup>Blend together 95 parts fresh squeezed orange juice, 2½ parts citric acid powder, and 2½ parts ascorbic acid powder.

<sup>2</sup>Combine 4½ grams dried matsutake mushrooms with 6 ounces Everclear and macerate for 1 week in a sealed container. Strain solids, then add 6 ounces water to proof the tincture. Combine tincture with a 10% salt solution at a ratio of 12:1 matsutake to salt.

<sup>3</sup>Combine 1 liter Fords gin with 200 grams heirloom tomatoes, roughly chopped and with excess liquid removed. Macerate for a minimum of 2 days in a sealed container, then strain solids.

<sup>4</sup>Combine 25 grams freshly grated horseradish root with 6 ounces Everclear and macerate for 1 week in a sealed container. Strain solids, then add 6 ounces water to proof.