



Drinks All Around

BY AMANDA
TASCHER

ERICK ZENTENO
Gaslamp Breakfast Company
551 J Street
Gaslamp



The pink is kind of our signature color here," says Gaslamp Breakfast Company's bartender Erick Zenteno. One glance at the restaurant's perky pink decor and bright neon signage overhanging the bar proves his point. He proceeds to serve up a popular brunch-time cocktail called Pinkies Up, a double-meaning name. "Obviously, the color, we knew it was going to be pink. And then it's just a

fun concept — drinking with your pinkies up!"

Zenteno tells me how they created a new cocktail menu to help give the location its own identity. "When we first opened the restaurant, we had the exact same menu as the other Breakfast Company that's in North Park. But once we opened, we saw what the culture was here — very fun, casual and outgoing. We wanted the cocktail menu to match the vibe, so we started switching it up with the drinks."

Pinkies Up may be their most ingredient-rich cocktail. "We start with muddled raspberries; we have the X-Rated, the orgeat, little bit of lemon juice — not too much — vodka, and champagne." He teaches me how to pronounce "orgeat" (or-zhaat), which is an almond liqueur. "Just a little bit of that goes a long way, so we don't put too much, but just enough to get that flavor. Sometimes when you make a drink with too much stuff, it's just overwhelming. So we made sure it was the perfect amount of everything in there."

The pop of color comes partially from passionfruit-flavored X-Rated Fusion liqueur, plus the muddled raspberries which add textural notes. The thistle glass is even

rimmed with sugar, to go with your morning coffee. "It goes well with anything you're going to want to order on the menu. And if you have one, and you're going to keep drinking them."

He explains what inspired the recipe, "We wanted to have a cocktail for every type of spirit — so this is vodka. Everyone has a preference in their alcohol. And they all can have a fun drink." Vodka-phobes may be surprised and delighted. "I've had people who are tequila drinkers, or whiskey drinkers, who don't really like vodka too much but they want to try it how it is. And they get it as-is, and they love it."

He suggests trying Pinkies Up "over a glass of champagne that you can get anywhere else. Champagne is great..." he says, treading quietly in front of the brunch crowd. "But we also have the champagne in [this drink], so you're still getting it!"

In conclusion, Zenteno says, "I think the combination of everything that's in this drink is something that you've probably never seen anywhere else. Especially adding the champagne to the top. I don't think anyone would think vodka and champagne would go together!"

GASLAMP BREAKFAST COMPANY'S PINKIES UP



- 1 oz. vodka
- ¾ oz. X-Rated Fusion
- ¼ oz. lemon juice
- ¼ oz. orgeat almond syrup
- 1 pump strawberry syrup
- Muddled raspberry
- 3 oz. brut Champagne

Rim glass with sugar. Add raspberries, orgeat almond syrup, and strawberry syrup to shaker tin and muddle five times. Add X-Rated, vodka, and lime juice. Fill shaker tin with ice, shake and dump into thistle glass. Top with brut Champagne.

San Diego Reader features Gaslamp Breakfast Company

8.19.21