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NOVEMBER 6, 2019 • SDCITYBEAT.COM • FREE



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IS 'AWESOME'**

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SORRENTO VALLEY

Drinks to This

The Nolen's facelift includes new drinks and small bites

By Mary Pat Abruzzo

When the Courtyard San Diego Gaslamp Hotel and Basile Studio discussed renovations to The Nolen rooftop bar, it considered one thing.

"The biggest motive for both us and on behalf of ownership is never take ourselves for granted," says Tim Billing, Azul Hospitality Group's regional vice president.

"We have this stunning venue, great atmosphere and such loyal followers. We're always making ourselves current and not taking the venue for granted."

The hotel's 14th floor now features a redesign courtesy Paul Basile of Basile Studio. The Nolen complements its new space with a refresh of its

cocktail and small bites menu.

"The space and food and beverage are raising the bar on a city staple to an entirely new level," Billing says.

Basile Studio is one of San Diego's most prolific and high-profile design firms, changing up San Diego's restaurant scene with a portfolio of restaurant projects like Raised by Wolves, Morning Glory and Ironside Fish & Oyster. Basile Studio injected The Nolen space with a mid-century art deco style to elevate its design. It also expanded "edge" seating to allow more guests to enjoy the views of the San Diego skyline and waterfront. That included custom furniture to allow comfort while taking in the views.

The cocktail and small bites menus were refreshed, although The Nolen



Top: The Nolen complements its new look with a revamping of its menu. **Bottom:** Crab cakes benedict. (Photos by Haley Hill Photography)

continually revamps its drink menu, which offers local small-batch spirits and a barrel-aged cocktail program using unique blends of hard-to-find spirits aged in American oak barrels. The drinks are created in-house by its bartending team and the result is an innovative cocktail menu that respects the classics.

The Sweater Weather—a smooth mix of vodka, pumpkin spice simple, Borghetti and almond milk—



is a customer favorite. Masaya is a fall hit as well, with reposado tequila, habanero honey, yellow chartreuse and pamplemousse liqueur.

New bites can be paired with the cocktails. The Nolen's menu includes decadent items like homemade four-cheese

mac and cheese and light items such as heirloom tomato and burrata.

Even with a total reimagination, Billing ensured The Nolen will keep its original charm. The Nolen is an attractive spot for visitors to San Diego, but it has collected a loyal following of locals as well.

"The atmosphere lends itself to any walk of life. It doesn't matter if you are a Bud Light drinker or a very exotic rare spirit drinker," Billing says.



Top: A bartender creates Sweater Weather, made with vodka, pumpkin spice, espresso liqueur, almond milk, aquafaba and a shaved nutmeg garnish. **Bottom Left:** The Nolen updated its look with a mid-century art deco style. **Bottom Right:** Crab cakes, four-cheese mac, and crab cakes benedict.

The Nolen
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 Gaslamp Hotel
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 Gaslamp District
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