

Scratch and Win

Back-to-back hits with Tour and Magnolia Room



There's something very Indiana Jones-like about speakeasies—trying to find the secret entrance by running your fingers along antique maps, looking for a button to open the door to a 1920s style cocktail lounge. For years, Shanghai's adventure-hungry cocktail enthusiasts have been relishing in this trend. And luckily, it doesn't seem to be going anywhere anytime soon—proven by the recent opening of The Magnolia Room: a bar within a bar, located beneath Tour.

Opened last year in the new United Valley complex, Tour quickly made a name for itself with its edible menu and drinks that come with food (the Negroni comes with a grilled cheese). The Magnolia Room, found by sliding one of Tour's concrete walls, has the same foodie approach, with an equally fun (and gimmicky) menu—presented as a scratch-off lottery ticket. Winners get prizes ranging from a shot of Jameson, a grilled cheese and even a bottle of Chivas 18.

We start off with the refreshing Tier One (¥85), recommended by our friendly bartender. A simple drink of sweet vermouth, bitter Italian liqueur Cynar and soda, it might be our favorite cocktail come summer—especially since it comes with crackers topped with homemade sun-dried tomat

to and feta paste. The Whiskey Sour (¥85) is another drink likely to make it into our regular rotation. Strong, slightly sweet and topped with some of the creamiest, frothy egg whites we've seen, it's almost like dessert. Oh, and it's served with actual dessert—a home-baked lemon tart.

The 12th Ward (¥90) makes use of the bar's large collection of bitters, employing a fragrant walnut variety with bourbon, pulpy orange juice, ginger and soda, and comes with two spoons filled with a tasty citrus feta salad. While we wanted to try all eight of the bar's cocktails, we decided one more was probably enough, and went for the unique PBS (¥90). It's a drink owner Mack Ross says was inspired by hot pot dipping sauces—mixing tequila with peanut butter, Sriracha, sugar and lime. Topped with quail eggs, it's like drinking alcohol infused satay. We dig it.

With all of Tour's gimmicky charm, in a smaller, more intimate setting, we see this being another successful venture for Ross. And a place you'll likely need to get to early to secure a seat. *** Jennifer Stevens**

Find it: E104, 462 Changle Lu (near Shaanxi Nan Lu)
长乐路462号E104 (近陕西南路), Tel: 6075-5821

