



Behind the Stick with Eli Larios of The Rail



Born in Mexico, raised in Los Angeles, and a proud San Diegan since 2007, [Elizabeth "Eli" Larios](#) is a staple at Hillcrest's [The Rail](#). After working her way up from the bottom of the bar over four years from barback to bartender and now to bar manager, Larios is a powerful female presence behind the bar at this nightlife icon. Taking great pride in The Rail's distinguished history as San Diego's oldest LGBT bar, Larios enjoys being a part of the story, representing her community, and being able to help usher the newest version of The Rail into the future while still paying homage to its rich past with unique Prohibition-inspired cocktails and a classic bartending style that focuses on quality and fresh ingredients. On this episode of Behind the Stick, she chats about her start in the industry, her passion for bartending and shows us how to make the e light and refreshing cocktail called Coco Chanel.

Coco Chanel

\$13.50



3 dashes Lavender water

0.25 oz Lime Juice

0.5 oz St-Germaine

1.5 oz Grey Goose Vodka

Topped with soda water and a splash of cranberry

Garnish with a lime peel and maraschino cherry

What's the story behind the Coco Chanel?

When designing the Coco Chanel, we wanted to create a whimsical cocktail that was light and refreshing with floral undertones that could capture the essence of spring in San Diego.

What's the key component of this drink?

The key component to the drink is the addition of Lavender Water as it complements the St. Germaine and provides a delicate balance to the cocktail.

What reactions do you get from customers when they try this cocktail for the first time?

When a customer tries the Coco Chanel for the first time, they are delighted with how refreshing yet flavorful the drink is. The general reaction is to drink one and order another right away! Many people also enjoy watching the cocktail being made as there is a bit of cocktail magic that happens with the addition of the cranberry juice at the last minute.

If you had to pair this cocktail with a dish, what would you pair it with?

The Coco Chanel is tasty on its own but pairs well with a variety of dishes on our food menu. My personal favorite pairing is the Fig and Prosciutto Flatbread with a Coco Chanel.

Watch as Eli makes her refreshing Coco Chanel cocktail.



What kind of experience can guests get at The Rail?

Upon entering The Rail, guests are greeted with a modern take on a 1930's speakeasy. Quality and service are key components and we strive to ensure every customer feels welcome. We aim to provide a relaxed atmosphere where guests are treated like family.

About Eli Larios



Are you from San Diego?

I am originally from Los Angeles.

How has your journey been leading up to your role at The Rail?

My journey at The Rail started with promoting for an event held on Friday nights geared mainly towards women. I eventually was asked to join the staff as a barback and then moved on to bartending when two bartenders, Twan Dallas and Julian Rosado, helped train me for the role. I became hooked on the art behind creating well balanced, classic cocktails. From there, I expanded my knowledge base to incorporate more of a craft cocktail focus.

What's your mission for the cocktail program?

My mission for The Rail's cocktail program is create iconic cocktails that speak to a cocktail enthusiast while helping introduce more craft cocktails to the casual beverage consumer.

What's your favorite cocktail on the menu?

My favorite cocktail on our current menu is The Mint Chip featuring Stillhouse Mint Chip Whiskey. More of a dessert drink or brunch cocktail, it's a sweet blend of Mint Chip Whiskey, Frangelico, Orgeat, and heavy cream. Boozy enough to satisfy any drinker, the lingering flavor of mint tantalizes the taste buds. Try it with our Coffee and Doughnuts during brunch!

Define the perfect cocktail.

The key to a perfect cocktail is balance. From taste and texture to the aromatics and presentation, the perfect cocktail draws someone in and creates a unique experience every time.

What are some cocktail trends you are noticing in San Diego?

I've noticed that San Diego is currently experiencing a revival in certain cocktail trends. Fresh ingredients are becoming more of a staple and a concentrated effort is being made to be more sustainable in crafting cocktails. Another trend that's emerging is a love affair with Mezcal, helped thoroughly by the passionate people behind the brands.

What is one thing you wish people understood about bartending?

Bartending is an art and a skill set. It's so much more than putting some ingredients in a glass. Good bartenders are passionate and strive to make each individual love their drink every time.

What's your favorite drink to make behind the bar?

I love making every cocktail asked of me but my favorite cocktail to make is one that caters to the individual. I love being asked to surprise someone. When given free rein to create something unique for one person, I love being able to tailor tastes and watch the customer's eye light up when trying a cocktail specifically designed with them in mind.

What's your favorite spirit?

My personal favorite spirit is Whiskey. I love the variety and differences available and the subtle nuances in each batching by a brand.

What's next for you?

The next step for me is to absorb as much knowledge as I can. I firmly believe there are endless possibilities with creating beautiful craft cocktails. You may catch me in a couple of bartending competitions pretty soon though!

The Rail



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