



## Cocktail Whisperer

*Abigail Gullo is BACK in New Orleans honoring the culturally rich, cocktail narrative at her new home – loa - the stylish bar at International House*

New Orleans celebrates the art of hospitality like no other city and is thrilled to welcome home a beloved bartender. **Abigail Gullo** is the new Creative Director of the Beverage Program at *loa* — the stylish bar within the **International House** hotel. The bar's atmosphere is a sexy sanctuary to the divine, as well as liquid spirits of New Orleans, and its cocktail program reaches from Sicily to Senegal, Haiti to Habana, and beyond. That's why leading *loa* is an important change for Gullo - who has not only distinguished herself as an accomplished bartending professional but has practiced her craft around the world.

With a colorful French, Croatian, Native American, Sicilian, Italian, Irish, and French Canadian (her internationally famous Charbonneau Way cocktail includes maple syrup) gene pool, Gullo humorously nicknamed herself - "**Port City Mutt.**" A maternal, family relation was Toussaint Charbonneau of Quebec, a voyager and a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, along with wife Sacagawea and son Jean-Baptiste. There is no question, given her heritage, that New Orleans is a natural fit for Gullo, and, importantly, provides purpose for her passion.

Abigail Gullo maintains an enthusiastic national following and plays an integral role in New Orleans' hospitality community. Gullo has been recognized as Bartender of the Year by *Eater New Orleans*, *Tales of the Cocktail*, and the inaugural competition hosted by *Liquor.com* and Heaven Hill Brands. She has also concocted libations on *The Today Show* and *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. Her keen interest in mixed beverages is fueled by deep familial connections to the ritual of spirits – her maternal great-grandfather, Arthur Charbonneau, being an early 20th century bartender at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City, who worked under the legendary Oscar Tschirky. Out of 48 grandchildren, a precocious 7-year-old Gullo was the lone choice to be taught to make a Manhattan by her grandfather, Vincent, Arthur Charbonneau's son. Likewise, her paternal heritage includes grape-growing, wine-making Sicilians.

Abigail's brand of "mixology" combines art, craft, and science, and as a result, cocktails at *loa* go beyond the surface. Bountiful seasonal produce from a year-round growing season and time-honored local traditions advances the bar program to new heights. Gullo celebrates each individual layer influencing this port city. "I look to the Caribbean, Spain, France, Italy, and Africa – the people and places that really shaped this city - as sources of inspiration, ideas and ingredients to make our cocktails really special," she says. Gullo's cocktails maintain the integrity of the ingredients from a classic drink template, but also add distinctive twists and inventive combinations. The cocktails created at *loa* speak to Gullo's ethos as well as to the ethos of the Crescent City. Adding a hint of history, her inventive concoctions are served in delicate vintage glasses that link each sip to New Orleans' storied past.

With an intoxicating laugh and borderline operatic voice, Gullo brims with warm hospitality and an encyclopedic grasp of cocktail customs. She brings uncommon excellence to her craft, ever chasing flavors and stories that bring this legendary city's cocktail culture vividly to life from her unique perspective. "I am enjoying a newfound camaraderie and collaboration with my team at loa," says Gullo.

Well, with one A-lister in the liquid landscape noting, "If anybody has the chops to make her mark in cocktail central, it's Abigail Gullo" - *Twelve Women Who Shaped Cocktail Culture*, one can see her great grandfather's knowing smile as we all look forward to what's next.



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