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## Tiki TNT Opens at the Wharf With Frozen Rum and Cokes in a Can

The cocktail sets the tone for Todd Thrasher's giant Tiki bar and distillery on the Southwest Waterfront

Even in drinking circles, Todd Thrasher is something of a unicorn. The first cocktail he drank, a rum and cola, never made him sick. The absence of a stomach-churning origin story is at least in part to blame for the culmination of the nationally recognized bartender's career thus far, this week's opening of a riverside rum distillery with a three-story Tiki complex on the Southwest Waterfront.

Tiki TNT began accepting customers at the Wharf development this weekend. That meant Thrasher — a three-time semifinalist for James Beard Foundation Outstanding Wine and Spirits Professional at **now-shuttered Restaurant Eve** — and his crew got to work cranking can openers to take the tops of single servings of Coca-Cola.

Thrasher tells Eater over and over that the goal of Tiki TNT is for people to have fun. That message comes through loud and clear on a menu that eschews tumblers of craft cocktails for beheaded cans of Coke spiked with Captain Morgan spiced rum and a brown cola slurpee that would be at home at a 7-Eleven. The idea goes back to Thrasher's first drink, which was actually made with RC Cola.

“Usually the first one you have is a bad experience, but I always liked that,” Thrasher says of the classic mixture.

When he first embarked on the project three years ago, Thrasher wasn't interested in replicating **PX**, the cocktail temple he built up in Alexandria, because many people could only come on special occasions. He wanted Tiki TNT to be absent of pretense.



The “Wet Money” cocktail features Corazon Blanco tequila, vodka, blue Curacao, passion fruit juice, and salt water. | [Rey Lopez/Eater D.C.](#)

A menu influenced by Thrasher’s scuba diving exploits features drinks that come in technicolor. They’re either named in a straightforward manner — a “not cheeky but still Tiki” section features a mai tai, a zombie, and a pina colada — or in with a wink. The “not so classic Tiki cocktails” section contains a drink called, “This Will Make Your Belly Feel Better, I Promise,” which mixes Cruzan Black Strap rum, Branca Menta, mint simple syrup, and mint bitters.

Thrasher tells Eater that as of today, the bar food menu overseen by former Society Fair chef Larry Blevins features every listed item but one, a salmon sandwich designed by buddy Bryan Voltaggio. That will be brought on shortly.

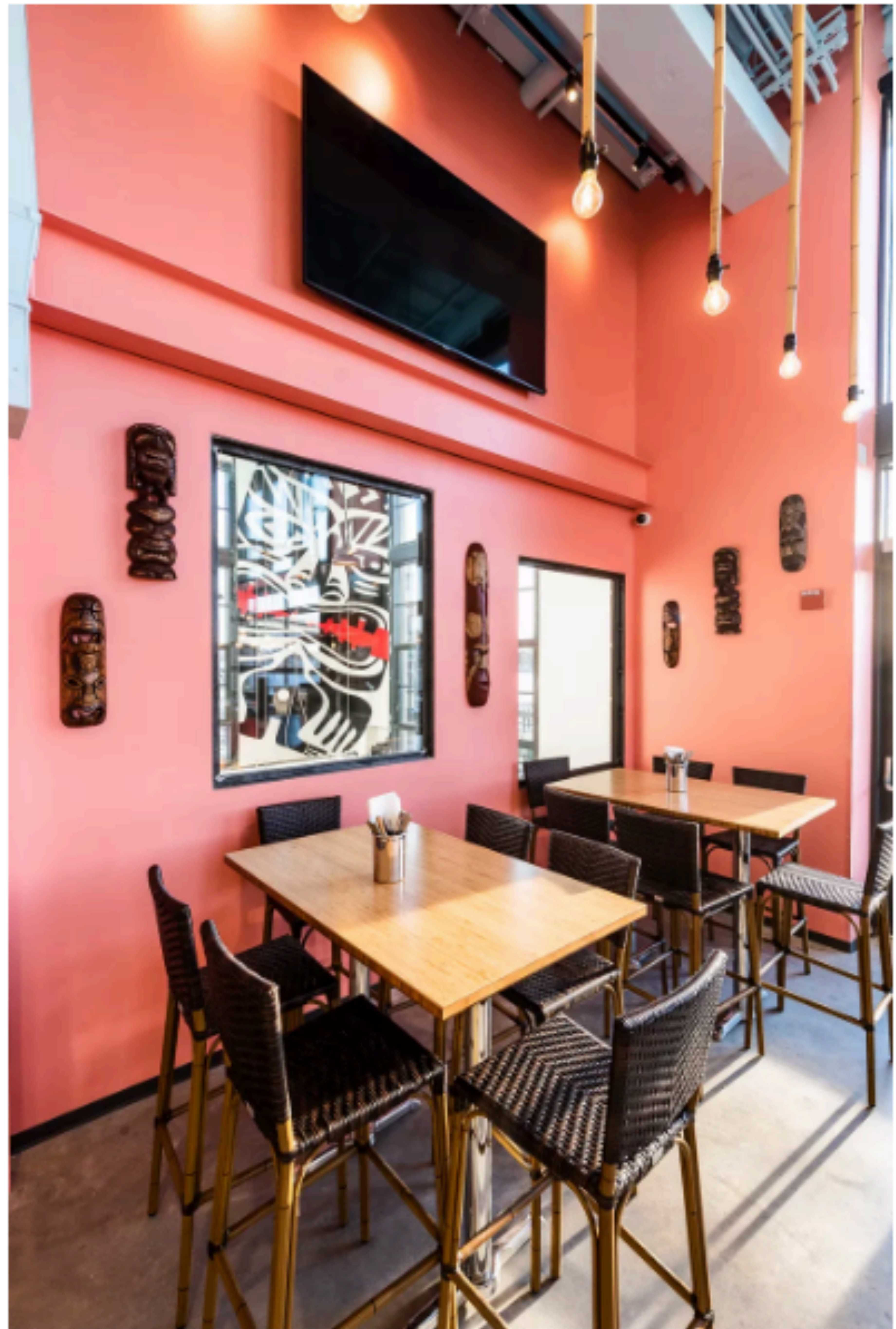
After leading the cocktail program at Erik Bruner-Yang’s Brothers and Sisters in the Line Hotel, Thrasher says he agreed to pitch in at sister bar Spoken English if Bruner-Yang would contribute something to Tiki TNT. So there’s an E.B.Y. chicken that debuted yesterday, when Thrasher finally tracked down a missing piece to a rotisserie cooker. The bird comes with three sauces: dynamite, sweet-and-sour, and green Peruvian style.

Thrasher says his wife also went to Annandale, Virginia, on an emergency mission yesterday, acquiring large quantities of Spam to fill out *musubi* and sandwiches because he had trouble finding a wholesaler. King’s Hawaiian bread is used throughout the menu.





Ahi tuna poke with soy, sesame oil, and nori. | [Rey Lopez/Eater D.C.](#)



Tables at Tiki TNT | [Rey Lopez/Eater D.C.](#)

Bayou Bakery's David Guas — who Thrasher says has “rum in his blood” thanks to Cuban heritage — is providing desserts such as pineapple rum upside down cake and sweet buns that come both with and without rum. The Tiki TNT poi — taro root that gets boiled, peeled, and boiled again before a trip in the food processor — has been a surprise hit, Thrasher says.

Tiki TNT has three bar areas across three stories. Thrasher says he doesn't anticipate opening the rooftop deck until the weather gets warmer in the spring.

The barman tells Eater that the most ambitious part of the building, his Potomac Distilling Company, is awaiting one final inspection on Friday, December 14, before he can start making his own brand of Thrasher's Rum. White rum takes about five days to produce, he says. He'll designate one barrel per week for a 3-year aging process in three different barrels: new oak, bourbon barrels, and red wine barrels.

Until Thrasher's Rum is ready to pour, the owner is substituting rum from El Dorado in Guyana and Maggie's Farm in Pittsburgh. Tiki TNT is open from 3 p.m. to 2 a.m. on Monday through Thursday, from 3 p.m. to 3 a.m. on Friday and Saturday, and from 11 a.m. to midnight on Sunday.





Tester bottles show off labels for four types of Thrasher's Rum. Distiller Todd Thrasher hopes to start production at the end of the week. | [Rey Lopez/Eater D.C.](#)

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Bamboo and Polynesian designs cover the bar. | [Rey Lopez/Eater D.C.](#)





Another bar features a lush tropical vibe. | [Rey Lopez/Eater D.C.](#)

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