

D.C. Is Turning Pink: Here's Where to Stay, Shop, and Eat During Cherry Blossom Season

The capital is turning pink.

By Katie Chang | March 26, 2021



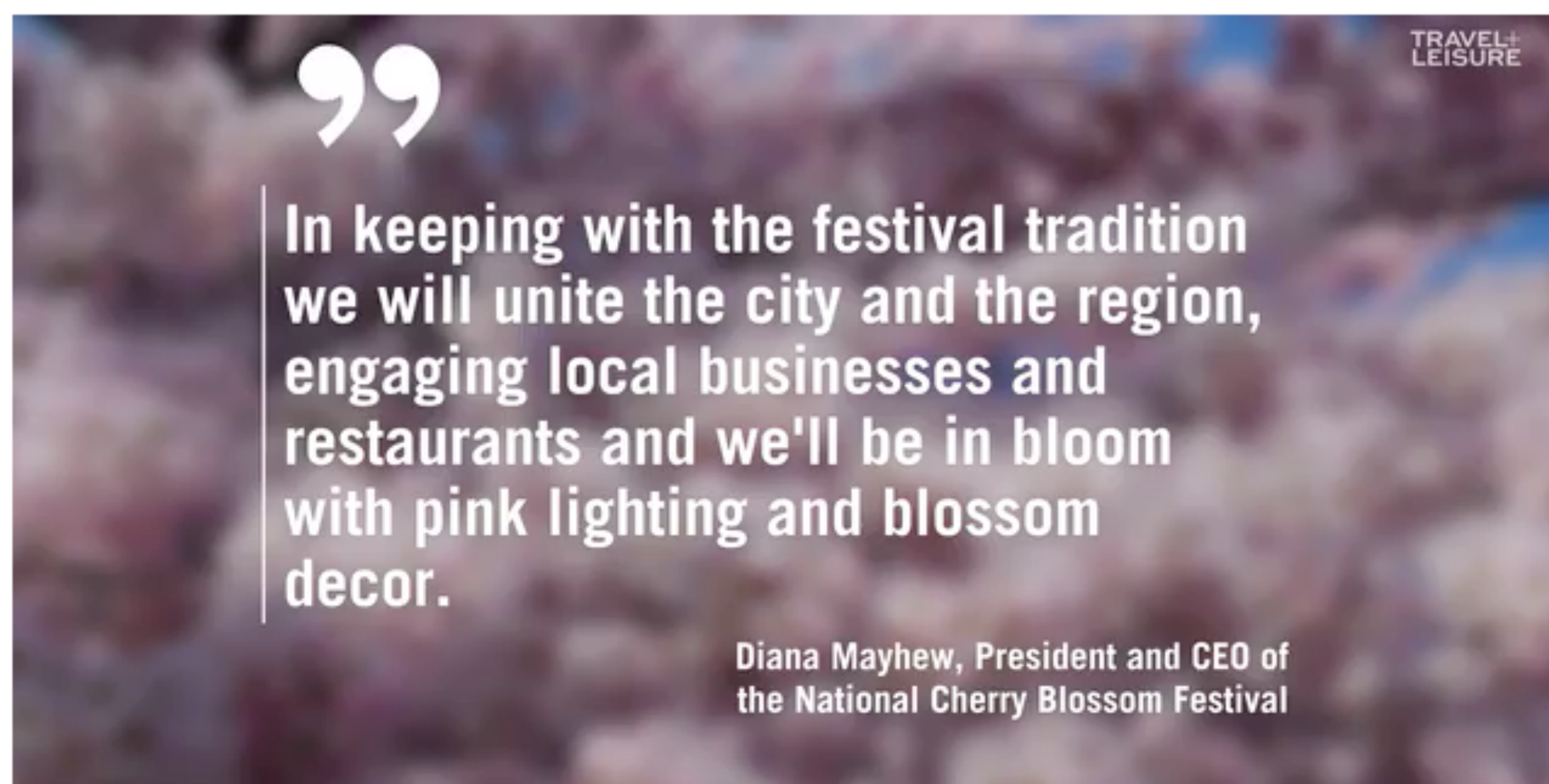
PHOTO CREDIT: COURTESY OF THE ST. REGIS WASHINGTON D.C.

Though springtime is a welcoming sight wherever you are, Washington, D.C. is an especially breathtaking example of the shifting seasons. For a short period in early spring — The National Park Service is forecasting peak bloom April 2 through 5 — nearly 4,000 cherry blossom trees cloak the nation's capital in a delicate petal pink. But because it's such a popular time to visit and given the restrictive nature of the pandemic, ahead is a handy guide on how to plan a memorable, and just as important, safe trip to Washington, D.C. in the upcoming weeks.

Where to Stay

Few hotels are celebrating the season more lavishly than The St. Regis Washington, D.C. Guests booking the Cherry Blossom Suite Indulgence Package will be pampered with a positively pretty suite envisioned by local florist Multiflor and a bevy of cherry blossom-inspired treats (including a silk kimono, full-sized L'Occitane bath products, tea, and dessert). If staying overnight isn't an option, reserve the Cherry Blossom Decadence, where sweets whimsically presented in a miniature cherry blossom tree are paired with champagne. Or pop by the discreet St. Regis Bar for imaginative libations like the sake-based Japanese Milk Punch by head bartender Jane Tat.

At Georgetown's Four Seasons Hotel Washington, DC, spring blooms everywhere, from the rooms to the restaurant. Guests will be welcomed with seasonal mini pastries and sweets in their rooms, and can bid winter adieu with The Spa's new Sakura Serenity Treatment, an invigorating exfoliating session that leaves skin silky-smooth and perfumed with spring florals. Diners at Bourbon Steak's popular outdoor patio can indulge in wood-fried Wagyu steaks, Michael Mina's legendary lobster pot pie, and seasonal cocktails surrounded by verdant vines and a striking floral wall.



VIDEO CREDIT: COURTESY OF TRAVEL + LEISURE

Downtown, Eaton DC marries modern hospitality and social change in a sleek black structure designed by Gachot Studios. While the accommodations' cozy vibes (imagine Victrola record players, Himalayan salt lamps, and organic mattresses) and Weekend Staycation package make staying in more than easy, the globe-trotting dishes (like pork cheek lumpia and Gullah shrimp perloo) at American Son by Tim Ma are absolutely worth a visit.

In Dupont Circle, what's old is new again with Hotel Madera. Though the hotel's been around for decades, it just unveiled a sweeping top-to-bottom renovation. Now, the rooms are airy and super spacious (request one with a balcony) with punches of unexpected color, while the hotel's restaurant Firefly continues to be home to one of the city's best happy hours.



PHOTO CREDIT: HOLLY BARZAK

Where to Eat and Drink

Columbia Heights' Makan by chef James Wozniuk is dedicated to Malaysian cuisine, and one of the most exciting restaurant openings in years. Because the cooking is heavily influenced by neighboring China, India, and Thailand, things initially may feel familiar with their bold flavors, spices, and high craveability factor — Char kway teow, for example, features salty-sweet wok-fried rice noodles with Chinese sausage and bean sprouts — but it won't be long before you realize what you're experiencing is truly singular.

At Bammy's in the Navy Yard, beloved chefs Gerald Addison and Chris Morgan (formerly of Maydan) are making their mark again with vibrant Caribbean food. The jerk chicken and curry goat are mandatory (and exemplary), and pair perfectly with sides of the namesake Bammy, a Jamaican flatbread, and Festival, a sweet cornbread fritter. But for something different, try the Saltfish Buljol, a bracing mix of salt cod, tomato, and peppers that's typically served for breakfast in Trinidad. Since you're in the area, stroll to Mah-Ze-Dahr, an offshoot of the wildly popular New York bakery by Umber Ahmad. Like the original, this location purveys all of Ahmad's signature sweets: Mah-Ze-Dahr bars, chocolate chip cookies, and those infamously irresistible brioche doughnuts.

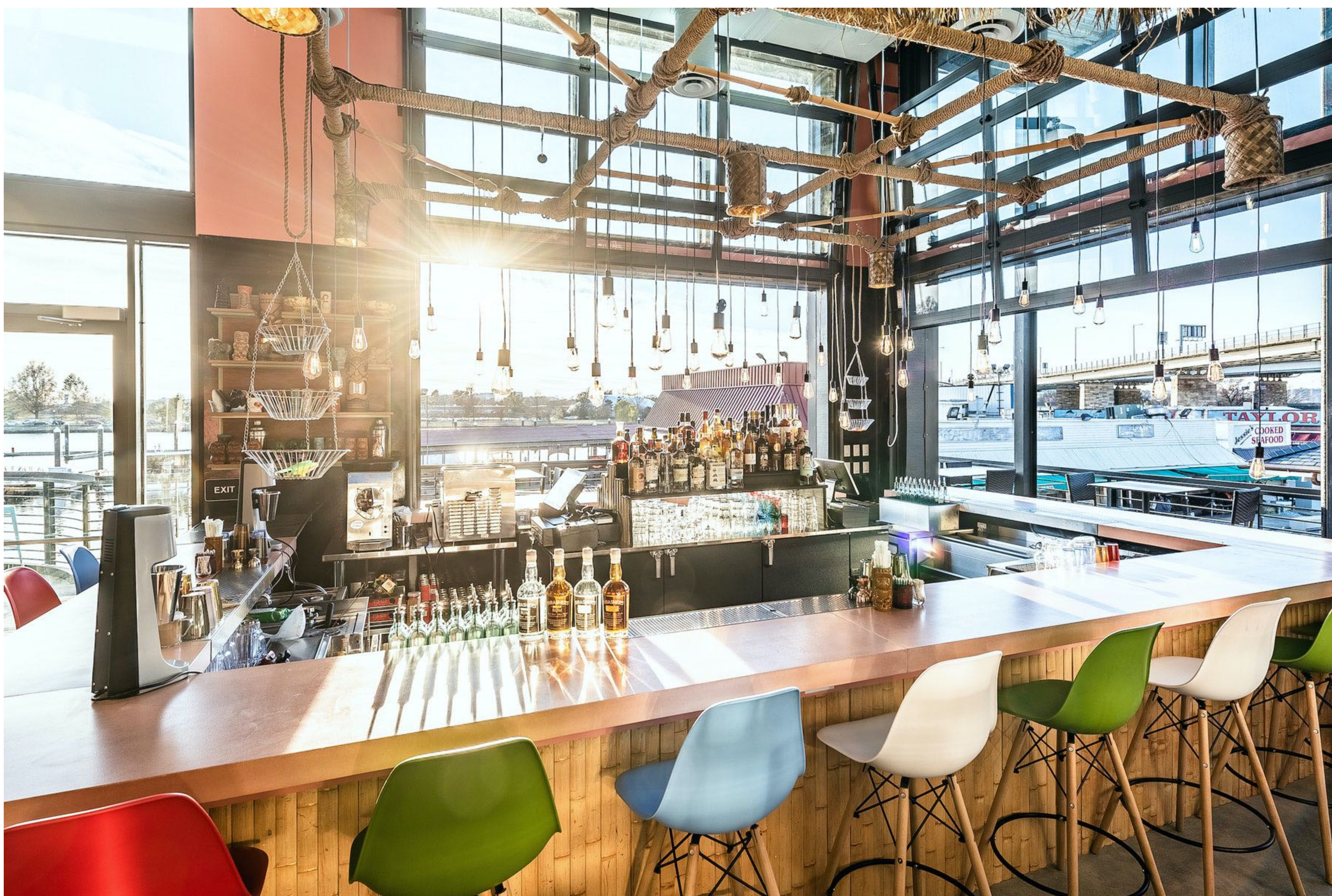


PHOTO CREDIT: REY LOPEZ

Quality sushi abounds in the nation's capital, but Union Market's O-Ku remains a city staple with its striking industrial design (think soaring ceilings, exposed ductwork, and concrete accents) and creative spins on raw seafood (like the truffle ponzu and pickled wasabi-topped Salmon Usuzukuri) by chef Ugan Uga. Tucked away in posh CityCenterDC is Centrolina, where acclaimed chef Amy Brandwein has perfected simple and elegant handmade pastas. (Her white ragu-smothered pappardelle is a must). In the mood for something casual? Then head to Piccolina da Centrolina across the alley for pizza and rustic sandwiches. And for tiki drinks and beachy vibes, pay a visit to The Wharf's Tiki TNT & Potomac Distilling Company. Owned by Todd Thrasher – who also distills several rums onsite – the wonderfully kitschy, island-inspired space has three floors and a patio so guests can spread out and kick back.

If you're looking to stick to one neighborhood, make it Shaw. Since opening in 2015, The Dabney has established itself as one of the top dining experiences in town. Led by chef Jeremiah Langhorne, the kitchen fires many dishes from its ever-changing prix fixe menu – which spotlights ingredients unique to the mid-Atlantic, such as Chesapeake Rockfish and Autumn Olive Farms pork – on a massive, wood-fired hearth. Craving French fare? Book a table at Cedric Maupillier's Convivial. Since it's all about keeping everything lively and approachable (as the name suggests), the menu brims with crowd-pleasing French Onion soup, Boeuf Bourguignon, and Coq Au Vin. You won't find a better burger and believe it or not, cheesesteak, than the versions being cooked up by Stephen Starr alum Robert Aikens at Ghostburger, a takeaway concept run out of Oaxacan restaurant Espita's kitchen. For the perfect end to your day, it's tough to top All Souls. A neighborhood watering hole by hospitality veterans David Batista and Joanna Brady, it's easy on the wallet and easy to spend hours at.



PHOTO CREDIT: EMMA MCALARY

Where To Shop

There's no shortage of big brand retail in the nation's capital, but since it's crucial to support small businesses now — shop locally. Head first to [Steadfast Supply](#) in The Yards. The 3,000-square-foot lifestyle boutique curated by Virginia Arrisueño supports creatively-driven, independent brands from all over the country. Consider it a one-stop-shop for pretty much everything, from statement face masks to unique housewarming gifts. [Rewild](#) was founded on the simple belief that nurturing plants can be a form of self-care. In addition to stocking all types of greenery, the tiny oasis champions education so you and your plants can live long, healthy lives. At [Kicheko](#), the jewelry is handcrafted by owner Sarah Bayot and not only looks beautiful, but also funds a month's education for one child. To prove that great style and sustainability can go hand-in-hand, four female friends from different parts of the world banded together to open [Tribute](#) in October 2018. Every item sold here, from the Kente Gentlemen jackets to the Utilitario Mexicano mugs, has been thoughtfully picked to look sharp now and equally important, for years to come.