

LOUISIANA COOKIN'

Authentic Cajun & Creole Cuisine

THE EAT
LOCAL
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CELEBRATE SUMMER WITH BOILED CRABS

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*Cool Off with
Simple, No-Cook
Summer Dishes*



As you know, in each issue, we feature a chef we believe in here in this space, but this time around, we're going a bit more high-spirited. **Alan Walter** is the creative director at Loa, the upscale cocktail lounge in New Orleans' International House Hotel. We caught up with Alan to discuss his distinctive approach to craft cocktailing:

- ▶ **For those who haven't visited, please tell us about Loa.** Loa is part of a boutique hotel just outside the French Quarter. It is close enough that we cater not only to our own guests, but people who are sent our way from concierges at other hotels. We also have a strong local following. It's a very romantic, candlelit bar, great for date nights, with low light and music low enough to talk, and a lot of spirits for sipping, and good wines.
- ▶ **Tell us about the job of creative director at Loa.** For the most part, the cocktails are my recipes, and I actually supply the local and homemade ingredients in every recipe. I have a very hands-on role. Local ingredients find their way into the drinks via the syrup, and I write playful descriptions on our menus. I also like to greet people and personally talk to them and familiarize them with the products and with the city.
- ▶ **The craft cocktail concept seems to have emerged strongly in the last few years, right?** I think it emerged about 10 years ago, but then it leveled off. Bartenders now are aware that they may be service people first, but they are craftsmen and cocktail librarians second. Loa traffics in the New Orleans story with a lot of thought and attention, not just using locally sourced ingredients but also with little narratives on the menu, which help enliven the story that people face when they come here, to think of history and food at the same time, to enjoy and to taste tradition.
- ▶ **Can you describe a favorite cocktail at Loa?** We actually make our own limoncello, with lemons from Sorrento lemon trees that we grow ourselves. We use that limoncello in a cocktail named after Italian actress Monica Bellucci. We use Italian bitters, Armagnac, fresh cucumber, and orange. It has a little foam made with local kombucha, which comes out as sort of a meringue consistency. It is bright red and served over ice.
- ▶ **Thanks for giving me the best excuse to take a little break and stop by Loa. ✦**



NOW, THAT SHOULD KEEP YOU BUSY AND WELL FED UNTIL NEXT TIME.
REMEMBER: BUY LOCAL, EAT OUT OFTEN, AND CLEAN YOUR PLATE.