



Penn It In!

Passion Food Hospitality is back in Penn Quarter
Penn Commons - An American Tavern like its sister, District Commons

15 years ago Penn Quarter was an unlikely home for an upscale restaurant, but now it is one of the most explosive dining scenes in **Washington, DC**, and Chef **Jeff Tunks**, along with his partners, Gus DiMillo and David Wizenberg of **Passion Food Hospitality**, think so too! They once thought differently of the area, but became one of the pioneers in 2000 when they drew an abundance of adventurous diners to their former Asian inspired establishment in the neighborhood. And now they are back...in the thick of a continuously emerging culinary epicenter of culturally diverse restaurants with a sleek second branch of its sister Foggy Bottom hotspot, District Commons, the new **Penn Commons**, which opened August 4, 2014, is a chic American Tavern on 6th and H streets. Taking over a formerly developed restaurant next to the bustling Verizon Center, the trio at Passion Food Hospitality worked with Gensler, an integrated DC architect firm, to smarten up the space with an executed makeover. Confidence is a strong mark at Penn Commons with a solid footing in American sensibilities that round out the cuisine and the look.

Chef Tunks, with a national reputation for unfussy, but praiseworthy dishes is focused on market-based, seasonal ingredients featuring modern interpretations of time-honored classics, as well as an array of dishes celebrating worldly influences on our national cuisine. Feast on dishes such as *Brick Pressed Chicken with Rainbow Chard, Mashed Potatoes and a Preserved Lemon and Parsley Jus*; *Shrimp & Grits with Country Ham and Holy Trinity*; and *Grilled Creekstone Farms Skirt Steak with Whiskey Peppercorn Sauce*. Tunks has a simple mandate for his culinary team: “Arm diners with distinct flavors that come from both the water and land’s daily bounty.” Crossover appeal comes with popular tavern specialties Tunks so cleverly created at District Commons: people will watch the clock for nightly dinner bell plates like Wednesday’s “Midweek Ritual of Cleaning out the walk-In” with *Chicken Fried Steak & Creamy Gravy, Mashed Potatoes and Green Beans*; the robust Bar Menu features items that are just what the fast paced crowd desires before a Caps game; and all the allure of the great American meal – burger and fries will be desired. These grilled burgers are not ordinary by any means, but bold choices that welcome a healthy appetite.

Penn Commons builds a cult following at the long and pronounced bar with its 40 beers on tap, hoping to claim most beers from each ale-producing U.S. state, wines, all by the glass and bottle [and two on tap], and 13 signature cocktails nodding to the Thirteen Colonies. “We’ve got Wisconsin covered with PBR which has been a staple for beer lovers across this country,” states David Wizenberg.

All in all it is simply American tavern food at its best, with a twist. With the advent of great U.S. products and the resurgence of the local farmer, Tunks has cultivated partnerships with purveyors nearby... or just made it himself. It takes one *common* philosophy: American sensibility joined with American seasonality.

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