

# FLORAL INFUSION

Marcellino Ristorante pours up a drinkable work of art with the Italian Passion

BY ALISON BAILIN BATZ / PHOTO BY ELIZABETH MARIE

In addition to an impressive wine list, each bottle chosen by Italian native and award-winning chef Marcellino Verzino himself, Marcellino Ristorante also boasts an ever-evolving mixology menu.

In developing the “Summer Sensations” menu (available at least through Labor Day), the bar’s mixologists looked to chef Verzino’s theory behind his food – creating visual and taste sensations with only a few fresh ingredients and lots of garden herbs – for inspiration. The Italian Passion (\$15), named for the exuberance and life chef Verzino exudes, is that vision executed in a glass.

It starts with Patron Rocca Silver Tequila, a premium liquor made using a centuries-old process wherein a two-ton volcanic stone wheel breaks down agave fibers and releases the subsequent juice that will become tequila. The result is a very complex and distinctly earthy flavor.

To enhance the “passion” quotient in the cocktail, quite literally, the mixologist combines the tequila with organic passion fruit juice and freshly squeezed lime in the shaker. The fruits add a bright tartness and flowery aroma into the mix, while a drizzle of organic honey ramps up the sweet notes in the tequila. Then, the contents are shaken.

Rather than pour the mixture over ice, the bar team freezes edible flowers and water to make a colorful, eye-catching ice sphere. The contents are poured in a rocks glass over the sphere, allowing it to melt just enough to enhance the outrageous beauty of the flowers.

The fragrant drink is garnished with a basil leaf from the garden, again in a nod to the chef’s love of fresh herbs.

Marcellino’s Ristorante, 7114 E. Stetson Drive, Scottsdale; 480.990.9500; [www.marcellinoristorante.com](http://www.marcellinoristorante.com).

