

Neighborhood Comforts



A smart new Manhattan cocktail spot channels a Tribeca loft.

BY LAURA ITZKOWITZ

If you're familiar with the other bars run by Yves Jadot, Alberto Benenati, and Meaghan Dorman, The Bennett's contemporary style might come as a bit of a surprise.

The trio's first bar, Raines Law Room, resembles a Victorian parlor with plush sofas arranged in intimate nooks. The aesthetic at Dear Irving, a lounge in Gramercy Park, is a *Midnight in Paris*-inspired fantasy spanning four different eras. Belgian designer Delphine Mauroit of DM Design & Architecture is the creative force behind each concept. An architect by training, she cut her teeth working on high-end projects like Peninsula and Andaz hotels for Yabu Pushelberg and Rockwell Group. One would think a compact bar would seem like a breeze, but not for Mauroit, who never rests on her laurels. "I was a bit anxious about this one, actually," she says over drinks at The Bennett. "It's a bit different than what I usually do, so it was a new challenge."

The partners—whose bars have become known for a whimsical sense of time travel—wanted to create something sophisticated that feels like a natural fit in upscale Tribeca. At first, Mauroit came up with a minimalist design, but it felt too cold. She instead found

ways to incorporate rich colors and materials: blue velvet banquettes, leather-topped tables, a black marble bar, antique mirrored cabinets that conceal the glassware and bottles. She found sculptural gold chandeliers reminiscent of trumpets and created geometric wall and ceiling fixtures. Sectional carpet on the floor aids the acoustics, ensuring the room doesn't get too noisy. The effect is harmonious and slightly homey feeling.

As you'd expect in a space with a residential tone, hospitality is key. A signature element in all the bars is tableside buttons, which allow guests to simply flip a switch and a discrete neon number in one of the cabinets hails a server. A vintage diner-esque board on the wall displays the employees' shifts, so patrons know to stop by when their favorite bartender is on duty. It's these kind of subtle, thoughtful touches that set The Bennett apart. "We've learned along the way what works," says Dorman, who trained under Michael McIlroy, a protégé of the late bartender Sasha Petraske. "Even if you want something different on another night, we know what we want our place to be like and we stick to it."

PHOTO: COURTESY THE BENNETT.



Cocktail by Meaghan Dorman

INSPIRED BY THE BENNETT

Like the bar itself, the "Bergdorf Lunch" is approachable but elegant. The use of green apple brings to mind the Waldorf and its famous salad, but we thought lunch at Bergdorf would be more current, hence the name. Delphine Mauroit used a mix of materials to balance the room and give it a mood, and here we contrast floral notes of pisco, elderflower, and orange blossom with tart and earthy elements from the fruit. The cocktail is served on pebble ice, keeping it really cold and refreshing. It's a beautiful drink to look at.

- 2 oz green apple and pear juice (2:1 Granny Smith apples and Bartlett pears)
- ¼ oz St. Germain
- 2 ½ oz La Diablada pisco

Combine all ingredients in a shaker, shake briefly, and strain into a tall Collins glass half-filled with pebble ice. Top the drink with more pebble ice and garnish with a fan of three apple slices. Mist top of drink with orange blossom water.

Meaghan Dorman is the head bartender at Raines Law Room, Dear Irving, and The Bennett in New York.



PHOTOS: TOP LEFT, COURTESY THE BENNETT; TOP RIGHT AND BOTTOM, DANI VERNON.