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SIGNATURE

THE PREMIER LIFESTYLES MAGAZINE FOR SOUTH MISSISSIPPI



FESTIVAL SOUTH
2026

BEST OF
THE PINE BELT
FINALISTS

Waymakers

Pink Invasion

Blueberry
Bread Pudding



Pink INVASION

Trattoria Pizzeria
128 East Front Street, Hattiesburg
trattoriapizzeriams.com • [f/trattoriahattiesburg](#)

Photos by Rob Walker

At Trattoria Pizzeria, bartender Jelly James has introduced us to her latest cocktail creation: the Pink Invasion, a gentle, floral spin on the classic gimlet. Instead of traditional simple syrup, she makes her own mimosa-flower syrup from the blooms of the Albizia julibrissin, giving the drink its soft color and botanical lift.

For Jelly, the gimlet is a reliable favorite - something she reaches for when she isn't sure what she's in the mood for. And the Pink Invasion, she explained, brings together two things she loves: gin and botanicals.

"There's a wonderful world of gin to explore," she said. "It's so much more than the piney stuff people remember from their grandpa's liquor cabinet."

Her interest in botanicals comes naturally. An avid forager, she is always looking for ways to "eat the weeds." The mimosa tree, though beautiful, is invasive, and turning its blossoms into syrup is her small way of keeping it in check while creating something memorable for the glass.

Though she calls herself a "baby bartender," with just three and a half years behind the bar, Jelly's creativity and sense of place shine through. A Mississippi native who grew up in Oak Grove, she's lived a few places but feels most at home in Hattiesburg.

And with drinks like Pink Invasion, she's helping give that home a flavor all its own. ✦



PINK INVASION

2 ounces Empress 1908 Indigo Gin
1 ounce lime juice
2 ounces mimosa simple syrup*

Blend in an ice-filled shaker, then serve and enjoy.

*To make the mimosa simple syrup, she recommends using a ratio of 4:1 by volume of simple syrup to fresh, clean mimosa flowers. Let it sit overnight in the fridge and strain it through a coffee filter to make sure none of the pollen or plant particulates end up in the final product.

Sunkissed SCANDAL

With a passion for his profession, bartender Matt Haskins of Trattoria Pizzeria in Downtown Hattiesburg explained that he takes “immense pride in crafting cocktails that aren’t just drinks, but experiences.” He added, “I’m constantly experimenting with new ingredients and mixing the unexpected. Some of those experiments succeed and others fail. But that’s life – a little sweet, a little bitter, and always worth the sip.”

Not only did Haskins concoct a refreshing, summer-inspired cocktail for us – the Sunkissed Scandal – he also recounted his journey to becoming one of the Hub City’s most appreciated bartenders and offered words of wisdom learned along the way.

“

Twenty years ago, I landed my first restaurant gig in New Orleans and met my boss (and bartender) Mike. Watching him work was like watching a master storyteller – he didn’t just make drinks, he created moments. He mixed in his own life stories, and everyone who came to the bar felt it. I remember thinking, “Man, I want to be just like that someday.”

Maybe I was just playing it safe, but life took me back to retail – a field I already had two years of experience in. I spent another 13 years climbing the corporate retail ladder, but I always felt something was missing. Though I had learned a lot, there was always a part of me that longed for something different. Eventually, I decided to return to the service industry and give bartending a shot. And now, I bring a little retail savvy to the bartending game, because great customer service never goes out of style.



Photos by Rob Walker

I've been behind the bar for almost seven years now. I got my start, downtown, at Front Street Bar, soaking up every bit of knowledge I could from that iconic 206 spot. After that, I worked at various restaurants in both downtown and midtown, honing my craft and finding my voice behind the bar. Then I found Trattoria, where I've been for almost three years now. And honestly? It feels like home. The owner, my coworkers, the patrons - they make me feel like family, and they are the ones that keep a smile on my face (sometimes with a little sass).

Something people may not know about me is that I've been sober for over two years. Alcohol and I had a toxic relationship, and breaking up was the best thing I could have done. Believe it or not, my sobriety has made me a better bartender than I could have ever imagined. It's given me focus, clarity, and a fresh perspective on the craft I love.

Looking back, I'm now the same age Mike was when I met him. And guess what? I became the bartender I dreamed of being all those years ago (maybe with a little extra flair). So, if you're wondering whether you can change direction or chase a dream, trust me: you can. My story is proof that you really can do anything you set your mind to. Life changes, you adapt, and when you do it with heart, you can have everything you've ever wanted. Don't settle for less than what lights you up. Show the world your sparkle!

Today, I'm blessed, thankful, humble, and yeah, still a little sassy. And I wouldn't have it any other way. ✦

Trattoria Pizzeria
128 E. Front Street, Hattiesburg
trattoriapizzeriams.com



SUNKISSED SCANDAL

- 1 ounce mezcal
- 1 ounce reposado tequila
- 1 ounce lime juice
- 1 ounce passion fruit puree
- 2 ounces Ruby Red Grapefruit Juice
- 2 dashes cayenne pepper
- Splash of ginger beer
- Lime wheel, for garnish
- Salt and Tajin, for rim

Combine mezcal, tequila, lime juice, passion fruit puree, grapefruit juice, and cayenne pepper in a cocktail shaker, fill with ice, and shake. Rim a glass with a mixture of salt and Tajin and fill with ice. Strain cocktail shaker over ice. Top with a splash of ginger beer, and then garnish with lime.

Lavender mOcha MARTINI martini

Tra oria Pizzeria
128 E. Front St., Ha iesburg
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Photos by Rob Walker

LAVENDER MOCHA MARTINI

- 2 ounces Baileys Chocolate Liqueur
- 1 ounce Kahlua Coffee Liqueur
- 1 ounce vodka
- 1 ounce lavender simple syrup
- 2 ounces espresso

Reannon West found her creative calling as a bartender – and has never looked back. Now working at Tra oria Pizzeria in the heart of Downtown Ha iesburg, her mastery of mixology is both a treat for her and for her customers.

“Greetings Earthlings, Reannon here. I started bartending in my mid 20s and quickly fell in love when I realized it was the perfect way for my chaotic brain to express itself,” she said of her skilled profession.

West’s own Lavender Mocha Martini is already a veri ed fan favorite as a sweet, smooth blend of calm and ca eine. “It was inspired by a ernoon trips with my bestie to T-Bones for chocolate and lavender cold brews,” she added.



Blossoms & Berries

SAVOR THE
FLAVORS OF SPRING

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FLAVORS OF SPRING
Photos by Rob Walker



BLOSSOMS & BERRIES

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ounces Empress 1908 Gin
- 1 ounce freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 ounce lavender simple syrup
- 1 ounce blackberry simple syrup
- Splash of club soda

DIRECTIONS

Combine gin, lavender simple syrup, blackberry simple syrup, and lemon juice in a shaker and shake until the ingredients are thoroughly combined. Pour over fresh ice, and top with club soda. Garnish with a lemon wheel, a few blackberries, and culinary lavender sprigs (lavender buds can also be used as garnish).

When it comes to crafting cocktails, bartender Matt Haskins at Trattoria in Downtown Hattiesburg is always up for the challenge – and his latest creation is a spring-inspired libation called Blossoms & Berries. “Nothing says spring quite like flowers and berries, so I wanted to combine those flavors into something light, yet flavorful,” he said.

“I love the flavor of lavender (and my favorite color is purple), so that’s where I started,” Haskins explained. “When thinking of what berry to add, blackberries came to mind. To me, nothing marks the beginning of spring in Mississippi more than blackberries growing in the wild. Adding the Empress 1908 Gin not only adds to the lovely purple hue of the drink, but also gives it a slight spiciness that complements the sweet and floral notes. Finally, adding some fresh lemon juice and club soda gives the drink a nicely rounded out, effervescent tingle on your tongue.”

Haskins, who grew up in Starkville, feels right at home in Hattiesburg – and at Trattoria. “I really enjoy working here at Trattoria,” he added. “Not only do we have an excellent staff, but we also serve delicious food and craft cocktails. We’ve also recently added a game room, which includes tables for dining as well as pool, foosball, air hockey, darts, chess, and tabletop Jenga. It’s the perfect place to bring your friends to enjoy a slice of pizza and play a few games.”

SIGNATURE

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07.2022

FESTIVAL SOUTH
2022

Best of the
Pine Belt
Finalists

—

Rosie's
Ice Cream
Truck

—

An Evening
at SoPro



