

SP hits the town and explores Whiskey Park & Whiskey Blue

Whiskey Blue



Whiskey Blue

IN THE CLUB

Whiskey Park Vault



Whiskey Park Crystal Lounge



BY HOPE S. PHILBRICK

The couch in the elevator signals that you're about to travel somewhere different. Perched on that long white leather couch peering out at Buckhead through glass walls while ascending to the roof, you can't help but feel elegant—that you're going somewhere special. Somewhere, perhaps, where the cocktails are so yummy and the fun runs so late into the night that you'll need a place to sit on the ride back down.

Such is the introduction to Whiskey Blue, which opened at the W Atlanta–Buckhead in January, becoming the second Gerber Group property in Atlanta (the first, Whiskey Park, opened at the W Atlanta–Midtown in 2008). And the feeling the design evokes is quite intentional: “The designs of Whiskey Blue and Whiskey Park in Atlanta are my interpretation of old Hollywood glamour in a contemporary setting,” says Rande Gerber, who is co-founder and principal of the Gerber Group with his brother and business partner Scott.

While the Gerber Group portfolio consists of 30 bars, lounges and restaurants nationwide, including multiple Whiskey properties, each location is unique. “We always take into consideration the city, hotel, location, people, weather and many other factors when deciding on the design and ambiance we are looking to create,” says Gerber. So Whiskey Park and

Whiskey Blue share some similarities and also boast striking differences.

Among the elements you might expect to find at any Gerber Group location are “custom high-end furniture, a hidden sound system, the use of quality building materials and artwork,” says Jason Dauble, General Manager of Whiskey Blue. “All of our back bars are signature, in that Gerber Group likes to place our liquor product in an artistic setting, in a wave of bottle heights and sizes.”

What's more, expect to “be greeted by friendly staff,” says Bradley Wyatt, General Manager of Whiskey Park. “We strive for an extremely high level of customer service. Also, the drink menu is the same at all of the bars to ensure consistency. We have so many fresh fruits and ingredients, the menu constantly changes and is really unique—we're not talking about five drinks; it's a three-page ordeal.” Popular cocktails include acai-blueberry martini, cosmopolitan, grapefruit basil martini, mango-mint mojito and the “local” Manhattan.

While both spaces are elegant, they evoke different feelings. For starters, Whiskey Blue is primarily an outdoor rooftop bar (with some indoor space), while Whiskey Park is mainly an indoor bar (with some outdoor space). Whiskey Blue is open and airy; Whiskey Park is dark and cozy. “Although both are from the same egg, Whiskey Blue is more contemporary ‘bankers and brokers,’ while Whiskey Park is more ‘Vegas ultra-lounge flashy,’” says Dauble.

“Whiskey Park is definitely a lounge,” says Wyatt. “To me, the décor is a kind of a nod

to a little bit more fantasy, with big overgrown fixtures and drama and a little crystal lounge disco glam. It's an adult playground with a nod to the '70s. It's intimate and fun. It's really just a great place for adults to go and get away from it all.” Whiskey Park offers several different rooms with different design themes and color schemes, some of which have private entrances and any of which can be reserved for parties. “Part of the design was thinking of celebrities who might not want to be seen by anybody,” says Wyatt. “And so there are different entry points for people so they can come and go and no one will know.” Or mere mortals like me can just climb the stairs and get wowed by the graphic lights at the main entrance.

Though both Whiskey Park and Whiskey Blue are located in W properties, hotel guests don't dominate. “Hotel attendance up here is only 20 percent,” says Dauble. “It's a good mix. During happy hours, we'll get suits in here just after work for cocktails meetings, which phases into local Buckhead scene, later on more night-going people.”

“We get a broad range of people,” says Wyatt. “We strive to create an environment. We don't need a VIP list or a line for this or that; it's not what we do. We take reservations, to prepare and not be elbow-to-elbow with people. People come here because of our reputation.” And to sip the glamorous life. **SP**

Whiskey Blue is at 3377 Peachtree Road in Buckhead, 678-500-3190. Whiskey Park is at 188 14th St. N.E. in Midtown, 404-892-6000.