

The Thinking Person's Bar is Realized at The Interval

By Schuyler Bailey on September 25, 2014 3:30 PM

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Bottles of Long Now gin or single malt whiskey (pictured here atop the 10,000-year clock prototype), created exclusively for The Interval by Lance Winters of St. George Spirits, hang in the rafters above the bar. They're available with a \$1,500 donation to the foundation. Photograph by Andrew Paynter

Did the advent of alcohol mark the beginning of human civilization or vice versa? That existential question is up for debate, but according to Alexander Rose, executive director of the futurist Long Now Foundation, man and booze are inextricably linked. Such is the cocktail fodder you'll find yourself pondering at **The Interval**, Long Now's salon-slash-bar on the first floor of the foundation's Fort Mason headquarters. "We're drawing from the idea of the coffeehouses and teahouses of the Enlightenment, as gathering places for thoughtful dialogue," explains Rose.

Patrons of The Interval have plenty of conversation starters around them, including the Manual for Civilization (a collection of 3,500 books, destined for the cafe's two-story library and intended to restart a post-apocalyptic society), a prototype of the 10,000-year clock that Long Now is building in west Texas (repurposed here into a table), and even the unabridged cocktail tome (ahem, menu) of bar manager Jennifer Colliau. In alignment with Long Now's futuristic thinking, Colliau—a Slanted Door vet, founder of Small Hand Foods artisanal cocktail syrups, and bona fide spirits nerd—has culled her menu based on concepts of, and moments in, time. The daiquiri section, for instance, harks back to 1930s Cuba, when Ernest Hemingway was imbibing the rum concoctions there daily. Also on offer from the bar: wine, coffee, tea, bar bites, and the storied Dogfish Head Midas Touch beer, made from a 2,700-year-old recipe discovered in the great Turkish king's tomb.

In the coming weeks, The Interval will welcome two automatons to its staff. You'll find the gin robot behind the bar. Using the instructions parlayed via a connected wireless device, it will blend custom concoctions of up to 15 botanicals from St. George Spirits. And Long Now speaker events will be enhanced by the chalkboard robot's in-the-moment illustrations. It was only a matter of time.

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