



Forger owner Jacques Bezuidenhout, making a Gran Cobbler cocktail, wanted to take advantage of the booming SoMa.

Forger's finesse

By Rhys Alvarado
Special to The S.F. Examiner

There's something new shaking up in the old club space Sloane.

Forger is the latest addition to South of Market, courtesy of Ken Luciano and Jacques Bezuidenhout, both longtime Kimpton Hotels vets. These two big players are behind the stick at the new cocktail joint at 1525 Mission St.

The place aims to be a neighborhood spot — when the new neighborhood of high-rise apartments arrives.

"This is a little pocket," Luciano said. "Hopefully the South of Market comes up. Four high-rises are slated for completion within a few blocks away. Hopefully they're thirsty."

"No teetotalers," Bezuidenhout added.

Bars like Oddjob and Alta CA are just a few blocks away, and newcomers Dirty Water and Bon Marche are opening soon in the Twitter building at 1355 Market St., creating a worthy booze crawl for techies and cocktail geeks getting off of work.

At Forger, darker-stained, hand-planked redwood, high ceilings and exposed brick make the sexy and spacious interior inviting. There's also an upstairs loft for lounging that overlooks the bar. Only a third of the space has been used, with a nightclub with a separate concept that's still in the works.

The operation is backed by the Plumpjack Group, which was founded by former San Francisco mayor and current Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom and owns liquor stores, wineries and hotels around the Bay Area.

The space has been a glass factory, a printing press and a few other bars.

The menu is broken down into Forger Originals, Classics and Twists, and Friends, the latter of which features drinks like the famous Tommy's Margarita — from Tommy's Mexican restaurant in the Richmond — and the Green Beast, an absinthe concoction served in a towering glass over crushed ice.

Many of the drinks are batched in the daytime, as they aim to be a bar where you can get a great drink without having to wait a long time.

I enjoyed a Spanish Negroni. It had the usual suspects with the addition of sherry, which gave it a dry and nutty finish.

The Pickled Swede — a classic twist on the Gibson, with Absolut Elyx vodka instead of gin, dill-infused Dolin vermouth and a cocktail onion — came off tight and herbaceous at first, but as the drink warmed up, it

evolved in the glass and grew round and sweet, the dill soft and delicate. It was the type of cocktail I wanted to keep drinking.

For my last drink I decided on the bartender's whimsy, something with agave and stirred. Bezuidenhout pulled out a number from his old playbook, with Partida Reposado tequila, Manzanilla sherry and pear liqueur. It was wonderfully simple, yet complex with all components playing well together and making their appearance throughout my palate.

It may be too soon to tell, but the duo are already planning their next venture, as they have inked a deal to take over the recently closed Lexington Club on 19th Street.

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