

**ABY ROSEN**

# **SURFACE**

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## Cocktail by Tomas Delos Reyes

### INSPIRED BY PEPE LE MOKO

This cavernous space inspired me to create something deep in texture and color. I felt that Balvenie Doublewood was a perfect way to express the warmth and cozy layout of the bar. The deep hue of the berries mimics the seductive lighting, and in combination with the vanilla creates a complex yet relaxing mix of flavors.

- 2 ounces Balvenie Doublewood scotch
- 6 blackberries
- ½ ounce lemon juice
- ¾ ounce vanilla syrup
- 2 dashes of Angostura bitters

Muddle four berries and add the rest of ingredients along with ice. Shake hard, then strain into an old-fashioned glass with fresh ice and splash with club soda. Garnish with the remaining berries on a skewer.

*Tomas Delos Reyes is a mixologist and partner of the gastropub Jeepney in New York's East Village.*



## The Getaway

### Nestled in the basement of Portland's Ace Hotel, Pépé le Moko provides a hideout for travelers and locals.

BY ELLA RILEY-ADAMS

Jack Barron isn't really interested in design. One of the owners of the Ace Hotel Portland and lead designer of its new basement bar, Pépé le Moko, he cares more about what he calls "placemaking." The two are closely related, but to him placemaking is not so much designing as it is understanding the spirit of a space and how it should interact with its surroundings. "As long as you get the emotion right, nothing else really matters," Barron says.

Pépé le Moko serves as an escape from Portland's often rainy weather as well as from the city's increasingly homogenous design aesthetic. "I feel like I can't get away from a certain signature," Barron admits. "But Pépé's not meant to be an Ace."

In addition to providing late-night beverages for hotel guests, Barron expects the bar to attract a local crowd. "I'm hoping Pépé will be its own little institution," he says.

Visitors enter Pépé le Moko from the street through its tiny kitchen. After descending

some stairs and parting a custom-made bead curtain, the guest reaches the 40-seat underground establishment. Its most striking feature is its barrel-vaulted ceiling, designed to make the narrow space feel even more intimate. "If we had not vaulted the ceiling like that, it wouldn't have any of the warmth or the cocoonlike effect," Barron says. "It would just feel like a basement." A 16-foot zinc bar sits across from dimly lit tables and dark-blue leather booths, where Fernet-spiked creme-de-cacao milkshakes and bocadillos are served.

Whereas the Ace Portland represents a genuine effort to design using local materials, Pépé le Moko is more of a "tongue-in-cheek fantasy," Barron says. The ambiance was inspired by a host of "weird things," such as old sports cars, Art Deco, jazz, and the French actor Jean Gabin. In the 1937 film from which the bar takes its name, Gabin plays the titular Pépé, a French criminal hiding out in Algiers's casbah. Fittingly, Barron's underground bar provides guests with an escape, making out-of-towners feel at home and locals thrillingly foreign. The aim is to conjure fantasy, Barron says. "We wanted to create something exotic, but without being pretentious about it."