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NEWSROOM 231-9865

Editor in Chief: Erica Corder

(editor@collegiatetimes.com)

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Design Editors: Andrea Pappas, Lauren Boitnott

Copy Editors: Rebecca Robertson, Melissa Fairfax

Multimedia Editor: Leslie McCrea

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Opinions Editors: Gautam Rao, Samantha Hill

Photo Editor: Zack Wajsglas

Assistant Photo Editor: Ben Weidlich

Have a news tip?

newstips@collegiatetimes.com

BUSINESS STAFF 231-9860

Business Manager: De'Lis Marshall (business@
collegemedia.com)

COLLEGE MEDIA SOLUTIONS

231-9860

Ad Director: Cameron Taylor (ad.director@
collegemedia.com)

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David Nichols, Kevin Reilly, Brandon Riffe

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Deverin, Haley Keen, Darienne Hammer, Kassie
Ruprecht

Creative Director: Kitty Schafenorth

Creative Staff: Jason McIlhany, Luke Lesinski, Zeyu
Li, Hannah Murray, Mukund Katti, Casey Phillips

solutions.collegemedia.com

advertising@collegemedia.com

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Best of Blacksburg supports the community

JOY NYSTROM
news staff writer

The Best of Blacksburg readership survey can tell you where to go for town favorites, from the best place to get a burger to the best local band.

The survey has been around for more than 10 years and highlights the best restaurants, stores and more in Blacksburg through community and student voting. Over the years the categories in the survey have expanded quite bit. There is now a total of 50 categories.

This year the survey had 3,000 respondents that voted in every category.

"The goal was to keep the fill out time under 10 minutes," said Carrie Cousins, general manager of Educational Media Company at Virginia Tech Inc. "Otherwise people get bored and don't finish."

The survey initially only listed businesses that had some connection to the Collegiate Times. In most of the categories however, there was an option for participants to write in another candidate that may not be listed.

Write in answers allow for participants to go with their gut instinct, and they tend to bring out the real answers of what people are thinking. It is also a challenge for the creators of the survey to include every single business in Blacksburg.

"What makes the Best of Blacksburg unique is that it is the only readership survey in our area that is solely about Blacksburg," Cousins said. "Other surveys include big box companies like Dick's Sporting Goods; every Best of Blacksburg winner is a Blacksburg small business and it really is about our community."

The survey gives people exposure to the places in Blacksburg that they may have never heard of and gives them a chance to know what places are worth going to.

"It brings in places that you may never thought to eat or shop or get flowers," said Nick Varelos, owner of Mike's Grill and recipient of the Best Burger of Blacksburg. "[The survey] brings people to think about places in Blacksburg and keeps them in Blacksburg."

Business owners have actually seen influxes in business after the results of the survey are published.

Even when a new year comes around and someone is no longer a winner, they continue to display their sign that shows what category they won.

"Businesses really love the recognition and really thrive on it whether they were a winner three or six years ago," Cousins said.

The tradition of choosing what the best places in Blacksburg are is ultimately left



Look for businesses sporting the Best of Blacksburg winner decal.

up to the students.

Depending on the years, the results can stay the same or change.

Mike's Grill won Best Burger in Blacksburg every year since the survey started until Five Guys came along.

"We used to win every year, now it has been going back and forth between us and Five Guys. A lot of people from up north follow them, and half the school is from up north, so it didn't surprise me when they won," Varelos said.

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Windsor Hills Makes College Living Easy

Finding affordable housing is hard enough. Finding affordable housing that is pet friendly seems next to impossible.

Windsor Hills Apartments offers affordable, pet friendly living convenient to Virginia Tech with mountain views you wouldn't expect from a location so close to downtown. With the best pet policy in town and 22 acres of greenery, it's the perfect off-campus living environment in Blacksburg. The housing community even has it's own off-leash dog park so you can play with your furry friend!

But if you are not an animal lover, the community has a lot of other things to offer as well. Amenities include a lounge pool, half-court basketball and picnic and grilling sites for those nice weather days. And the views are amazing. Unlike some other complexes, you can see the New River Valley and mountain skyline, not just other buildings.

Since we all know Blacksburg weather is unpredictable, there are indoor options for entertainment as well, such as a 24-hour fitness facility and newly renovated clubhouse. Plus, Windsor Hills is right on the bus route, so you can save that commuter parking pass money for even more apartment décor.

In addition to great housing, you can find friends that will last a lifetime just next door. The Students First Program offers students the opportunity to meet neighbors when taking part in Windsor Hills' events, activities and workshops, all of which are designed to help students succeed.

"[Windsor Hills] always had these delightful events at their clubhouse," said Rory Rowan, a 2014 Virginia Tech graduate and former tenant of Windsor Hills. "Many times they would cook cupcakes or other delicious sweets, even sending a text message or email reminder about those events. They also did a movie night pretty often, which was really fun. They really did their best to make it a fun place to be and meet other neighbors."

There are plenty of options to fit your lifestyle as well, whether you want to live alone with a pet or with several Virginia Tech classmates. Studio, one, two and three bedroom apartments - many with an optional den are available at Windsor Hills. Dishwashers are in every unit, as well as central heating and air conditioning.

Planning to graduate early? Six-month leases are an option as well, but have limited availability. Subleasing is also an allowed option.

The real question though always comes



down to price and ease of finding a rental. You can apply for an apartment online – yes, you don't even have to get up -- and the price you are quoted on the day you submit a lease application is the price you will pay. Windsor Hills also offers special promotions on fees and discounts on rent.



Contact: Windsor Hills

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Best of Blacksburg 2015 Results

Best of Blacksburg voting was conducted Jan. 18-Feb. 8 at bestofblacksburg.com.

The top three winners in each category will get a Best of Blacksburg certificate and window decal.

FOOD & DINING

Best Place to Get Breakfast

1. Gillie's
2. Mill Mountain Coffee & Tea
3. Next Door Bake Shop
4. Bollo's
5. Joe's
5. Lefty's
7. Our Daily Bread
8. London Underground
9. Subway
10. Boudreaux's

Best Bakery

1. Our Daily Bread
2. Bollo's
3. Next Door Bake Shop
4. Mill Mountain Coffee & Tea
5. Carol Lee Donuts

Best Burger

1. Mike's Grill
2. Five Guys
3. Sharkey's
4. Blacksburg Taphouse
5. Lefty's

Best International Fare

1. Souvlaki
2. Café de Bangkok
3. Pita Vera
4. Zeppoli's
5. Himalayan Curry Café

Best Vegetarian Fare

1. Gillie's
2. The Cellar
3. Himalayan Curry Cafe
4. Zeppoli's
5. Pita Vera



FILE / COLLEGIATE TIMES

Your favorite Mexican fare comes from Cabo Fish Taco, according to this year's survey.

Best Mexican

1. Cabo Fish Taco
2. El Rodeo
3. Moe's
4. Wicked Taco
5. Chipotle

Best Subs

1. Sub Station II
2. Souvlaki
3. Subway
4. Jimmy John's
5. Sycamore Deli

Best Pizza

1. Benny Marzano's
2. Papa John's
3. Domino's
4. Mellow Mushroom
5. The Cellar

Best Sushi

1. Green's
2. Sake House
3. Poor Billy's
4. Kroger
5. Sushi Factory

Best Wings

1. Buffalo Wild Wings
2. Sharkey's
3. PK's
4. Bull & Bones
5. Champs

Best Delivery

1. Jimmy John's
2. PK's
3. DP Dough
4. Benny Marzano's
5. China Inn

Best Late Night

1. Benny Marzano's
2. DP Dough
3. The Cellar
4. Jimmy John's
5. Waffle House

Best Coffee

1. Mill Mountain Coffee & Tea
2. Next Door Bake Shop
3. Strange Coffee
4. Red Rooster Coffee
5. Bollo's

Best Ice Cream or Sweet Treats

1. Frosty Parrot
2. Sweet Frog
3. Deet's
4. Gobble Cakes
5. Cook Out

Best Place to Eat on Campus

1. West End
2. Turner Place
3. D2
4. Burger 37
5. ABP

Best Overall Restaurant

1. Zeppoli's
2. The Cellar
3. Social House
3. Cabo Fish Taco
5. Bull & Bones
5. Black Hen
7. 622 North
8. Sal's
9. Lefty's
10. Poor Billy's

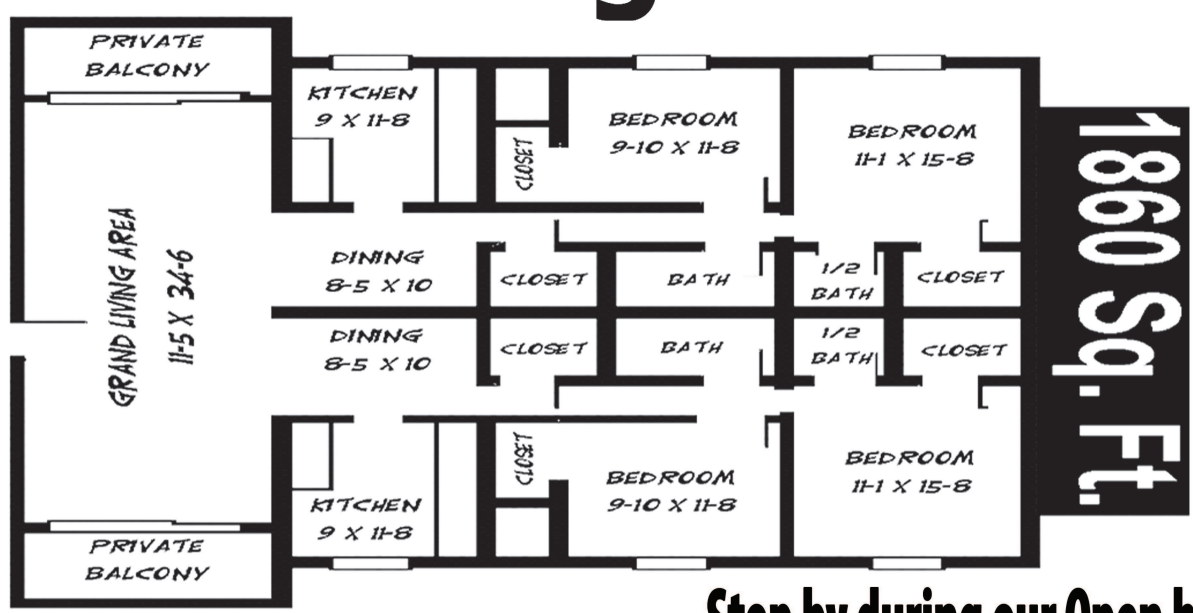
see **ENTERTAINMENT** / page 6

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ENTERTAINMENT

Best Festival or Event

1. Steppin' Out
2. Blacksburg Brew Do
3. Blacksburg Farmers Market
4. International Street Fair
5. Relay for Life

Best Hiking Trail

1. Cascades
2. McAfee Knob
3. Dragon's Tooth
4. Huckleberry Trail
5. Pandapas Pond, Tinker Cliffs, Kelly's Knob

Best Golf Course

1. Pete Dye River Course
2. Cox's Driving Range
3. The Meadows
4. Blacksburg Country Club

5. The Hill
Best Place to Take a Date

1. The Lyric
2. Any Tech Sporting Event
3. Horticulture Gardens
4. Social House
5. Center for the Arts

Best Karaoke

1. Top of the Stairs
2. Champs
3. Bull & Bones

Best Place to Hear Music

1. Sycamore Deli
2. Center for the Arts
3. The Lyric
4. 622 North
5. Burruss Hall

Best Local Band or Singing Group

1. Juxtaposition
2. VT Sensations
3. Naturally Sharp
4. Deral Fenderson
4. Concord

Best Place to Watch Sports

1. Buffalo Wild Wings
2. Sharkey's
3. Champs
4. Macados
5. Bull & Bones

Best Darts or Pool

1. Hokie House
2. Champs
3. London Underground
4. Macados
5. Bull & Bones

Best Place to See a Movie

1. The Lyric
2. NRV Mall – Regal Cinemas
3. Starlite Drive In

Best Day Trip

1. Tubing the New River
2. Mountain Lake Lodge
3. Winterplace Ski
4. Shopping in Roanoke
5. New River Expeditions Rafting

Best Happy Hour/ Drink Special

1. Hokie House
2. The Cellar
3. Sharkey's
4. Macados
5. Big Al's

Best Cocktail

1. Sharkey's
2. Top of the Stairs
3. Bull & Bones
4. Hokie House
5. Social House

Best Bartender

1. Julia Novario (The Cellar)
2. Tim Curtis (Hokie House)
3. Russ Tyree (TOTS)
4. Becca Reynolds (Big Al's)
5. Grayson Lucas (Sharkey's)

see **SERVICES** / page 10



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Tuesday, April 7–Saturday, April 11, 2015
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Thursday, April 9, 8 PM
Omar Offendum with guests VT Expressions

Offendum is a Syrian-American hip hop artist, designer, poet, and peace activist. VT Expressions, a student organization dedicated to free expression in art, music, and poetry, opens the concert.

Friday, April 10, 8 PM
An Evening of Comedy: Maysoon Zayid and Maz Jobrani

Zayid is a Palestinian-American professional stand-up comedian, writer, actress, co-founder and co-executive producer of the New York Arab American Comedy

Festival. Jobrani is a founding member of The Axis of Evil Comedy Tour, which first aired on Comedy Central, and has two Showtime specials, most recently, *I Come in Peace*.

Saturday, April 11, 8 PM
Kayhan Kalhor and Brooklyn Rider

Kalhor is an Iranian kamancheh virtuoso and Brooklyn Rider is an American string quartet.

Each performance above \$10 for students with ID.
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With all the amenities offered, it is easy to see why Collegiate Times readers voted Foxridge No. 1 apartment community in Blacksburg. There are clubhouses, swimming pools, basketball and tennis courts, as well as fun social events that allow residents to meet their neighbors and make new friends!

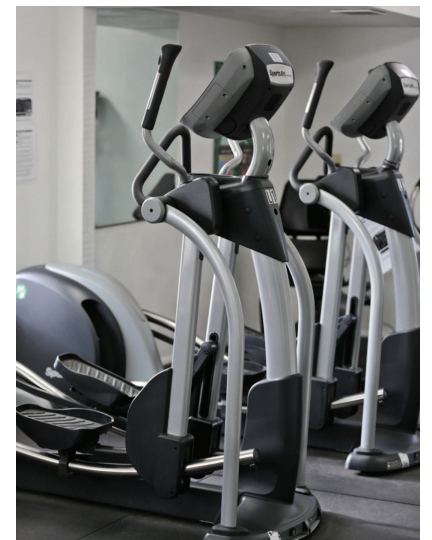
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Family restaurant serves breakfast favorites

CALLI ZARPAS
staff writer

Widely considered the most important meal of the day, breakfast has won the hearts (and stomachs) of people across the nation. When the Blacksburg community thinks of breakfast, it thinks of the French bakery and restaurant, Our Daily Bread.

Located on Main Street, the space is home to everything from French toast and omelettes to macaroons and croissants to steak and soup.

Aurore Tellier, who owns Our Daily Bread along with her parents Danielle and Thierry Tellier, joined Our Daily Bread over a year ago.

"I'm originally from Houston and (my parents) called about a year ago and asked if (my husband and I) would want to work with them," Tellier said. "We saw it as an opportunity so we decided to come here and try it out. I've been in the hospitality industry forever now. So I went to school

for that and worked in corporate in country clubs and hotels and thought I would try this out."

Originally from France, her parents took over Our Daily Bread five years ago and put a French twist on the bakery. The couple also owned two bakeries in Houston, Texas.

"My dad has always been huge entrepreneur. It sounds kind of corny, but the feeling of waking up every morning and knowing you're your own boss and that you can do something every day that makes people really happy," Tellier said. "And that people come back everyday and eat our food every day. That's a pretty big inspiration when you're in this industry knowing that you have a happy crowd that follows you."

The menu offers a diverse range of foods including breakfast, brunch, bakery and dinner items.

"Seeing that we're a French bakery, I would suggest any of our French macaroons. The French macaroons, our baguette sandwiches, any of our soups. I would



BEN WEIDLICH/ COLLEGIATE TIMES

Located on Main Street, Our Daily Bread serves everything from French toast to steak and soup.

tell everyone to just keep coming back and try something new every time they come because I think that's the easiest way to discover everything that we have here," Tellier said.

Colette Julson, a junior biological systems engineering

major from Tennessee, provided some helpful hints regarding her "love affair" with Our Daily Bread.

"The constant of my friends and me going is someone has to get French toast because it is so good," Julson said.

Julson had been a longtime breakfast-goer, but recently decided to try Our Daily Bread's dinner menu.

"It is such a diverse menu, you would think that it's only kind of a breakfast spot because it's known as a bakery, but I went there with some friends for dinner the other day and it was also so good," Julson said. "I got this tomato soup and it was probably one of the best tomato soups I've ever had. That was such a pleasant surprise because I was zero percent expecting it to be good outside of breakfast time."

Although Julson comes for the food, she finds she stays around for the ambience.

"It has such good atmosphere. They have a really nice color scheme and bottomless coffee so that's so nice. So you get to go up and get yourself a refill and try all the different flavors. Sometimes when we go they have someone with a guitar or a singer and it just adds to the calm and relaxed atmosphere," Julson said.

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3. Tech Tan
4. Club Tan
5. Palm Beach Tan

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2. The Weight Club
3. In Balance Yoga
4. War Memorial Gym
5. Blacksburg Rec Center

Best Tattoo Shop

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2. Hot Rod Tattoo
3. Rendezvous
4. Star City Tattoo
4. Asylum Roanoke

Best for Copies

1. A-1 Copies
2. UPS Store
3. Professional Services
4. Kopy Korner
5. Newman Library

SHOPPING & GROCERY**Best Grocery Store**

1. Kroger
2. Eats
3. Oasis
4. Annie Key's
5. Walmart

Best Wine Selection

1. Vintage Cellar
2. Kroger
3. Zeppoli's



FILE

Torgersen Bridge is your favorite place to study on campus, as voted in this year's survey.

4. Social House
5. Blackstone Grill

Best Beer Selection

1. The Cellar 6-Pak Store
2. Vintage Cellar
3. Kroger
4. Oasis
4. Blacksburg Taphouse

Best Bookstore

1. Tech Bookstore
2. University Bookstore and Volume II
3. Bookholders
4. Barnes and Noble
5. Amazon.com

Best Flowers/Gifts

1. D'Rose
2. Uncommonly Gifted
3. Henebry's
4. Best Wishes
5. Kroger

Best Jewelry

1. Kent Jewelers
2. Capones
3. Best Wishes
4. Henebry's
5. Aureus Jewelry

Best Sporting Goods

1. Back Country Ski and Sports
2. Blue Ridge Mountain Sports
3. Runabout Sports

4. Play it Again Sports
5. Dick's

Best Clothing Store

1. Fringe Benefit
2. Mad Dog
3. Bonomo's
4. Chantilly Lace
5. 310 Rosemont

Best Tech Gear

1. Campus Emporium
2. Alumni Hall
3. Tech Bookstore
4. University Bookstore
5. High Peak Sportswear
5. Walmart

HOUSING**Best On-Campus**

1. Lee Hall
2. Ambler Johnston Hall
3. Peddrew-Yates Hall
3. New Hall West
5. Slusher Hall

Best Apartments

1. Foxridge
2. The Edge
3. Maple Ridge
4. Terrace View
5. Windsor Hills

Best Place to Buy Dorm, Apartment Décor

1. YMCA
2. Goodwill
3. Matrix Gallery

3. Second Time Around
5. NRV Furniture

Best Storage Facility

1. Commonwealth Storage
2. Schleppy's Storage
3. Tuck It In Storage

Best Place to Study

1. Torgersen Bridge
2. Newman Library
3. Duck Pond
4. Residence Hall or Apartment
5. Squires Student Center

Best Healthcare

1. Carilion Clinic/Velocity Care
2. LewisGale
3. Valley Women's Clinic
4. Tuck Chiropractic
5. Schiffert Health Center

Best Hotel

1. Inn at Virginia Tech
2. Main Street Inn
3. Clay Corner Inn
4. Hilton Garden Inn
5. Holiday Inn

Best Ride/Cab Service

1. Hooptie Ride
2. Blacksburg Transit
3. Uber
4. Safe Ride
5. Home Ride

Best Bathroom

1. Bull & Bones
2. Squires 2nd Floor
3. The Lyric
3. Top of the Stairs
5. Inn at Virginia Tech

Best Radio Station

1. WUVT 90.7
2. The Bear 105.3
3. WVTF 89.1
4. Star Country 94.9
5. Alternative Project 96.7

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2. collegiatetimes.com
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What Restaurant Do You Wish We Had in Blacksburg?

1. PF Chang's
2. Chili's
3. Zaxby's
4. Cheesecake Factory
5. Noodles and Company

What Store Do You Wish We Had in Blacksburg?

1. Trader Joe's
2. Whole Foods
3. Kohl's
4. Forever 21
5. J. Crew

Your Favorite Bartender: Julia Novario (The Cellar)

SAM SMITH
lifestyles staff writer

Upstairs, The Cellar in downtown Blacksburg is an award-winning restaurant.

In the restaurant and 6-PAK store on the main level, there is a homey vibe. Downstairs, however, there is a very different atmosphere.

"Upstairs is more of a restaurant and dining," said Julia Novario, who has been a bartender at The Cellar for nine years. "Downstairs is more of a fun speakeasy kind of dive-y cocktail bar where you can talk to people and have a more intimate conversation."

Although Novario moved around a great deal when she was younger due to her father being in the Navy, she eventually settled down in Blacksburg to attend Virginia Tech.

She graduated from Tech as an undergrad in 1998 and again as a graduate student in

2002, with a master's degree in English. However, she did not start bartending at The Cellar until 2005.

"I started here in 2005, but I've been in the restaurant business since I was 17, so I started as a dishwasher and I just kept moving up," Novario said.

Because Novario has been working as a bartender for so long, she claims that she is so used to the nightly hustle and bustle of working late hours that it has simply become a part of her schedule.

In fact, she compared bartending on a good night to being "the host of a giant party."

"If it goes well, it's fun and everyone has a great time," Novario said.

Unlike some of the bars around downtown Blacksburg, The Cellar is known to have an eclectic crowd, Novario said.

"Especially at The Cellar, we have a really good mix of clientele, we sort of have more

grad students and professors than undergraduates," Novario said. "We have a lot of international students and locals as well, so it makes a cool atmosphere."

However, more undergraduates frequent The Cellar for Hammer Time, a happy hour-like event.

"It's a fun time," Novario said. "You have to have two people on a pitcher, but it's fun to try expensive beers that you may not be able to otherwise."

According to Novario, with Halloween just around the corner, students and community members should prepare for some odd events happening at The Cellar.

"I'm glad it's this time of year; you see some odd costumes. (People) have masks ... and they haven't really thought about the fact that they're going to be drinking, so they're trying to figure out how they're going to get the drink into the mouth with the mask; it's kind of funny,"

Novario said.

If you're looking for something to get you in the fall mood, The Cellar may offer a few cocktail options with an autumn twist.

"We make our own flavored simple serves with ingredients from my garden or from the farmers market," Novario said. "I like to make up fun, seasonal cocktails."

But if you're in the mood to have a drink that goes along with the "speakeasy" atmosphere of the downstairs bar, there are also a few drinks from the past that you can try.

"I really like Galliano, which is like an herbal-flavored liqueur that not many bars have, and it was used in the fancy cocktails from the '50s and '60s like the Mad Men era," Novario said. "There's this drink called the Golden Cadillac, and it's a martini that's very fancy and sweet. I like those old-fashioned kind of drinks, they're fun to

make."

For a newly 21-year-old student, Novario offered some drink suggestions to make sure that the birthday bash is a breeze.

"I would say that if you're going to order shooters, because I feel like for 21st birthdays people will order shooters, its better to order ten of the same instead of 10 different ones because it's more taxing on the bartender to make 10 different shooters," Novario said.

Novario also cautions that everyone should have a sober friend with them while out drinking to prevent any chance of trouble.

At the end of the day, when Novario is off the clock, she likes to keep her drinks rather simple.

"I normally drink Sailor Jerry and soda water," Novario said. "It's kind of boring, but I call it a sailor, so it's more fun."

(This story first ran Oct. 21 in the Collegiate Times.)



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