DAILY NEWS

September 28, 2014

Bryan Schneider of Park Avenue Autumn pours a Mai Chai. Clockwise from below, Pinnacle Pecan Pie vodka, Banana Cream Pie in a Jar from STK, Butterscotch Treats from Treat House, High Road's Fig and Saba ice cream.

Bored out of our gourd

Mai Chai, $18

(Park Avenue Autumn, 360 Park Ave. South, parkavenyc.com)

This fall version of a Mai Tai looks like it's in a tiki glass from afar, but get close up and you'll see that it's a hollowed-out gourd.

Head barman Bryan Schneider originally imagined the drink would be served in a pumpkin, but found it difficult to get pumpkins that were the right shape to sip from. When chefs added a dish to the menu of fried delicata squash rings – a take on onion rings that's served with a barbecue dipping sauce – Schneider thought they were the perfect size and shape.

So he hollows out delicata squash and freezes them, which keeps the cocktail cold. The drink is crafted with a chai-infused rum made in-house. And the though it's not the standout ingredient here, there is pumpkin involved – in the form of a sweet syrup made from toasted pumpkin seeds and a touch of pumpkin butter.

Schneider came up with the idea for the drink as an homage to the Hurricane Club, a tiki bar that once occupied the space that was most recently the restaurant General Assembly. It reopened Tuesday as Park Avenue Autumn, an eatery that used to be on the Upper East Side and changes decor with the menu and seasons.