

Thursday, June 6, 2019

Flora and fauna meet the science of cocktails and food in Wicker Park.



Credit: Matthew Reeves

Machine: Engineered Dining & Drink Restaurant Review:

About the restaurant & décor: Machine by name, industrial it's not. The vibe here is intentionally romantic, a breath of fresh baby's breath along bar-heavy Division Street. How many Chicago restaurants sport an onsite florist who can create arrangements tableside? Soak up the grandeur throughout — the vintage floral cart, the antique host stand, the bankers' lamps across a sprawling bar and the Insta-story-worthy cocktails, some requiring props (like gold mini hammers) — to fully enjoy.

Likes: The tableside floral service and advance ordering option of arrangements via Tock are luxurious date-worthy touches.

Dislikes: We would love to see some of the flowers spread to the expansive patio.

Food & Drinks: The team behind Headquarters Beercade partners with chef Trevor Hoyte and Aneka Saxon (Violet Hour) to delight diners. Upscale yet approachable, the menu splits shareable plates and larger dishes that elevate American fare. The foie gras burger is decadent with every bite, while the pork croquettes and beans marry kale, andouille sausage and blanquette sauce. Vegetarians aren't forgotten. A power bowl packs in the nutrients from freekeh, quinoa, sweet potato, Brussels sprouts, avocado, radish, 63-degree egg and herb avocado dressing. Bypass dessert for Saxon's cocktail program, which includes Breakfast at Tiffany's, a large format cocktail of gin, watermelon, blueberry, lime and luster dust poured in a glass diamond.