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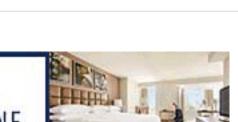
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STYLE



work, style essentials and confidence in all forms.

Ann Marie Coolick about the connective power of her



impressionist images with knives, a technique she has mastered since graduating from Virginia Tech art school in 2002.

doesn't use a paintbrush, and she hasn't for the past 20 years. Instead, she paints

While the Manassas native knew she was going to be an artist since her days at Osbourn Park High School, her parents—who are both scientists—required a backup plan be put in place. So, with a little pressure, Coolick decided to stay an extra year at Virginia Tech and get a business degree. "When you graduate with a degree in fine arts, it's very difficult to immediately become a

professional artist, it's almost impossible," Coolick explains.

To "pay the bills," Coolick worked in government until 2015, painting and showing her work on the side. For the past five years though, she's been able to turn her passion into a full-time profession, creating about 20 one-of-a-kind pieces each month that have generated a following of nearly 80,000 followers on Instagram.

When she's not behind the easel (she's had the same once since her days in college), Coolick is running around with her three elementary school-age boys, shopping for locally made accessories and scanning Instagram for new creatives to follow. Here, she shares what an artist wears to work, why social media matters and how 2020 is going to be big.

On personal style: "I'm kind of a mess honestly. My kids saw this sweater, which is my favorite by the way, and they're like, 'Mommy, you can't wear that; it looks messy.' Most of

like love at first sight."

Ann Marie Coolick's art studio, located in the attic of her home in Arlington. (Photo by Jess Feldman)

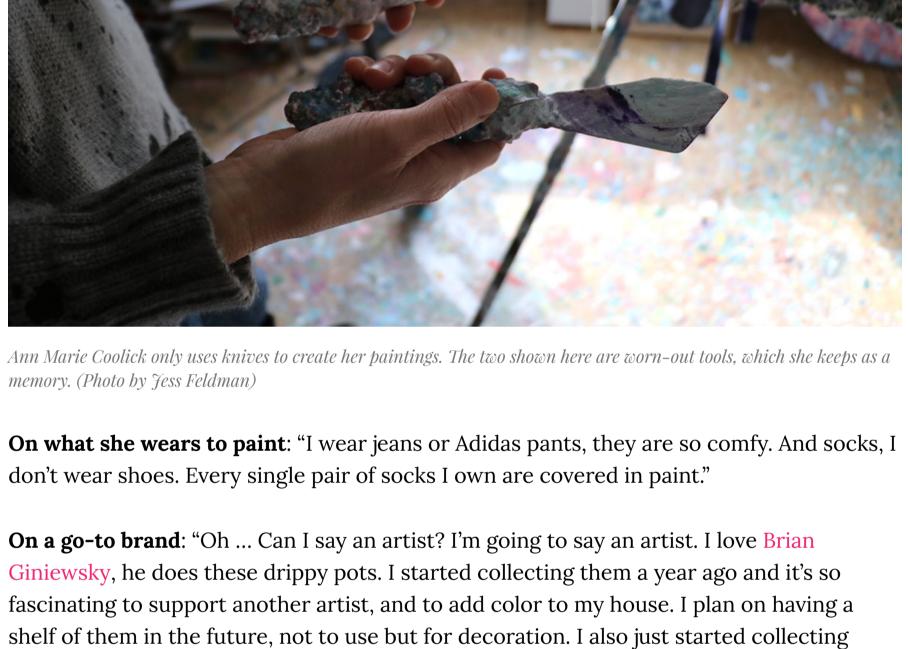
comfortable but colorful, classic but with a pop. My Polka Daubs really reflect it, they are messy and fun."

my clothes that I wear on a day-to-day basis have paint splatters on them. I like to be

On finding a passion: "In the last week of high school, my teacher was like, "OK let's grab

the oil paints," which is something we had never done. I just remember being absolutely

amazed by the texture. Since that point I've just been painting super thick. It was kind of

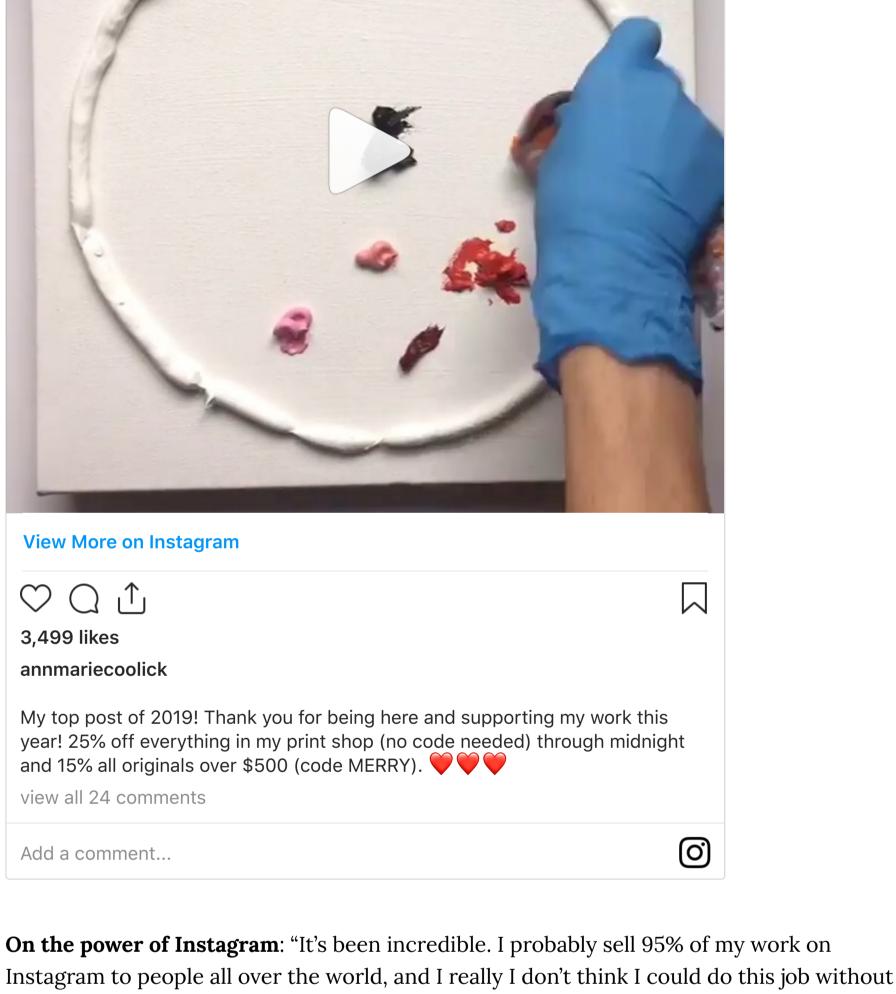


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Shiny Apple Studio and it's super cool pieces of ceramics."

annmariecoolick

83.3k followers



became so much more relaxing to do abstract type of work. Having three boys who are crazy ... it's my own escape. Also, now when people come to me for a commission, they really trust me to make something creative without specific requests. They let me do my thing, which is awesome. When people come with something super specific I feel too restrained."

social media. I share my process and people really like to see that, it connects them to

what I do. My top-three selling cities are New York, Washington, DC and then London.

For me it's really fun, there's no pressure. I love getting the feedback, like in college when

we would have critiques once every two weeks. Now I can get feedback every single day,

especially from the other artists. Probably half of my followers are other artists and it lets

me kind of be like a mentor them. I also like to post work and see if people are interested,

**On artistic evolution**: "I definitely put less pressure on myself to look perfect, both in

clothing and with my work. I used to paint more detailed work, landscapes, monuments

and I got away from that when I had kids. I only had a set amount of time to focus and it

and if it doesn't get attention I work on it further."

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goal of being able to make the same amount I made in government with my artwork, and I'm almost there. I never thought I'd be able to make a living being an artist, it's all so amazing and I can hardly believe it."

The last three items Ann Marie Coolick added to her closet. (Photo by Jess Feldman)

TAGS: ABSTRACT ART, ACCESSORIES, ART, ART SCHOOL, ARTISTS, ARTWORK, BUSINESSES, CLOTHING, COLOR, CREATIVE

On the last three items added to her closet: "I got this long sweater from Nordstrom that

is now one of my favorite things. Then I got this soft hat from Ann Taylor and these

them from this artist on Instagram Kirsten Hatfield, she does '80s-inspired jewelry."

On goals for 2020: "I usually have the same goal every year. So I like to sell about 100

paintings a year, which I've done the past two years. I just want to keep being able to

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paint, and keep attracting people to my work, it's a huge feeling. Then I also have a big

earrings are amazing, I bought them for an '80s night out. Aren't they so cool? I found

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## **Saying Goodbye**

My grandfather had an underlying condition, but that doesn't mean it hurt any less when he passed away from the coronavirus.

BY JESS FELDMAN

t was a Tuesday afternoon when my dad sat down with my mom, brother and me to tell us that my grandfather—a once brave, confident man who had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease for the past eight years—had contracted COVID-19. In a very matter-of-fact manner, as if he'd been preparing for this moment, my dad let us know that our Dulia (a nickname my brother and I gave my grandfather when we were little) was expected to die by the following Monday.

When those words fell from his lips I immediately thought about my favorite person, my grandmother, nicknamed Bulia. Since my grandpa moved into a rehabilitation center nearly a decade ago, Bulia dedicated her life to keeping him healthy. From getting her driver's license reinstated at age 80 in order to visit him every day to micromanaging his attentive nurses, Dulia was her top priority, her day job, her purpose.

Yet when the coronavirus made its way to Massachusetts in March, my strong, Russian, go-getter grandma was told she had to stop visiting for his safety. And now, a month later, another sickness for which there is no cure had gotten to him and there was nothing she could do about it. None of us could. When Northern Virginia, like much of the country, issued stay-at-home orders, I decamped from my house in Arlington to my childhood home in Massachusetts, where I could be close to my family and, it turned out, help my Bulia through her grief.

I knew the statistics: By May, more than 90,000 people had died of the virus in the U.S. But, despite this knowledge, I didn't realize the depth of power and uncertainty surrounding this invisible killer until we heard the facts directly from my grandpa's doctors. "I have to be honest with you," one said. "We don't know how to help him, but we will make him as comfortable as we can."

On April 27, just as the doctors predicted, my grandpa passed away. He was 86, had a preexisting health condition and couldn't walk on his own when the virus made its way into his lungs. Simply put, his body was a magnet for this unexplainable sickness that creeps into the body like fog rolling over the sea on a summer morning-distant at first and then impossible to avoid.

We didn't get to sit shive after his death, a time where family and friends bring food to the home as a grieving ritual per Jewish tradition. We weren't there by his bedside to say goodbye. We didn't get to hug my grandmother the second she found out the man she had been devoted to for 59 years was gone.

Yet, in those final days before he passed, my family and I had time to come to terms with death, a rarity for most. Each night, the five of us sat around the kitchen table (with Bulia on FaceTime), looking at photos of pre-Alzheimer's Dulia—the guy who had the guts to propose to a woman after knowing her for just two days. For the first time in my life, my dad, who rarely opens up about his past, was telling stories about his childhood in Moscow and Dulia's ability to gain the respect of diplomatic leaders with ease.

There are very few things we can control in this life-Alzheimer's disease, the toll of the coronavirus, heartbreak from loss—but I've learned how we approach each situation is always a choice. As seven family members stood under a cherry blossom tree on a sunny day in New England for a pseudo funeral—the only gathering that was allowed with safety restrictions in place—I chose to see the good in that moment: the pink petals flowing through the wind as the rabbi said my grandfather's name, the blue jays chirping almost in sync with the sound of my grandma's tears. These are things I don't think I would have noticed months ago. The coronavirus took my grandfather and I saw firsthand how this disease is wreaking havoc on families. But, that day, at an intimate funeral I wouldn't have previously pictured for my Dulia, I felt lucky that I was able to clasp my grandma's latex-covered hand and see her bright blue eyes above a face mask. None of it was normal, but as my grandpa was laid to rest I could feel Bulia's body let out a deep sigh, as if she had been holding it in for years. At that moment, I knew we'd all be OK.

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NorthernVirginia

HEALTH

# Local entrepreneurs launch new concert series Music with Friends DC

Friends DC)

AUGUST 16, 2019 by JESS FELDMAN

From live music in an intimate setting to pre-cocktail gatherings and after-parties, here's what to expect from this private concert club arriving in the District.



and drive to Sidney Harman Hall where free parking awaits, head up to the cocktail reception featuring high-end food and then proceed to a live concert—featuring icons like Tony Bennett and Diana Ross-before closing the night with an after-party at a

Alex Obuchowski (left) and Barry Feil (right) launched Music With Friends DC in July. (Photo courtesy of Music With

Picture this: It's Saturday night and you're ready for a night out. You pack up your things

designated restaurant in the area. And the best part is, you get to do this three times a year without ever pulling out your wallet throughout the evening.

This is what a typical night would look like for a member of Music With Friends DC, the newly launched concert series that has been thriving in Charlotte and Houston for over a decade. The DC branch of the concept is spearheaded by two entrepreneurs from the Northern Virginia region, Alex Obuchowski and Barry Feil.

Prior to taking a leap and welcoming the concert series to the District, Feil served as CEO of nonprofit Celebrate Fairfax for nearly 15 years, where he ran major festivals, led community outreach programs and grew his love for the arts scene in this region. But Feil didn't just dive into this idea, he had been thinking about it for a long time.

"I first heard about it 10 years ago while I was at Celebrate Fairfax," says Feil. "I was working with my agent and he casually mentioned this program he was working with in North Carolina and I instantly fell in love with it. I thought, what a perfect way for people like me, who love live music but don't want the hustle and crowds, to enjoy the art."



For Feil, the series is about experiencing music in its truest form. Every concert will take

place at the Shakespeare Theatre Company's Sidney Harman Hall, which was specifically chosen for its architecture and size, fitting a capacity of 760 people. Yet for Music With Friends, each performance will cap at 600 seats in order to keep the events intimate and comfortable.

"The key was finding the right venue that had all the boxes checked," says Feil, referring to

"There had to be character to it. The stage is large with great sites for every seat, the roof

elements of size that weren't too large or small, good acoustics and a little bit of history.

Feil expects members will span in personality, ranging from corporate teams to DC couples, but the underlying similarity will be a love for the arts.

is high, making for great sound, and it's in a populated area. It's the perfect venue."

"The event is something people can look forward to for months, and in reality it doesn't really matter who is performing because the experience is always going to be special," says Feil.

But of course, the stars who will make their debut on the Sidney Harman Hall stage are

recognizable names, as the members will have a say in who performs. Each year, the team will send a list of musicians, ranging in genre from classic rock to pop, for members to choose from. As for who Feil would like to see? The Doobie Brothers, The Pretenders and Elvis Costello come to mind. Obuchowski and Feil are currently wrapping up the branding phase of the project, and are

concept. Over the course of the next few months, they will be inviting individuals to come in for dinner or brunch events to continue spreading the word about Music With Friends. While all of this behind-the-scenes action is happening, applications for membership for the inaugural 2020 season are now open. Cost for membership start with an initiation fee that runs from \$800 to \$1,000, followed by a membership fee of \$2,000. "I want to attract people like me who love music and who are just going to cherish what

starting to work with local businesses, corporations and law firms to promote the

bringing them on board." Want to stay up to date with all the latest ventures coming to Northern Virginia and

this is all about," says Feil. "We know there's an audience for this, it's just a matter of

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TAGS: ARTS AND CULTURE, CONCERT SERIES, CULTURE, ENTERTAINMENT, LIVE CONCERTS, MUSIC, MUSIC WITH FRIENDS,

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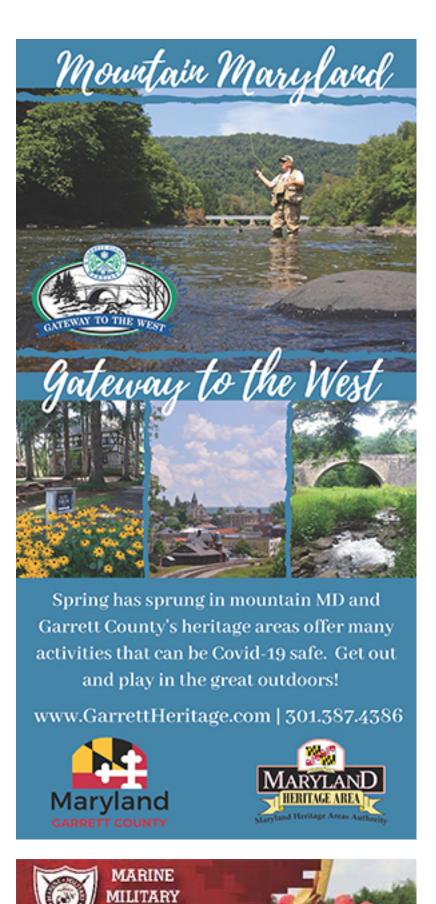
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A Parisian mom living in Arlington is sharing her French skin care secrets with the launch of a DIY beauty company.

#### BY JESS FELDMAN

HEN ELODIE CALLY AND HER HUSBAND MADE THE decision to move to Northern Virginia from their home in Paris, they had everything planned out: the job, the house, the lifestyle—it was foolproof. That was until she discovered she was pregnant the same day they were putting their entire life into a truck to be shipped across the globe. "There was no going back," recalls Cally.

Once settled into her new digs in Arlington, Cally set out to find all-natural skin care products that would benefit both her and her baby. However, something that was once easy to locate in her hometown now seemed nonexistent stateside.

"I discovered that you can basically make anything from anywhere in the U.S.—there's no FDA approval necessary," says Cally. "You can use the words 'natural' or 'organic' and there is no worth to the definition, which I thought was very scary."

That was nearly three years ago. Today—after receiving a degree in cosmetic formulation from Paris and perfecting her recipes—Cally owns Elodie's Naturals, a cosmetic company that doubles as a DIY skin care formulation class, where the students decide exactly what goes on their skin, with guidance from Cally. Conforming to standards of the European Union, Cally uses no more than 15 plant-based ingredients in each product. These include aromas created from a natural blend of essential oils and pigments (for lip gloss and lipstick) extracted from foods like beet root and sweet potatoes.

From her own Arlington kitchen, Cally teaches groups of eight to 10 individuals how to make natural products like facial serum, hair conditioner and lip moisturizer. With small class sizes, Cally can customize each product to the individual by altering the active ingredients. The skin of a teenager, for example, would require a different level of essential oil than that of a new mother.

**32** APRIL 2020

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**About Face** Elodie Cally teaches DIY skin care classes out of her gorgeous kitchen in Arlington. Products include reusable makeup remover pads (top left) and her own line of natural beauty products (bottom left).



"Most people who come to my class are moms, expecting mothers or women who've had experience with cancer; they are people who are very concerned about what goes on their skin," explains Cally. "Now they can see the process and understand exactly what they are putting on their bodies."

In March, Cally expanded her concept to include an online shop where customers can purchase her homemade cleansing balm, two facial serums and dry oil body spray, as well as eco-friendly accessories like reusable makeup remover pads. Former workshop participants can also restock their self-designed beauty products online.

On the horizon, Cally hopes to offer sip-and-design classes, open a brick-and-mortar beauty boutique and start a YouTube channel for beauty mavens not in NoVA. All of her ideas, she says, are inspired by the desire to keep her daughter's (now 3) skin healthy.

"She's the reason I'm doing this, even though she corrects my English now," Cally says with a laugh. // elodiesnaturals.com



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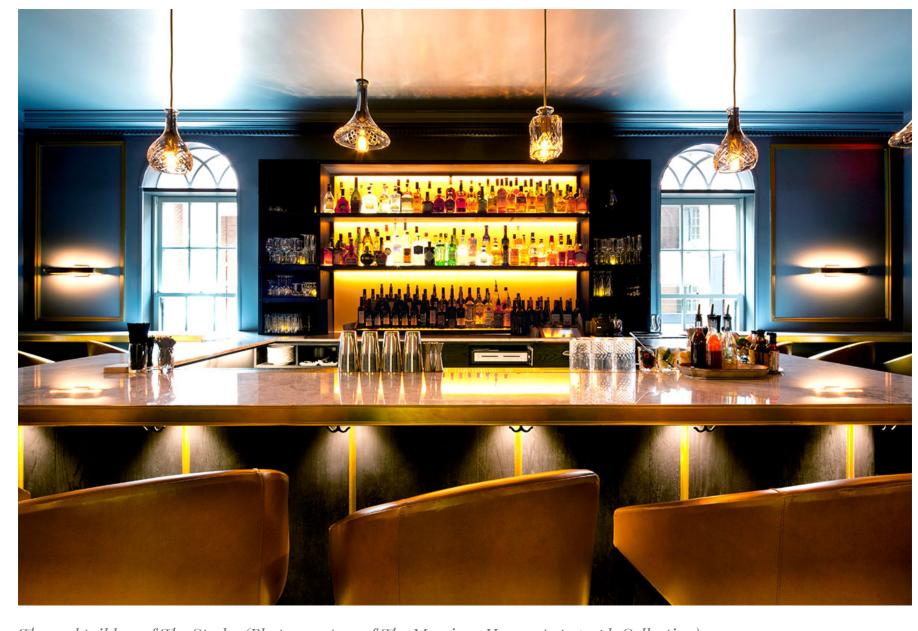


HEALTH

# Inside the rebranding of Morrison House's new dining concept

JUNE 11, 2019 by JESS FELDMAN

From beef-infused Manhattans to walls aligned with literature of the past, Alexandria's famed hotel introduces The Study.



The cocktail bar of The Study. (Photo courtesy of The Morrison House, Autograph Collection)

Stepping into The Study at the Morrison House, Autograph Collection is like stepping into the fantasy home you've always wanted—and that's exactly the point.

General Manager Koli Zeka likes to call, "a gathering place."

As of last Thursday, May 30, the Morrison House rebranded its eatery to be what Assistant

While the establishment serves food and drinks, it certainly isn't what one thinks of when they think of a typical restaurant. The dim lighting, sounds of a piano streaming in from the bar (from Thursday to Saturday) and the modern, yet elegantly classic decor create a vibe of both comfort and curiosity at the same time, which is divergent of the spot's predecessor, MoHo Kitchen + Cocktails. Plus, it's hard not to be entranced by the quotes of literary icons like Ernest Hemingway and Mark Twain that fill the walls.

"With The Study, what we're really doing is we're pushing that the cocktails are the big focus," says head chef Peter McCall, who was brought on by Sage Hospitality three months ago. "Really I think that the difference is ... it is quite a shift from this kind of, you know, small restaurant into a really cool neighborhood cocktail bar."



The dining room of The Study. (Photo courtesy of The Morrison House, Autograph Collection)

The process of rebranding began about a year ago (last July) when Sage Hospitality initially acquired the Morrison House. In order to fully execute the envisioned ideas, though, the right people were needed for the job. Zeka, who has over 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry here in the DMV area and McCall, who has served in a variety of kitchens across the country, were both brought to the team this past March.

Since they came on board, Zeka and McCall have worked together to create a cocktail program of six specialty concoctions. On a humid summer day, the go-to refresher has to be the Gin & Chamomile Milk Punch, made from chamomile tea-infused Hendricks gin, Elderflower liqueur, tings of lemon and lavender bitters. As for Zeka's drink of choice? He goes for the Beef Tallow Manhattan every single time.

day, that's the whole idea behind a great cocktail," Zeka explains.

For the Manhattan to come to fruition, bartender Cynthia Thomas, who has been with the Morrison House for over two years, follows a step-by-step process that leads to the

creation: melt the tallow, infuse it with bourbon, place the liquid in a micron to remove all

fat from the mixture, chill it and, finally, top it off with sherry water and apple bitters. The

cocktail; it has such a unique flavor to it that you want another one. And at the end of the

"You think, 'You're using beef tallow in a cocktail, how is that?' But it's such a unique

result is as delicious as it is detailed.

While the cocktail bar sets the scene, the freshly prepared food is what ties it all together.

For McCall, the change in brand has given him the opportunity to get back in touch with

"About probably five or six years ago, I really had this kind of homecoming to my style of cuisine," says McCall. "After traveling all over and working in Michelin-star kitchens in London, and being in very kind of high-level fine dining, I really came back to the soul food that I grew up with."

his Southern roots by taking on a new, yet familiar approach to cooking.

The menu is small-plate style with 12 items to choose from. While today it features Spice Grilled Spring Lamb that has hints of barbecue, next week that may change, as chef McCall selects his dishes based on what goods and produce are fresh at that given time. What will stay constant, though, are Mom's Pimento Cheese and Anson Mills Cast Iron Cornbread, both of which are family recipes passed down from McCall's mother and grandmother.

In addition to the rebranding of The Study, The Morrison House's neighboring sister hotel, The Alexandrian, Autograph Collection, also just recently experienced a change in menu at its eatery, Jackson 20, with help from Zeka and McCall. In addition to new featured dishes, Jackson 20 will now be serving brunch daily. // 116 S. Alfred St., Alexandria

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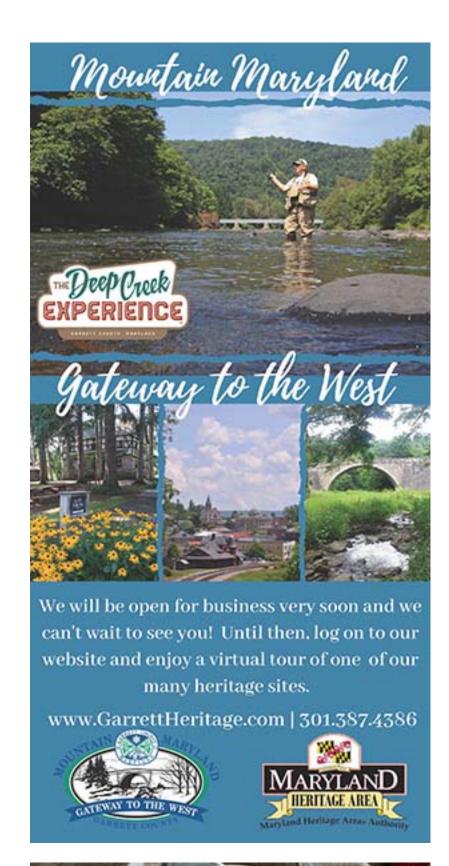
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