

Food & Drink

Eat & drink your way around town Edited by Myffy Rigby

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What's your poison? *Red Belly* Page 30

- ★ Crook
- ★★ Competent
- ★★★ Good
- ★★★★ Great
- ★★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★★★★ Extraordinary



Bars

Red Belly at the Storrier



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DANIEL BOND

Belly up to the bar Snakebite not shown

Whether it's umbrella drinks or champagne cocktails you're wanting, Red Belly will serve it in that vintage style

★★★★★

Umbrella drinks are back and they're staying. Better known as the tackiest of tacky in days of yore, they're now chic as hell and practical to boot – the cocktail umbrella was invented to keep the ice in your drink from melting in the hot tropical sun. They've been traced back as far as 1932 to Trader Vic's (an American chain of Polynesian style restaurants and also the supposed birthplace of the Mai Tai) but it wasn't until the '50s and '60s when Tiki really boomed as a popular culture that the umbrella became a cocktail staple.

At Red Belly – the Storrier Hotel's bar offering which opened a couple of months ago – they're making some great drinks and aren't afraid of an umbrella, themselves. You'll find them in drinks like the Mai Tai (Appleton's rum, orange curacao, orgeat and rock candy syrup topped



Straight up Made with care

with a maraschino cherry) served strong and stout and a classic Tiki drink that's really come back with a vengeance over the past year or so.

But if you're after something a little less festive, you might try the Tom Collins (gin, sugar, lemon juice shaken over ice. Not on the list but



Under my umbrella A cocktail

they'll make one for you if you ask) or order straight off the drinks menu and try one of their classics like the Fancy Brandy Cocktail (Courvoisier VSOP, Grand Marnier and bitters). Drinks like these, though, come at a price and that price is hefty. You can't get a drink on the list for under \$18 and you could find yourself paying up to \$24 for the good stuff.

Speaking of spending the big bucks, there's a type of bourbon behind the bar called Pappy Van

Winkle that goes for \$75 a measure (imagine an Old Fashioned made with that – it'd be the sort of thing you'd drink as your last drink on earth and the nose on it is mind blowing – tobacco, honey and fresh peaches). What brings the vibe down here is the giant plasma screens channeling fashion TV built into the grey marble bar. It's one thing to be sitting there feeling fancy enjoying your cocktail but it's another to have the eerie blue glow of two televisions bouncing up at you and apart from anything else, it seems pretty pointless having them set below the average person's line of sight.

This is more of a transitional bar than somewhere you'd settle in for the evening and get some serious drinking done. That said, you get what you pay for – the drinks are made with skill and care, they're plenty boozy and mostly (with the exception of their very frou frou Berry Blazer) straight up and down the line. Now, if only someone would bring back those plastic cocktail monkeys. 15 Springfield Ave, Potts Point 2011. (02 8988 6999).

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