



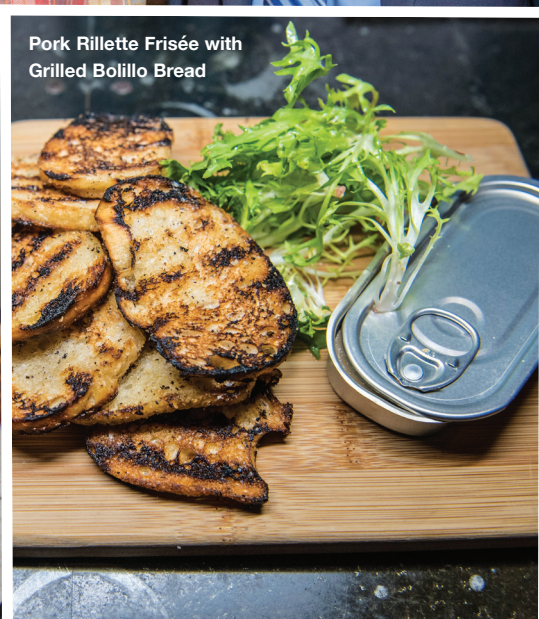
Jacques Driscoll, Nick Austin



Jamie Kaye Walters, Christine Driscoll, Lauren Williams, Milan Boyer



Jeff Lambert, Devon O'Reilly



Pork Rillettes with Grilled Bolillo Bread

# CATCH OF DETROIT

**SOUTHWEST'S HURON ROOM CELEBRATES GREAT LAKES WITH LOCAL FLAVOR AND FLAIR**

If at first you have no idea what to put into a space you've just purchased in Detroit, pull some inspiration from your Michigan roots. For the owners of Huron Room, it worked out pretty darn well and provided a new, yet familiar atmosphere for *Ambassador's* most recent Dinner Party.

## HOME SWEET HOME

Anyone who has wine and dined in Corktown should already be familiar with the names Jacques and Christine Driscoll and Les Molnar. They're the owners of popular and inventive eateries Green Dot Stables and Johnny Noodle King. Their latest hospitality venture called Huron Room, located adjacent to Our/Detroit vodka distillery and tasting room on Bagley

Avenue in Southwest Detroit, pays homage to the Great Lakes and growing up in Michigan.

"I feel like a lot of the concepts that we were throwing around were very ethnic-centric and maybe stuff that would be a little bit of a reach for us," says Molnar, who is also the executive chef at Huron Room. "But at the end of the day, we all kind of settled on what was at home. Michigan was kind of the common denominator between the three of us."

Co-owner and operator Jacques says the group tossed around some pretty crazy ideas – like turning the space into a food market or planning the concept around canned fish – before settling on a fish-and-chips restaurant. "There are so many lakes in Michigan," Jacques says. "You go fishing, and you eat fish."

Huron Room's décor highlights Michigan's maritime background, capturing a calm and tranquil dining experience with accents of sky blues on the chairs and tiled walls, and cloudy whites on the wooden benches, which have metal horn cleats fastened to their sides. The seawall bar built by Andrew Ward, owner and operator of Line Studio Detroit, however, was the element that really brought the owners' concept to fruition.

"Andrew is brilliant," Christine says. "We were like, just go to town on this concept ... and he blew all of our minds. I feel like everything built around that."

And if you still have any doubts as to what you'll find at Huron Room, you only need to take a look at the large trout positioned above





Mushroom & Chicken Wing Skewers



Matthew Trupino, Jennifer Shea, Jacques Driscoll



Paddy Lynch, Jessica Byrne, Les Molnar



Candice Bowman



Gefilte Fishstick with Carrot Tartar, and Scotch Quail Egg with Chipotle Dijon

the entrance that appears to be swimming through the wall.

"There's so much Michigan pride right now," Molnar says. "You look around and everyone has those little Michigan stickers on their cars."

#### FAMILIAR FARE

As Dinner Party guests brought their brews and cocktails to a group of tables along the back wall below a mural, which depicts the retired Huron Lightship and was created by the talented folks at Detroit Wallpaper Co., servers gave them quite the sampling of Huron Room's menu.

Working alongside Head Chef Dan Hine, Molnar put together a selection of samplers, smaller bites and entrées that included: the Gefilte Fishsticks served with carrot tartar; the Brussels Sprout Salad, consisting of leek, fennel, dill and pecorino with lemon vinaigrette; the Michigan meat and cheese board; the Fish &



## Menu

**AMBASSADOR'S DINNER  
PARTY GUESTS GOT TO ENJOY  
A SELECTION OF SAMPLERS,  
SMALLER BITES AND ENTRÉES AT  
HURON ROOM:**

**SKEWERS**  
GEFILTE FISHSTICKS  
VENISON KAFTA  
CAULIFLOWER  
CHICKEN WINGS  
MUSHROOM  
SCOTCH QUAIL EGG

**EXTRA SPECIAL ITEM**  
36-OZ BONE-IN DRY-AGED RIBEYE STEAK

**SALADS**  
BRUSSELS SPROUT  
CHARRED ROMAINE  
APPLE & WALNUT FRISÉE

**MICHIGAN MEAT & CHEESE  
BOARD**

**ENTRÉES**  
FISH & CHIPS  
STEAK & FRIES  
TUR/DUCK/EN MEATLOAF  
PATTY MELT





Darnell Small



Fish & Chips



Adrian Tonon



36-ounce Bone-in Dry-aged Ribeye  
Steak with Pub Sauce, Butter and Fries



Chips, consisting of beer-battered fried fish and fries served with tartar and lemon; the Steak & Fries, consisting of grilled steak, Huron butter, pub sauce, vegetable escabeche and fries; and the Huron Room Patty Melt, made with a half-pound ground beef patty and toasted bread with tartar, caramelized onion, raclette and fries. Dinner Party guests also enjoyed a special item that's occasionally available at Huron Room: a 36-ounce bone-in dry-aged ribeye steak.

"The Great Lakes Basin stretches all the way from Rochester, N.Y., all the way to Wisconsin, so we have our pick of a lot of really good fish throughout the year," says Molnar, adding that everything served at Huron Room is sourced from the Great Lakes region.

As for the drinks, Jacques says it was pretty easy finding Michigan products ranging from wine to liquor. "There's probably like 20 distilleries, and a lot of them we didn't even know, so we got to learn about a lot of these

smaller distilleries," he says. "Everybody knows Bell's, everybody knows Short's, so we wanted to bring one or two of those on, but we didn't want to get too heavy."

While the selection changes frequently, draft beer options include Perrin's 98 Problems and Bell's Hopslam, plus bottled options from New Holland, Jolly Pumpkin and Oddside, to name a few. They also have a selection of meads and ciders.

Huron Room's craft cocktails are nautical and Michigan versions of old-time favorites, like the Michigan Mule made with cinnamon whiskey, Vernors and lemon, or the I-75 made with gin, blanc de blanc Champagne, bolivar bitters and lemon. "Cocktails were a group effort, and it's always changing, too," Jacques says. "Now our bartenders have a little more say in it."

Michigan wine is also available from places like Fenn Valley, Chateau Grand Traverse,

M. Lawrence, Black Star Farms and Good Harbor.

## FRIENDS AND FOOD LOVERS

The evening's Dinner Party guests were an assorted bunch of hospitality industry veterans, old friends, business owners and young professionals.

Guest Matthew Trupino, general manager at Green Dot Stables, was in attendance with his girlfriend, Jennifer Shea. Trupino, who was sipping on the Rez Gets Smashed IPA by Witch's Hat, helped the owners open Huron Room and hired the restaurant's first employees. He especially appreciates the small business aspect of Detroit's food scene.

"You see the owners there, and they're just like you and me," he says. "It's not like some big corporation or anything like that. You can talk to the owner whenever you want."

While it was Jennifer Shea's first time dining at Huron Room, she says she felt





comfortable the minute she opened the door. “It’s really appealing immediately when you walk inside. It’s warm,” says Shea, who first enjoyed Huron Room’s version of a Manhattan and then switched to a Michigan Mule. “I grew up in Michigan, so a lot of the things I see on the menu are very familiar to me.”

Attendees and close friends Lauren Williams and Milan Boyer were seated and waiting for dinner to be served. Williams, who is Dennis Archer Jr.’s executive assistant, had previously been to Huron Room for a bar crawl on Thanksgiving. “It’s really fun in here. It’s cool,” Williams says. “I like the color scheme. I like how it’s laidback, but it’s also a little bit fancier than somewhere I would normally go to hang out.”

Boyer, a freelance video production professional, says the interior first reminded her of an upscale Long John Silver’s with the nautical vibe of the décor. “A Detroit-style type of seafood place,” she adds. “I don’t really know

of a place cool and casual like this, but still very stylized and hip.”

Detroit entrepreneur Darnell Small, who plans on opening a dinner theater in Midtown this year, says he’s definitely a “fish-and-chips kind of guy,” although he prefers to enjoy his with some vinegar. He finds the growing diversity in Detroit’s food scene exciting and applauds the work of Mayor Mike Duggan’s office. “Our new administration is doing a fantastic job with the diversity,” he says.

Nick Austin, the host of WDET’s New Soul Sunday and longtime friend of Jacques, was lucky enough to have attended Huron Room’s soft opening. “It’s absolutely gorgeous. I think they do a great job with the theme,” he says. “I really like juxtaposing that to Jacques’ other locations because they all have distinct themes.”

Jeff Lambert, president of the public relations firm Lambert, Edwards & Associates, was attending the dinner party with friend

Candice Bowman, who does business development for Detroit architecture firm Hamilton Anderson Associates.

“One of my side jobs is to find new places to eat and drink at in Detroit, so I’m really excited to come here,” Lambert says. “Each one is unique in its own way – unique so you want to go back.”

It was Bowman’s first time dining at Huron Room, as well, and she says she really enjoys the growing focus on local products and ingredients in Detroit’s food scene. “Everyone is really big on incorporating local products,” Bowman says. “I’ve seen it done very successfully. ... It’s always exciting to see people pouring into Detroit’s economy from farmers all the way to the table, and helping and supporting Detroit’s businesses.” 👑 — Audrey LaForest

*Huron Room is located at 2547 Bagley Ave. in Detroit. Call 313.265.3325 or visit [huronroom.com](http://huronroom.com).*