



# dining



Bottles line the wall behind the bar at Terry's Lounge in the Cypress Inn in Carmel.  
SUBMITTED PHOTO

## CYPRESS INN LAUNCHES NEW COCKTAIL MENU

**BY ELAINE GIULIANO**  
For Off 68

**A** bustling Friday night, stylish clientele, an intimate, dimly lighted bar with distinctly Moroccan accents, clinking glasses ... a scene out of 1950s Hollywood? Try Terry's Lounge at the iconic Cypress Inn in Carmel. Famously co-owned by actress Doris Day and her business partner, Denny LeVett, the inn was the

first pet-friendly lodging in Carmel. Indeed, locals have re-christened happy hour "Yappy Hour" (4:30 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday) in honor of the four-legged clientele, whose humans can order them a "Muttini" (a big bowl of water). Terry's Lounge held a party Oct. 14 to celebrate its new cocktail menu, which is all about retro-Hollywood swank and swagger. The lounge, which is named after Day's late

son, musician and producer Terry Melcher, also serves a Mediterranean-influenced menu of small plates, ideal for sharing. According to Amanda LeVett, executive director of inns (including sister properties Carmel Forest Lodge, The Vagabond's House, and the Lamp Lighter Inn and Sunset House), one goal of the Cypress Inn is "to be respectful and true to what the hotel is — a local

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### Lounge

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institution." She noted that many of the guests come back year after year and locals come in regularly for drinks and food. "We're not always re-creating ourselves," she said, explaining that managers avoid big changes that would ruin the inn's character.

If a "local institution" conjures up images of stuffiness, think again. To create the new cocktail menu, said LeVett, who is co-owner Denny LeVett's daughter, managers just started asking, "What did Doris Day's co-stars like to drink?"

The quest led to the discovery that Cary Grant was a big fan of the Stinger, and it took off from there. From the creamy, nutty "Plenty O'Toole" to the zesty "Between the Sheets," the cocktails are smooth, sophisticated and balanced. Launch party guests oohed and ahhed over each other's drinks, exchanging glasses while exclaiming, "Try this!" Drinks are made with freshly squeezed juices — LeVett and the rest of the inn's team are determined to use as much organic, sustainably grown and local product as possible in creating the inn's menus.

Alas, the search for a Frank Sinatra-themed drink came up dry — apparently Old Blue Eyes was ultra-fussy about his drinks, down to the number and shape of ice cubes, and he didn't like a lot of variation. Not much there to inspire the

imagination, but the cocktail menu is more than sufficient in its scope without Frank's presence.

The food offerings include a sweet and tangy mango crab salad (\$12), grilled pitas with a trio of spreads: smooth red pepper hummus, garlicky black bean hummus and cucumber yogurt (\$6), and perfectly fried shoestring sweet potatoes with a slightly spicy dipping sauce (\$6). The smoked trout with a hint of horseradish and a fresh, crisp apple topping on toasted pumpernickel bread (\$8) was a real standout. The texture and sweetness of the apple complement the smoked trout perfectly. The obligatory Monterey Bay calamari (\$9) was cooked perfectly and served with a spicy harissa aioli.

Laughter and energetic conversation from the lively Friday afternoon crowd spilled out into the street, a happy — even tail-wagging — accompaniment to the stunning Carmel sunset. Terry's Lounge strikes an enviable balance: the Doris Day and Terry Melcher memorabilia pay homage to the inn's history, but the lounge's high standards and stylish surroundings are, like the Lady herself, timeless.

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