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Shaking up Galentine's with cocktail-crafting at The Collegiate



The class was for Galentine's of all ages who wanted to share a night learning about different cocktails.

Photo by [Meg Garrett | Photographer](#) | The Auburn Plainsman

By [Ella Walton | Newsletter Editor](#)

February 14, 2025 | 8:00am CST

With romance in the Auburn air as Valentine's Day nears, it is easy for platonic relationships to be overlooked. It is in the celebration of friendship that The Collegiate Hotel, a 40-room boutique hotel in Downtown Auburn, decided to host a Galentine's cocktail-crafting class on Feb. 13.

The class took place on the hotel's closed-in patio, warm lighting and Valentine's decorations adorning the space. Hannah Wirth, daughter of The Collegiate Hotel owners Brian and Kim Wirth, was the instructor for the evening's demonstration.



[Meg Garrett | Photographer](#)

Hannah Wirth lead tonight's class by making the cocktails up front for Galentine's to see and learn how to make their cocktail.

Wirth has worked as a bartender at The Collegiate for years and recently graduated from Auburn with a degree in hospitality management. The skills she picked up from these experiences were translated into material for this year's cocktail-crafting class.

Last year was the first time the hotel hosted a Galentine's event after realizing that there aren't many other events in the area to celebrate the day.

"We had had people in the past ask us we'd put on cocktail-making classes just because our bar is known for its craft cocktails, using unique recipes and using locally sourced ingredients and home-making a lot of our syrups and things," Wirth said. "So, we kind of threw around the idea, and then when we were coming up with a Valentine's Day event, it was kind of something I didn't see around the area."

Whereas last year's theme was centered around learning the basics of cocktail-making, this year's was focused on teaching guests how to be great hostesses.

According to Wirth, the 35 ticket spaces for this year's event were sold out within the first week they were made available. They expanded the event's seat space to allow 45 seats — quickly selling out of those, too.

The class, which lasted from 6 to 8 p.m., included instructions on how to make three different cocktails.

"I love hosting people, so the first cocktail I'm teaching is how to batch a cocktail. When you make a large batch, everyone can pour their own portions," Wirth said.

The first drink on the evening's menu was an espresso martini, followed by a lavender martini. The final cocktail of the night included Opelika's Spoonlight sorbet topped with Prosecco.

"[The last one] is an easy cocktail to make — you're just topping an ice cream or simple syrup with your favorite bubbles," Wirth said.

After Wirth gave the run-down on how to make each drink, servers distributed cups for the guests to immediately enjoy. Between cocktail recipes, many attendees flocked to the charcuterie and dessert spread located in the center of the patio.



[Meg Garrett | Photographer](#)

A large charcuterie board was there for guests to snack on as the night went on.

As the night progressed, it appeared that the espresso martini wound up being the crowd favorite.

“We all love espresso martinis, so the batch recipe is really going to come in handy,” said Natalie Latham, a recent Auburn graduate and event attendee.

Brittany Alexander, an Auburn local, attended the event with nine other women to celebrate a friend’s birthday. Like Latham, Alexander was most excited about the first cocktail.

“I think the espresso martini can go with anything,” Alexander said.

At the end of the night, participants were able to make their own cocktail using their choices of liquor, simple syrups, juices and garnishes. Each Galentine's Day guest left The Collegiate’s cocktail-making class with a recipe on how to be a "hostess with the mostest."

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Ella Walton, majoring in English literature with a minor in creative writing, currently serves as the Newsletter Editor at The Auburn Plainsman. Formerly the Culture Editor, Walton has been with The Auburn Plainsman since the fall of 2023.



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