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Ready for its Close-up

Mercadito's cocktail list lets tequila strut its stuff

For years, a great tequila cocktail in Chicago meant a margarita at Frontera Grill. But there's a new list in town, and it goes far beyond the standards.

[Mercadito](#), a New York-based Mexican restaurant, has come to Chicago and brought the [Tippling Bros.](#) with them. For the occasion, the drink duo has crafted a bold, all-tequila cocktail list.

The aromatic Misty Sleeve (named for a friend's hibiscus tattoo) mixes blanco tequila with ginger liqueur, Gran Marnier, citrus, hibiscus concentrate and a splash of El Yucateca hot sauce. The fruity and smooth Big Nose Goes to Mexico (pictured) is a blend of guava, blanco and añejo tequilas, Orgeat syrup, bitters and lime--garnished with a flaming, rum-filled, inside-out lime rind and a rim of rosy hibiscus salt.

The flavors are big, but even those in the "tequila=ta-kill-ya" camp will be pleasantly surprised at the balance and drinkability. It helps that your cocktail is mixed to perfection by an old pro: You'll find a roster of Chicago drink-world veterans, like Jennifer Contraveos (La Madia) and Daniel de Oliveira (Boka), behind the stick.

A downstairs cocktail lounge called Double A will follow in a month or so. There you'll find a different cocktail list and a T-shaped bar that gives full access to the bartenders. Hint: Ask them about the "souvenir tequila" from south of the border....

Mercadito, 108 W. Kinzie St.; 312-329-9555 or mercaditochicago.com

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