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Seven Troughs Speakeasy serves offerings like this corned beef hash, waffles and charcuterie board.

PHOTO/ALLISON YOUNG

Bottoms up

St. Paddy's fell on a Sunday this year, so a brunch visit to the recently opened Seven Troughs Speakeasy seemed apropos. An offshoot of Seven Troughs Distilling in Sparks, the decor and craft cocktail menu—featuring house-produced spirits—are intended to evoke the days of Prohibition. Its basement location in an art deco building—formerly home to Reno's downtown post office—certainly doesn't hurt.

A Bloody Mary (\$8) made with Snowline vodka and house mix was presented in the classic style—complete with celery garnish. It had great flavor and just enough spice. A bees knees cocktail (\$9) of Argentum gin, honey lavender syrup and lemon juice was a little sweet, with a refreshing finish. My spirits sampler (\$8) included half-ounce tastes of Argentum gin, Old Commissary whiskey, Black Rock rum and Seven Troughs bourbon. The gin was definitely worth sipping on its own, not that it wouldn't perk up any cocktail. The rum and white whiskey were fine, but the bourbon's two year cuddle with oak made it star of the lineup.

We shared a plate of roasted chicken wings (\$10) in moonshine barbecue sauce, and I was surprised at how crispy they were. The sauce was a little smoky, a little sweet and just a hint boozy. Bonus for being served with chunky bleu cheese dressing and plenty of celery and carrot.

Three folks ordered the corned beef hash special (\$11), a decent plate of meat and potatoes topped with a pair of fried eggs. One asked to have hollandaise poured over the whole thing, which I would call a genius move. The hash itself was fairly salty, but the sauce made a perfect accent—I was lucky enough to get more than a couple of bites. We agreed it should be permanently added to the menu.

The rest of our order consisted of a jambon beurre sandwich (\$9) of thin sliced ham, Gruyere and honey dijon butter, stuffed in a crusty roll made with spent distilling grain and served with a pear vinaigrette salad on the side; a pair of waffles (\$6) with bourbon barrel syrup, whiskey whipped cream and a side of thick cut, oven roasted bacon (\$4); and a plate of eggs Benedict (\$8) constructed with plenty of applewood smoked ham.

As the plates were being served, a mini pitcher of waffle syrup was accidentally upended on the seat of one diner; a fair amount ended up on my sandwich and salad. The owner and his staff were quick to apologize and render assistance, then presented us with a round of complimentary bourbon cask pours (normally \$14 each). It's straight bourbon from the cask, 124 proof and my idea of heaven. I thanked my sticky friend for her unintended sacrifice.

Of course, I could have asked for a new plate, but I was curious about the syrup/sandwich combo. The syrup itself was the highlight of my friend's not-quite-crispy waffles, and its well-developed notes of vanilla and caramel actually kind of worked with the quality ham and cheese. Half of my simple salad had a light notion of pear and vinegar, the other half was not something I'd recommend. My friend's Benedict was really good, and I'll take that ham over Canadian bacon any day.

Despite the momentary misadventure, we enjoyed our meals and beverages and headed out—well fortified—to tackle the rest of the holiday. □

Seven Troughs Speakeasy

50 S. Virginia St.

Seven Troughs Speakeasy is open Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.