

The Bulletin

Dropping in on Jackson Hole

Arts and adventure in the shadow of Wyoming's Grand Tetons

By John Gottberg Anderson / For The Bulletin

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Restaurateur Gavin Fine, right, poses with a manager at his newest Jackson bistro, Bin 22. Behind the men is a cask of Wyoming Whiskey, which produced its first bourbon in late 2012. Photo by John Gottberg Anderson

Fashion and food

The kickoff event for the Fall Arts Festival was the Western Design Conference Fashion and Jewelry Show. Held in the town's chic Center for the Arts, it drew several hundred supporters of the wearable arts, most of whom were themselves decked out in contemporary Western style. The fashion purveyors came from as far away as New York, and price tags ranged as high as \$39,200 for a silver-and-gold concha belt with 2½ carats of inset diamonds.

My budget doesn't allow me such extravagance. I'm more inclined to spend my dollars on good food and drink, as at Bin 22, the latest venture of local restaurateur Gavin Fine, partner in a half-dozen Jackson-area businesses since he established the Rendezvous Bistro in 2001.

"Cooking has become very sexy," said Fine, who admitted that when he started his business more than a decade ago, "I used to grab cooks off the street." Now that cooking is regarded as an art in its own right, those days are far behind him.

Bin 22, which opened early this year, couples a rustic Italian kitchen with a wine shop. Fine's chefs showcase Spanish-style tapas as well as regionally produced Wyoming Whiskey, poured straight from a cask behind the marble bar.

I sipped a snifter with the distiller himself, David DeFazio. With substantial support from Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead — younger brother of his business partner, Jackson resident Brad Mead — the bourbon, produced outside the Bighorn River town of Thermopolis, was introduced last December. "We sold all 3,000 cases online in 27 seconds," DeFazio said. "So we're now planning to produce another 1,200 barrels (more than 15,000 cases) this December." There may be art in distilling, but there's also art in marketing.