

“The problem with the world is that everyone is a few drinks behind.” - Humphrey Bogart



Vintage. That's definitely the vibe here. The place feels like a beach house resurrected from a family vacation of the long, long ago days of wood paneled station wagons packed to the roof with a summer's worth of promise. Right through the door there's a classic feel, a definite island vibe but without the usual kitschy accoutrements, just a few well-placed, well-chosen touches, as if left by a succession of summer visitors. An old camera and super-8 projector adorn a side table.

Old black and white snapshots of someone else's summer vacations hang here and there. A nifty '50's Westinghouse radio sits on a shelf behind the bar waiting to break into Sinatra's "Summer Wind."

The throw-back aluminum bar stools beckon. So does the list of specialty cocktails. The names may look a little familiar if you've cruised the Marina. *The Sweet Thing*, *Adagio* and *Last Fling* are all boats. All of the bars specialty beverages are named for marina occupants and regular, including the bar's best seller (and my new favorite summer beverage), the *Dance Aweigh*.

Co-owner Jeff Tillapaugh knows both the beverage and the boat well. The boat belongs to his in-laws.



"It's fresh squeezed lime juice, mango rum and ginger ale," he says. "Pretty simple but very good."

"They go down really easy," says wife and co-owner Jill Tillapaugh.

The idea's generated a bit of a buzz around the marina. "We have people vying to get their boats on the list," she says. "So we keep things on a rotating schedule."

"We also scan the names for something to play off of," says Jeff, "*The Sweet Thing* was a good fit." The namesake drink is made with lemonade and Firefly Sweet Tea Vodka, distilled a short boat ride up the coast on Wadmalaw Island.

The Tillapaughs are still tweaking the fine details of running the bar and restaurant, a little like taking a new boat out on a shakedown cruise. Happy hour is currently geared to "island time" on Dataw and runs 3:30 to 5:30, although that's likely to change. "We do a dollar off draught beer, two dollars off house wine and it's bartender's choice for a three dollar specialty cocktail," says Lauren. "Appetizers and snacks are half price on weekdays."

For some reason I can picture Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos holding down a couple of these bar stools working on fish stories and gins after a long day on the water. Captain Fuentes refuels the Papa's prize possession down at the docks. Perhaps another *Dance Aweigh* while I ponder the makings of a *Pilar*

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Full drink menus and wine list are available at www.sweetgrassdataw.com