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## The boathouse canton

Monday: Tuesday: Wednesday: Thursday: Friday: Saturday: Sunday: See the original article by Wesley Case at the Baltimore Sun. The cost to transform an underused bar into a buzzing hotspot is not cheap. But as the saying goes, when you pay for quality, you only cry once. Just ask Boathouse Canton co-owner Gene Singleton. He confirmed last week that the top-to-bottom renovations made to the former Bay Cafe (which closed in December after more than two decades of business) came with a \$1.1 million price tag. For a guy helping to foot such a bill, Singleton sure sounded happy about Boathouse Canton. (He and his wife, Maureen McEnerney, took control in January and opened the restaurant in mid-April.) That’s because Boathouse Canton has quickly established itself as a waterfront destination. On a recent Saturday night, more than 100 people mingled around the new outdoor bar and patio areas behind the enclosed restaurant. Most sat around dining tables, but a few groups sat under a gazebo on faux-VIP couches. Strings of lights illuminated the outside. Inside, some large parties — most with reservations — ate dinner in the redesigned dining room. Our group took seats at the long communal tables next to the bar and placed drink orders. The names on the cocktail menu were neighborhood-centric, but were rather standard. Most refreshing was the Boston St. Fizz (\$10), a combination of Hendrick’s gin, basil, cucumber, lime juice, simple syrup and club soda. It once again proved that the marriage of high-quality gin and cucumber has merit. The Canton Crush (\$8) read better on the menu (Deep Eddy Sweet Tea Vodka, lemon juice, simple syrup, club soda and Sprite) than it tasted. The nonalcoholic elements were counterproductive — instead of enhancing the vodka, they muddled the flavors to the point of unrecognizability. An Orange Crush (\$8), always a good way of gauging Baltimore bars, also seemed watered-down and in need of a boost of orange flavor, which was surprising since it used Absolut Mandarin vodka, triple sec and orange juice. These crushes needed work. Boathouse’s most significant improvement over Bay Cafe was the installation of 11 beer draft lines. Ten of the 11 options are craft brews, and four are locally brewed. (The outlier is National Bohemian, and really, who’s complaining?) Pints were priced as expected: \$6.50 for a Brewer’s Art Resurrection and \$6 each for Lagunitas IPA, Union Craft Duckpin Pale Ale and Samuel Adams Summer Ale. The sophisticated interior of Boathouse is nice — it feels well suited for meals of large parties — but the outdoor social area remains the biggest draw. It was a change of pace to roam freely, drink in hand, at a Canton bar and not once utter, “Excuse me.” The outdoor bar, which even has four beer taps, was packed that Saturday night, but the smiling bartenders worked quickly to fill empty hands. (Service on this night was noticeably faster and more attentive than a frustrating visit I had weeks prior.) The whole environment is conducive to unrushed conversations, and that is a decidedly good thing. Singleton made it clear that outside is an amenity, and not a focal point. The aim is to attract patrons inside as much as outside, no matter the weather. To make that happen, service must find consistency. If that improves, Boathouse, with its beautiful design, enviable location and improved bar program, could be poised for a long run like its predecessor. The Boathouse Canton Back story: After more than two decades, Canton’s Bay Cafe ended its run at the Tindeco Wharf apartment complex in December. In April, first-time restaurant owners, with the help of designers SM+P Architects (Woodberry Kitchen, Verde), opened Boathouse Canton, a bar and restaurant that hopes to attract a consistent dinner crowd to go along with its outdoor bar. Parking: The adjacent lot is free for patrons Monday-Thursday, and on Friday until 3 p.m. You’ll have to pay, or find free parking along neighborhood streets, at other times. Signature drink: The gin-based Boston St. Fizz (\$10) should hit the spot on a hot day, but it’s the addition of local craft beer served through draft lines — something Bay Cafe could not do — that deserves the applause. SM+P was brought in to renovate an existing waterfront restaurant space for a new owner. SM+P worked closely with the owner to create a contemporary, subtly nautical themed space through new carpentry features such as the bar, drink rail, and a community table. New finishes and colors throughout the restaurant, new lighting fixtures and furniture selections, and refreshed restrooms completed SM+P scope of work. The existing space suffered from a dark, heavy atmosphere which benefitted from the existng brick walls being white-washed, and new fireplace element. SM+P’s was involved at the conceptual level on the exterior, introducing canvas canopy elements to highlight the restaurants entrance from the parking area Completed 2014 A Baltimore restaurant is suddenly and severely understaffed following a visit from an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent. The BoatHouse Canton, located on the city’s waterfront, lost dozens of its kitchen staff last week after ICE paid the restaurant a visit to verify all of its employees’ immigration statuses, the Washington Post reports. In an open letter to customers posted to Facebook over the weekend, owner Gene Singleton explains that after an immigration official came to the restaurant to verify immigration documentation, more than 30 of his employees left their positions, with many “[going] home to pack and leave” for fear of potentially being separated from their families. In the letter, Singleton accuses the Trump Administration of “targeting the Hispanic community” and says he’s established a fund to support the affected employees. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Singleton’s statements have set off a flurry of controversy on the restaurant’s Facebook page: Many customers are praising Singleton for supporting his employees, while others have accused him of relying on undocumented workers. It’s no secret that the restaurant industry relies on immigrant labor — some of it undocumented — and multiple restaurants have been targeted with ICE raids in recent months. But Singleton does say that the restaurant was found to be “in compliance,” and it’s not just undocumented immigrants that have cause for concern as of late. Since the Trump Administration took office, even legal immigrants have found themselves caught up in a flood of anti-immigrant sentiment and uneven enforcement of policies like the short-lived travel ban, which resulted in several incidences of legal U.S. residents being detained at airports. Read the BoatHouse’s letter to its customers in its entirety, below: June 24, 2017 A NEW DAY AT THE BOATHOUSE To All Our Loyal, New and Soon to Be Guests: Yesterday was the saddest day for the BoatHouse family in its 3+ years. We had to say goodbye to over 30 of our teammates who operate our kitchen and support our service team, frequently known as “Back of House,” more appropriately known at the BoatHouse as “Heart of House.”Last Thursday, the Immigration Division of Homeland Security delivered a request requiring all employment files be turned over in order to review I-9, immigration documentation. Based on our Government’s current practice of targeting the Hispanic Community, properly documented and potentially less than properly documented are all fearful of being separated from their families, many with small children. Many went home to pack up and leave. This was a sad, emotional, tragic event. It has been confirmed that The BoatHouse’s policies and records are in compliance. The other 90+ of our employees and managers rallied and have pulled through like champions and the team and family that they are. The launch of our new Summer Menu is being postponed. We have created an interim menu featuring most all of our leading and popular items. Today I am proud to announce that the BoatHouse has created the “HEART OF HOUSE FUND” to assist our displaced families with their transition. A portion of all revenues will be contributed to this fund. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy the great experiences that the BoatHouse has become known for and support our Heart of House Fund. As a group, these people are some of the best I have ever come to know. Yesterday was a day of transition for the BoatHouse, and there were some bumps along the way. For anyone that received less than a great experience, we truly apologize and invite you back. Bring your receipt from Friday, June 23rd and receive 50% off your next meal. Anyone desiring to contribute to the Heart of House Fund may do so by adding a line on your check under your gratuity, or by cash or check to one of our managers. Your contribution will be truly appreciated. Every one of us at the BoatHouse very much appreciates your support. Thank you, Gene SingletonBoatHouse Principal Related What Restaurant Workers Need to Know About Immigration Raids • An ICE Agent Visited a Restaurant. About 30 Employees Quit the Next Day [WaPo]• How a Day Without Immigrants Affects Restaurants [E]• Even Being a Legal Immigrant Is Complicated in the Restaurant Industry [E] The freshest news from the food world every day Closed2.13 mi Hours This location is closed. Claim This Business Is this your business? Claim now to immediately update business information and menu!

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