

# The TAO Group Triumphs Again

Mediterranean-inspired **LAVO** has people talking

by Jenny Adams



**Edward Allen, Director of Beverage Operations for the TAO Group.**

Stepping into recent Las Vegas addition LAVO, located in The Palazzo, guests are finding more than a hint of the Mediterranean, with a décor that nods toward an ancient bathhouse (the name LAVO comes from the Latin word for “bathe”). The space is open six nights a week—a rarity in Las Vegas—and with TAO Group management, guests can expect world-class service.

The beverage service, in particular, has many talking. As Director of Beverage Operations for the TAO Group, Edward Allen has an understanding of what brings success in a glass, and with LAVO he has broadened that understanding to include sourcing exotic wine labels, decanting spirits tableside and a cocktail list that he calls a “loose interpretation of Mediterranean classics.”

“The wine list includes labels from Lebanon, Morocco, Slovenia, Greece and Malta,” Allen explains, “and we also have bottles from Spain, Italy and France. Our cocktails are loosely focused on ingredients found in this region. One that I love is our Lavolini—our take on a Bellini; instead of peach purée, we use passion fruit and St-Germain.”

Another popular seller is the Uva Bianco. Bartenders muddle seedless grapes with St-Germain, fresh lemon juice and Smirnoff White Grape, and garnish the drink with speared white grapes to create a white grape Martini. The Saggio cocktail is made from muddled green sage, Blueberi Stoli, white cranberry, lemon and simple syrup. “The sage,” Allen says, “really brings depth and complexity with savory note.”

Feeling that cordials are under-used, Allen puts a focus on them at LAVO, part of an overall belief in attention to detail in every aspect of operations. “For the whole beverage program, I probably tasted 60 cocktails with

the owners before I felt we had hit on what really fit our concept and where we were going,” Allen says. LAVO also offers Waterford crystal decanter service in the restaurant for any type of hard spirit, and guests can purchase a half-liter or a full bottle.

We are the only place doing something like that,” Allen admits.

“Our focus at LAVO is on customer service and hospitality. The space is much more intimate than TAO, and although it may be smaller, it’s still a *great party*.” ■■

## T&T Tacos Tequila

Luxor Las Vegas introduces its newest restaurant: T&T Tacos Tequila. Owned by Craig Gilbert, T&T features a delicious menu inspired by Richard Sandoval and



a tequila bar with more than 60 tequilas, including generous selections of blanco/plata, reposado, añejo and extra añejo, as well as mezcal. Our cocktail favorites were the Pomegranate Açaí Margarita (a

fresh lime and berry Margarita with Tres Generaciones silver) and the Spicy Lover (Gran Centenario plata tequila, English cucumber, fresh Mexican cilantro, fresh-squeezed lime juice, sweet agave nectar and a dash of spicy Tabasco pepper sauce), but there are many more to try on the next visit.—Allison Levine