

STEP INTO ANOTHER WORLD

The Boho Lounge
brings a taste of a Balinese Cafe
to the Wood River Valley

BY HAYDEN SEDER

PHOTOS BY KIRSTEN SHULTZ



Hannah McNees, owner and interior designer, with event planner Brenna Cavanaugh

Walk into Ketchum's new Boho Lounge and one is immediately transported. From the Moroccan-style poufs on the floor, to the 1970s macramé swings hanging from the ceiling, to the Turkish pendant lights hanging over the bar, it's clear that this is no typical Ketchum establishment. Designed to resemble a Balinese café that served as its inspiration, the Boho Lounge is the creation of 30-year-old owner Hannah McNees and her friend, interior designer and event planner, 31-year-old Brenna Cavanaugh.

Boho opened in early April in the space that previously housed the restaurant Globus, a two story oasis of space that has already allowed McNees to start a bar, restaurant, and event space complete with upstairs roof lounging. The young restaurateur—McNees owns Jersey Girl in Hailey—was approached by the owner of the building last fall about utilizing the space somehow rather than let it sit empty. McNees proposed a New Year's Eve party. After an extremely successful party in the space that included drinks, apps, and fun, jungle-themed design, the building's owner asked about getting the bar open and using the space's liquor license.

"I said, 'If I'm going to do it, I want to do it and make it special,'" offered McNees. "So after the New Year's party, I committed to the space."

McNees already had many ideas swimming in her head from a previous three-week trip to Bali where she often relaxed at beach clubs where shoes were removed at the entrance and customers sat lounging on the floor. McNees enjoyed the experience so much, she wondered why there couldn't be a space like this in Ketchum. She was met with typical responses (both from others and herself) that both the tourists and many residents wouldn't want anything to do with a space so out of the cultural norm.

"I knew it would be tough to make it work, but I said 'Screw it, let's do it.'"

While McNees had a vision for the space, she needed someone to help bring



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it to fruition. McNeese had seen much of Cavanaugh's design handiwork at her brother, Luke McNeese's, event Lost River Disco for which Cavanaugh did the design and visuals. He had also done the decor and design for the annual Festival held at Idaho BaseCamp, owned by McNeese's sister, Whitney, and her husband, Matt Gershater. Cavanaugh also owns the Movable Boutique (Mobo), a renovated vintage mobile home that sells clothing and jewelry. After only two days back in Ketchum after a winter in Amsterdam, Cavanaugh sat down with McNeese to hear about her idea.

"We met at the Warfield, and we talked for about three hours," said Cavanaugh. "She asked if I would design, and I said, 'Yes,' and the next day we were at work on it, getting the proposal done, getting funding, and breaking down walls the next week."

The booths previously used for dining were ripped out and a mix of tall café tables and floor seating and short tables were put in to give a mellower vibe. The upstairs area offers more of the same, as well as a second bar and several hammocks. The attention to detail in the space is spot-on, with jungle plants and cushy rugs encouraging you to remove your shoes but not to the point that the place is too hip or "crunchy" for a nicer crowd.

"We've definitely harnessed the younger age group, but Brenna has done such an incredible job designing it and giving it a sophisticated feel," explained McNeese. "She brought the playful vibe together with the classier, most sophisticated vibe so much so that customers looking for Globus walk in and end up staying and leaving blown away."

Already locals have flocked to the space, which is currently open Tuesday through Sunday at 2 p.m. for cocktails, dinner, occasional indoor and rooftop aerial yoga classes, DJs and other music events, and more.

"I want it to be a place where people feel like they can melt in—stay for an hour or stay for four hours," said McNeese. "The point of the space is not to have a conventional way of dining where you come in, have a reservation, sit down, do an appetizer, salad, main course, dessert and go home."

Boho inherited a liquor license, and McNeese immediately thought to bring in Christina Giordani from ROADBARS to

design the cocktail menu. Everything on the cocktail menu is delicious and made with fresh ingredients like their Coconut Milk Margarita or the Carrot-Ginger Highball, which features one of Giordani's signature shrubs.

For food, McNeese got a recommendation to reach out to local chef and private caterer Lindsey Czech who has worked at Limelight and NourishMe. Czech designed the majority of the menu, and Mario Wilson from the Hot Water Inn has brought over his Jamaican cooking since the Inn's recent closing. The menu is divided between "friendly eats," aka foods to share, and "for me" foods for a main course. For "friendly eats," there's a grazing board of charcuterie, pita, mushrooms and more, several versions of crostini, chips and dip, and fries. For main courses, there are Jamaican delights like Jamaican jerk chicken and other eclectic meals like vegan pho, Bahn Mi, gazpacho or a booty bowl filled with veggies, quinoa, chickpeas and other yummy additions.

Going forward, there are numerous plans for changes to the space itself, extending the hours to include the morning for coffee and possible weekend brunches, more events, starting a floral shop inside, and adding a mobile coffee cart featuring local Jens Peterson's Maps coffee. McNeese also wants to start doing weekend brunches with a DJ, movie nights on the roof using a projector, and possibly Jamaican nights. There's truly no end to the ideas these women have for the future.

Also a major priority for both McNeese and Cavanaugh is to make the space a one-stop-shop for events and event planning. With an in-shop florist and event planner (Cavanaugh), as well as a full kitchen and bar, Boho is suited for wedding events like rehearsal dinners, birthday parties and more.

In the few months since it opened, Boho has made a major splash on the cultural and culinary scene of Ketchum. McNeese and Cavanaugh have truly combined their resources and skills to create a space that everyone can enjoy.

"Part of our mission was to create a space where locals can come together with tourists—there's no separation of it being a locals-only spot or somewhere that only tourists can afford," said McNeese. "This is a place for everybody." ☀

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