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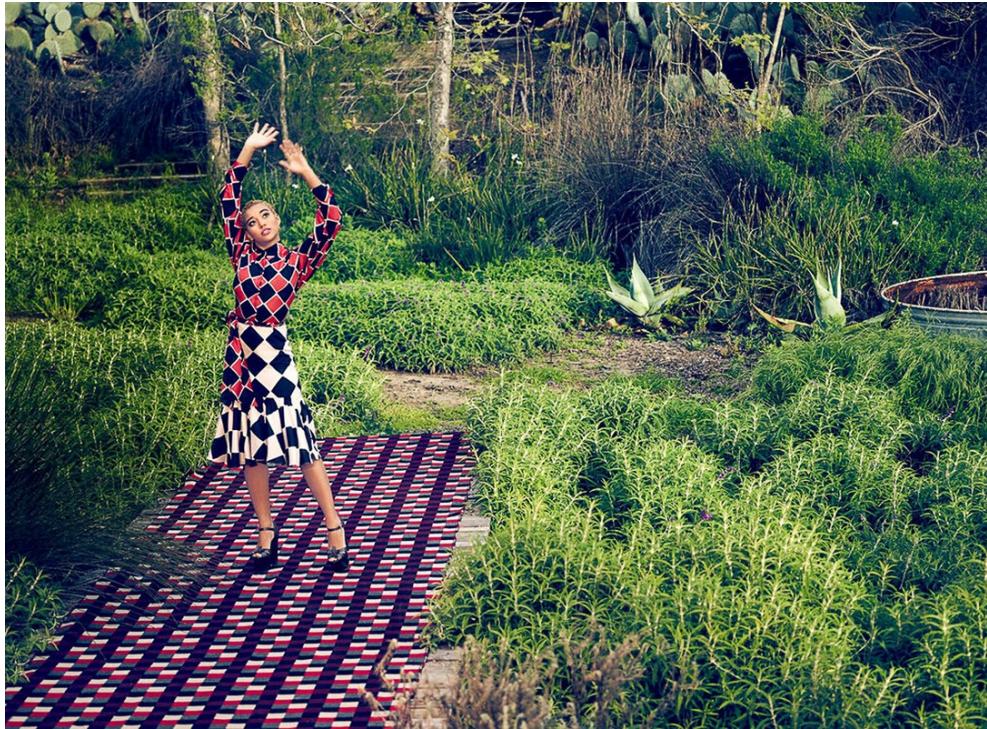
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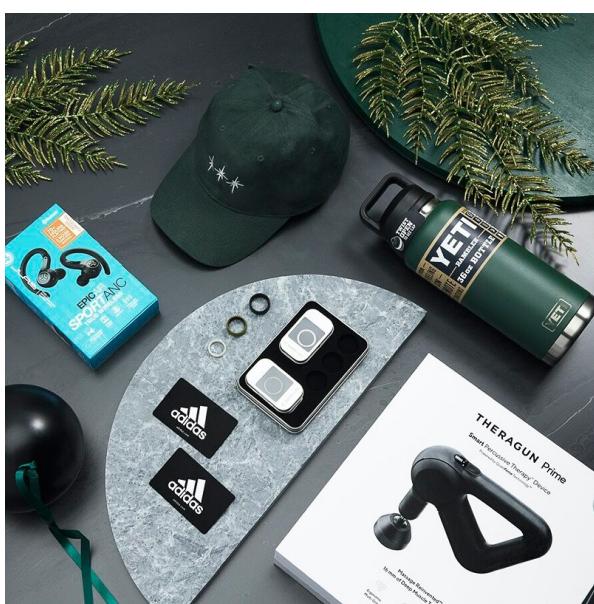
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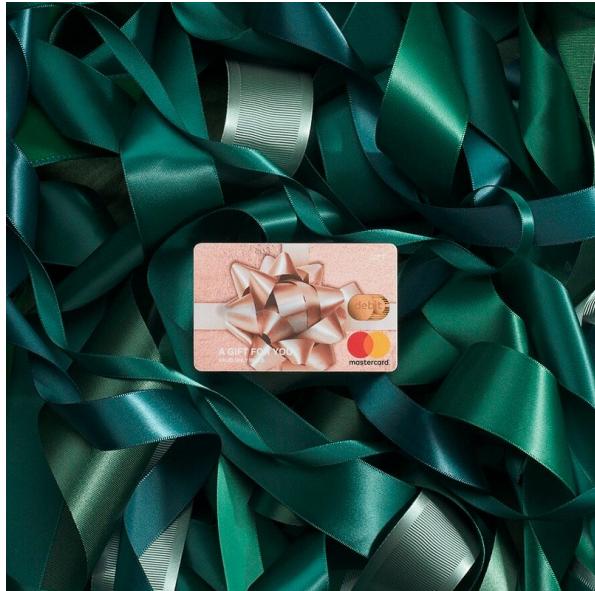
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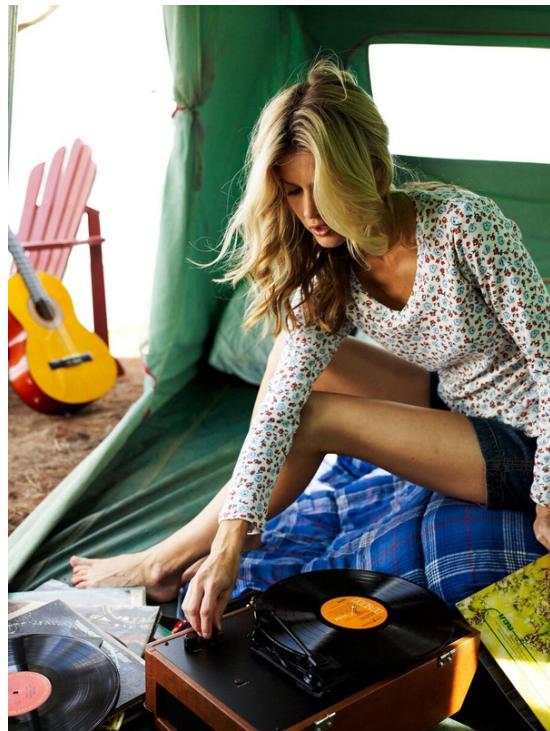
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EAT & DRINK

SPRING SPIRITS
Five Favorite Artisanal Cocktails to Celebrate the Season

LEFT TO RIGHT Lurin cocktails include Four Leprechaun, Lemon Berry Fizz, The Emerald, Strawberry Basil Margarita and Tangerine Mofita.

Photo: Michael S. Lewis

As the Santa Ynez Valley shakes off the cold to embrace all that blooms in the spring, the cocktail menu at Covernouvelas is also warming up. "It's all citrus and berry flavors of the season," says Ramiro Covernouvelas, first spring at Root 246, but he's a seasoned bartender who has served at both the Buffet and Willows during his three years with Churnan enterprises. Ramiro shares his Top 5 spring spirits for the season.

In honor of St. Patrick's Day, Covernouvelas introduces the Four Leprechaun. Bushmills Irish Whiskey, lemon, lime, a splash of grapefruit and citrus bitters, simple syrup and dry vermouth make for an unusual whiskey sour, but Covernouvelas said this cocktail's true uniqueness is found in its subtlety. "With no flashy colors or crazy garnishes, you get a flavorful drink that is citrus forward and slightly tart," he says.

For his next selection, Covernouvelas introduces the Lemon Berry Fizz. With Absolut Citron Vodka, lemon juice, strawberries, blueberries and blackberries, this drink is a perfect combination of tart and sweet. He said that in the springtime, customers "want a refreshing drink they can sip on and relax" — with this cocktail, "you can do both."

Next up is The Emerald, made with a generous combination of Hendrick's Gin, St. Germain and sonny flavors. Covernouvelas said, "the floral flavor from the gin and elderflower liqueur, combined with the light and citrus flavors completes the concoction with basil, lime and orange liqueur for the perfect finishing touch."

Covernouvelas' final cocktail for the warmer months is the Strawberry Basil Margarita, which consists of a fine blend of Bacardi Tangerine Rum, lime and orange juices, mint and soda water. "It has a very nice citrus flavor with a refreshing bite of mint to it," he said. • **CHARLOTTE NAUERT**

A collage of five cocktails and their ingredients: Four Leprechaun (yellow), Lemon Berry Fizz (pink), The Emerald (orange), Strawberry Basil Margarita (red), and Tangerine Mofita (yellow).

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