

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## Hot-Chocolate Craze Heats Up Frosty New York City

Dozens of establishments are serving gourmet versions of the childhood favorite, with prices up to \$14 a cup *CHARLES PASSY* – January 18, 2018



Gotham Bar and Grill is celebrated for its fancy fare, from foie gras to Dover sole. Starting this weekend, the Michelin-starred restaurant will spotlight a childhood treat: hot chocolate.

The Manhattan restaurant will offer a \$14 cup of steaming cocoa made with a chocolate sourced from Costa Rica. “It’s not like your Swiss Miss mix with hot water,” said Gotham Bar pastry chef Ron Paprocki, who came up with the new menu item. He pointed to the herbal flavor notes imparted from the chocolate, adding that the drink has a “black tea quality” to it.

Restaurant-industry insiders and observers say the hot-chocolate trend speaks to a growing fascination with retro comfort foods done with a contemporary nod: Think artisanal mac ‘n’ cheese. It also dovetails

with the gourmet-coffee movement that shows no signs of stopping. Coffee shops also are joining in the trend. A case in point: Zibetto Espresso Bar, an Italian-inspired establishment with three Manhattan locations, offers a coffee-chocolate hybrid drink called a marocchino, along with a more traditional hot chocolate, both priced at \$4 a cup.

These days, \$4 may be considered a bargain. And as hot chocolate heads into more expensive territory, some wonder if the trend will price itself out and purveyors will have to take a step back.

“Hot chocolate should be the antithesis of elitism,” said New York-based restaurant consultant Arlene Spiegel. “When it costs as much as a cocktail, you have to rethink your position.” ●