

500 WEST FLORIDA STREET
MILWAUKEE, WI 53204

THEIRONHORSEHOTEL.COM
1.888.543.IRON (4766)



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MEDIA CONTACT
BRIGETTE BREITENBACH

BRIGETTE@COMPANYBONLINE.COM
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Iron Age

One look at the Iron Horse Hotel's **Branded** (500 W. Florida St., 888-543-4766), and it's immediately clear developer Tim Dixon "gets it." The bar's exposed heart-pine and hemlock beams (originals from the 100-year-old renovated warehouse), Cream City brick walls and oak flooring exude classic cool with an everyman kind of unpretentiousness (much like a certain local motorcycle manufacturer). A black leather L-shaped bench and a few rugged tables complete the old-school swank look. I sit at a wood-and-steel barstool (one of several antique Toledo drafting stools) and survey an eclectic cocktail menu. The tasty Bacon Flip (left) – bacon-infused bourbon, bitters, whole egg and Wisconsin maple syrup – hints of pancakes and bacon after a shot of whiskey. The beer selection is heavy on locals – Sprecher, Lakefront, Miller and, oh yeah, Coors. Fire up the iron; I'll gladly be branded. (Dan Murphy)