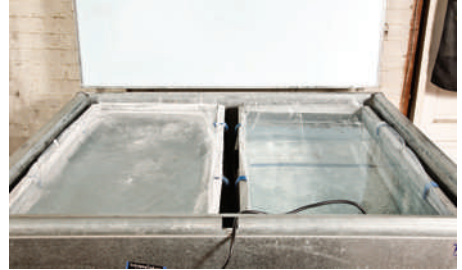




Marindin uses an **engine hoist** to lift ice out onto a prep table, but he doesn't cut it immediately. Otherwise, says Ambrose, left, cracks form inside the ice, making clear cubes impossible. The ice needs to temper (be brought slowly to a warmer temperature) for a few hours so it will be more pliable.

A **Clinebell Carving Block Ice Maker** can freeze two 300-pound blocks of ice; each block takes 48 to 72 hours to freeze, Ambrose says. He and Marindin estimate it makes four blocks a week.



To keep ice clear and bubble-free, two **air pumps** circulate the water while the ice forms. "It freezes from the bottom up. That way you get all the air out, to reduce any bubbles," says Ambrose.



Marindin uses a 16-inch **Homelite electric chain saw** to cut tempered ice into 25-pound blocks. Then he uses a band saw to cut them into smaller cubes.



Some clients order special shapes, such as **spheres**, which are made using an aluminum Taisin ice mold, warmed by hot water. The spheres form in minutes.

A 300-pound block of ice yields about 800 2-by-2-inch **ice cubes**, bigger than typical cubes, Ambrose says. The cubes' larger size and density result in a slower melting time — good for expensive Scotch or bourbon.



They have it down cold

Next time you have a cocktail, notice the ice cubes

BY KRIS CORONADO
Joseph Ambrose stands in a room loaded with heavy-duty-looking equipment and gestures to a 300-pound block of ice sitting on a nearby table. "You cut them down into plates, then you cut them down into rods; rods are cut into cubes," says the 35-year-old. "Then they go back into the freezer, then they go into little coolers and are shipped off to bars for old-fashioned

and other fancy-schmancy cocktails." It's a summary of the hours-long process that is the foundation for Favourite Ice Co. (*favouriteice.com*), a Germantown operation Ambrose launched with Owen Thomson in December. A side project for both — Ambrose tends bar at the W Hotel's P.O.V. Rooftop Lounge, and Thomson is the beverage director at Range in Friendship Heights — the pair saw an

opportunity to sell artisan cubes to the ever-increasing craft cocktail scene. Today, they supply ice, largely broken down and cut by Caleb Marindin (also a bartender at Range), to nearly a dozen local watering holes. "Jaleo is probably doing, like, 900 to a thousand cubes every week and half," Ambrose says. "Estadio does between 400 and 600 a week." Here, Ambrose and Marindin give us a glimpse at their cool operation.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BENJAMIN C. TANKERSLEY