





POUR IT ON

Mixologists elevate the ordinary drink into a 'craft cocktail'

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P-I food editor

Crafting cocktails requires precision in measuring the way baking does. You can eyeball amounts - "freepouring" in bartender parlance - but the result won't be just right. Size does matter when $\frac{1}{4}$ of an ounce is the difference between a well-balanced cocktail that makes your palate think it's experiencing it for the first time and one that is cloying and dulls the taste buds.

Why any of this matters is that craft cocktails, especially vintage recipes such as the pisco sour, daiquiris (the original, not the frilly tropical versions), the Pegu Club and the casino, are back. You will read about the trend and some of its purveyors, including the budding Suite 410 (we wrote about it in our Eat/Drink pullout Sept. 16) and the classic Zig Zag Cafe. If the scope of the publication reaches beyond Seattle, you will read about

the Pegu Club (named after the drink) in New York City, as well as the exclusive Milk and Honey, which has a daily fresh sheet of concoctions.

You will learn about the mixologists - the preferred term for "chefs" behind a bar - who insist on fresh-squeezed juices, house-made simple syrup, measuring with a jigger, a selection of bitters

SEE DRINKS, E6



JOSHUA TRUJILLO / P-I PHOTOS

TOP: Mixologist Ryan Magarian, whose consulting company is called Liquid Kitchen, pours a cocktail at Kathy Casey Food Studios. ABOVE: An array of craft cocktails. From left: Gin Delicious, El Floradita No. 3, a Mango Red and a Winter Huckleberry Sour.

are part of the mix

FROM E1

beyond Angostura.

But what is a craft cocktail? You also may hear it described as a scratch cocktail, as in made from scratch, which carries the same implication of, say, a scratch pie. (See chart)

The following recipes are courtesy of mixologist Ryan Magarian, whose consulting company is called Liquid Kitchen, which operates through Kathy Casey Food Studios. To listen to a podcast with both Magarian and Casey discussing craft cocktails, visit www.seattlepi.com/food-cast.

EL FLORIDITA NO. 3

SERVES 1

1½ ounces Cruzan light rum
½ ounce Maraschino liqueur
½ ounce simple syrup
1 ounce fresh lime juice
½ ounce fresh grapefruit juice

► Combine in a shaker glass with ice. Shake vigorously for 5 seconds. Strain into a cocktail glass. Garnish with cherry and grapefruit twist.

PISCO SOUR

SERVES 1

1½ ounces pisco
¾ ounce simple syrup
¾ ounce fresh lemon juice
1 organic egg white
Angostura bitters

► Combine pisco, simple syrup, lemon juice and egg white in a shaker filled with ice. Shake vigorously for 10 seconds. Strain into glass. Garnish with three drops of bitters.

GIN DELICIOUS

SERVES 1

2 large sprigs of mint
½ ounce simple syrup
¾ ounce fresh lime juice
1½ ounce Plymouth gin
Superfine sugar for glass
Extra mint and powdered sugar for garnish

► For the glass: Rub the rim of a cocktail glass with a slice of lime to moisten it. Then dip the rim in superfine sugar.

► For the drink: In a shaker glass, add mint, simple syrup and lime juice. Lightly tamp with a muddler to bruise the mint and release the flavor. Add gin, fill with ice, shake vigorously for 5 seconds. Strain into glass. Garnish with mint sprig dusted with powdered sugar.

ANATOMY OF A CRAFT COCKTAIL

Fresh ingredients: Can be as extreme as shopping at the farmers market daily for fresh fruits and garnishes. Premixes (margarita, daiquiri, sour mixes, for example) are exiled in exchange for mixologists: bartenders with skills who are interested in flavor nuances.

Premium liquors and liqueurs: Bars that cater to the masses might use inexpensive, often undistinguished spirits to mix into cocktails. Who's going to notice, right? In this new age of mixology, however, premium spirits are akin to artisan food ingredients: Imagine a caprese salad with bland mozzarella cheese, out-of-season tomatoes and generic olive oil versus real *mozzarella di bufala*, late-summer heirloom tomatoes and a peppery Tuscan extra-virgin olive oil. The difference is stark. Craft cocktails demand higher prices because they invest in better ingredients.

Precise measurements: There have been virtuous bartenders who use a jigger, which is like a measuring cup, when mixing drinks. It takes more time than freepouring and elicits scoffs from most bartenders, but using a jigger is essential for the mixologist who understands the potential of a cocktail and that it's about quality, not quantity.

Proper ice: There are bars that have ice made to order or stock several kinds, cubed or crushed to specification. The size and shape of the ice determine how much water the cocktail gets. After all, the ice doesn't just chill a drink, it gives it the necessary dilution.

Vigorous shaking: At least five, no more than 10 seconds, as directed, of vigorous shaking is required to activate the reaction of spirits, juices, seasonings and ice.

MANGO RED

SERVES 1

1 ring slice of red bell pepper
1½ ounces Plymouth gin
¾ ounce fresh lime juice
1 ounce mango puree
½ ounce simple syrup
2 dashes Angostura bitters

► Put bell pepper into shaker.

Press with muddler. Add the gin, lime juice, mango puree, simple syrup and bitters. Fill with ice. Shake for 5 seconds. Strain into cocktail glass and garnish with another red bell pepper slice.

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