

Holiday Spirits

Cooper Lounge mixologist
Matt Dutton created five
festive cocktail recipes to
help you pour on the
merriment and say cheers
to the season.



photography by Joni Schrantz



Big Apple Sour

INGREDIENTS

- 1 oz Breckenridge Bourbon Whiskey
- 1 oz Laird's Jersey Lightning Apple Brandy
- ½ oz lemon juice
- ½ oz apple cider
- ½ oz honey syrup (2 parts honey to 1 part water)
- 1 egg white
- ¼ oz Hamilton Pimento Dram
- ½ oz pinot noir (for float)

DIRECTIONS

You'll want to keep the egg white separate from the citrus until you're ready to make the drink. Once it's go-time, add one ice cube and all ingredients to a shaker, and whip until the cube is completely dissolved. Add several more ice cubes and shake it up again for about five to seven seconds. Strain into a coupe glass and top with a float of pinot noir.



MIX MASTER

These holiday cocktail recipes are the creations of Matt Dutton, assistant general manager of Union Station's Cooper Lounge, the city's most glamorous watering hole, and he's a master of his craft. While creating the holiday libations in this issue, Dutton shared a wealth of wisdoms that we've sprinkled throughout these pages like garnishes. More than mere visual flair, these are dashes of insight that enhance the cocktail experience.



ON GLASSWARE

Choosing the right vessel to serve your cocktail in is of the utmost importance, says Dutton. "It really comes down to dilution. You don't want your glass to be too large. You also want to find something that fits your aesthetic, and a little footed glass never hurt nobody. Holding it by the foot also keeps your hands from warming up the beverage—super important for egg-white and cream-based cocktails, best served in a coupe glass."



CHEERS TO THE HOUSE After raising your glass to toast with your friends, tap it on the bar before you drink. "It's an ode to the places that Covid showed us are so important to society," Dutton says. "Cheers to the people and to the establishments that we enjoy most."



Spiced Pear Punch

INGREDIENTS

- 16 oz Breckenridge Vodka
- 10 oz St. George Spiced Pear Liqueur
- 12 oz sparkling wine (preferably brut champagne)
- 8 oz lemon juice
- 8 oz honey syrup (2 parts honey to 1 part water)
- 10 oz chilled chai tea
- 5-7 whole cinnamon sticks
- 2-3 dehydrated lemons

DIRECTIONS

In a punch bowl, add vodka and spiced pear liqueur. Next, add 20 to 30 ice cubes and stir to dilute and chill for about 10 seconds. Next, add in chai tea, lemon juice and honey syrup, plus five to seven whole cinnamon sticks and several dehydrated lemons. Stir punch for another 5 to 10 seconds, and then add champagne. Add as much ice as needed to fill the punch bowl to the top—the more ice, the better. It'll help slow the dilution of the punch.

HOSTESS TIP

You can pre-batch all ingredients except for the champagne and chill in the fridge for one hour before serving. When it's time to get the party started, add the chilled batch and the champagne to your punch bowl, then fill with ice.

Bellevue Sour

Sours aren't just for whiskey. Tequila lightens things up.

1½ oz reposado tequila

½ oz Pierre Ferrand Dry Curaçao

¼ oz Lillet Blanc Vermouth

1 oz spiced raspberry syrup

½ oz lemon juice

1 egg white

DIRECTIONS

Add all ingredients to a shaker tin except for the wine. Keep the egg white separate from citrus until you're ready to combine to shake. Whip shake with one ice cube until completely dissolved. Add several more ice cubes, and shake again for about five to seven seconds. Strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with grated nutmeg.

TO MAKE THE SPICED RASPBERRY SYRUP

Melt **1 lb raspberry puree** in a medium-sized pot over medium-high heat until it's liquid. Reduce heat to medium and add **2½ c granulated white sugar** and **equal parts water** and stir until sugar is dissolved. In a separate small frying pan, **toast 3 tsp whole cloves, 3 tsp allspice berries** and **5 large cinnamon sticks** until fragrant and lightly smoking. Add the spice mix to the raspberry syrup and reduce to low heat. Let it all simmer for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, and then strain through fine mesh to remove all the chunky bits. Store in an airtight container and refrigerate for up to 45 days.



DON'T FEAR THE EGG WHITE

Egg whites add little in terms of flavor, but they provide a whole lot of texture by way of a silky, foamy body and richer, smoother texture. To get the fluffiest egg whites, Dutton suggests using a technique he calls the whip-shake. "First, just put one ice cube in the shaker with the ingredients, then shake the hell out of it until that ice cube is completely dissolved. Then add a scoop of ice and shake it again. The first cube really agitates everything and puts a whole bunch of air into the cocktail, which brings out the fluff."





Christmas Vacation

START BY INFUSING CACHAÇA WITH CINNAMON. Place **5 cinnamon sticks per bottle of the Brazilian-style rum** in an airtight container for 24 hours, then strain out the cinnamon and pour the liquor back into the bottle for easy storage.

NEXT, MAKE THE VANILLA DEMERARA SYRUP: add **2 c demerara or turbinado sugar** (raw sugar with large grains), **1 c water**, and **2 tsp vanilla extract** into a medium pot and bring to a simmer, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Store in the fridge in an airtight container for up to 45 days.

Once you've got everything ready to go, combine **1½ oz cinnamon-infused cachaça**, **½ oz VS or VSOP cognac**, **½ oz vanilla demerara syrup***, and **1½ oz eggnog** in a shaker with five to seven ice cubes. Shake it up for 10 seconds or so and strain into a coupe glass. Garnish with a sprinkle of nutmeg—bonus points if it's freshly grated.



GLASS MATTERS "I don't like putting cream-based drinks over ice," Dutton says. "The water will separate from the cream as the ice melts, and it won't be as fluid of a cocktail or as fluid of a flavor profile as its intended. Serve it neat, preferably in a footed glass so your hands are not warming up the glass the whole time—hold it from the bottom. It's super important for any cream-based or egg white cocktails."



SHAKE IT UP

When it comes to the cocktail shaker, Dutton says intentional movements make for the best results. "I used to shake straight from the elbow, but you've got to get a little shoulder motion to it or you'll get tennis elbow," he says. "Think of cutting a tree in two places: shake it hard, up and back, then hard, down and back—not just like you're mixing it around in a blender."



MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Don't just eyeball your pours—even if you were a bartender back in college and could always pass the pour test. If you're serious about your home bar setup, get yourself a jigger and use it. If you don't have one,

Dutton suggests using measuring cups instead. "You wouldn't eyeball how much flour you're adding to the stuffing you're making," he says. "A cocktail is no different. It's a recipe, so follow it."



A Wonderful Life

DIRECTIONS

In a shaker, combine:

- 1½ oz Breckenridge Vodka**
- ½ oz ginger liqueur**
- ¼ oz Hamilton Pimento Dram liqueur**
- ¾ lemon juice**
- ¾ cranberry 5-spice almond syrup.** (See below for that recipe.)

DIRECTIONS

Add one ice cube and whip the shaker until the ice is completely dissolved. Pour into your favorite collins/highball glass and fill with ice. Top with cold soda water, then garnish with a rosemary sprig and a few fresh cranberries.

FOR THE CRANBERRY 5-SPICE ALMOND SYRUP: Combine **1½ oz cranberries** (fresh or frozen, your choice), **2 c white granulated sugar**, **1 c water**, **1 Tbsp Chinese five-spice seasoning**, and **½ tsp almond extract** in a medium pot over high heat. Bring to a simmer, whisking until all the sugar is dissolved and there are no clumps of seasoning. Then grab a potato masher and pop all those cranberries in the pot. Let the mixture sit over medium-low heat for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, then strain through fine mesh to remove all the solid bits. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 45 days.