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cocktails?
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Cocktails

Cognac Revival

The old-school favorite just got a whole lot more versatile

BY KAYLEIGH KULP

COGNAC HAS LONG BEEN pigeonholed as our grandfathers' stodgy drink, an elegant après-dinner pour reserved for special snifters by the fire. But the aged French brandy's floral, fruity, caramel, and baking spice notes make it a *très* versatile base for cocktails, inspiring trendsetting bartenders to concoct cognac cocktails that enhance the delicate spirit with unlikely players such as madeira, artichoke liqueur, vermouth, and Aperol. Sip these four new-sensation drinks and the cognac that once gathered dust on your bar's back shelf might soon become your go-to spirit.

"Although the ingredients are quite similar to a 'perfect' Manhattan, the Good Friday is more closely related to a drink called the Double Barrel. The healthier dose of vermouth yields a much lighter-bodied drink that is lower in alcohol content, and the cognac adds complex fruity notes."

— Rene Hidalgo, bar manager, Lantern's Keep at the Iroquois Hotel, New York

"I created this cognac cocktail for the whiskey drinker to enjoy after dinner. The cognac's mellowness and somewhat funkiness really support the bitterness of the Cynar, an artichoke liqueur, and the Yellow Chartreuse's herbaceous quality."

— Nicole Lebedevitch, general manager, the Hawthorne, Boston

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"Inspired by the classic Vieux Carré, I wanted this cocktail to be fun but also straightforward. As it contains three fairly sweet components with the cognac, madeira, and honey liqueur, I use an unusually large amount of bitters to balance the flavor."

— Chris Gianaras, beverage manager, 4th & Swift, Atlanta

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"This great starter cocktail or digestif, with a very nice orange-red complexion, is named after French footballer Michel Platini, who is of Italian descent, hence the combination of French cognac and Italian Aperol."

— Vincent Heitz, bartender, Coquette, New Orleans

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HERBACEOUS AND EXOTIC

1. Ce Soir

2 ounces cognac
3/4 ounce Cynar
1/2 ounce Yellow Chartreuse
dash of Regans' orange bitters
dash of Angostura bitters
lemon peel

Stir all ingredients except the peel in a mixing glass with ice. Strain into a chilled snifter. Twist the lemon peel over the glass to release the essential oils and discard the peel.

CRISP AND COOL

2. Good Friday

1 ounce cognac
1 ounce sweet vermouth
1 ounce dry vermouth
3 dashes Peychaud's bitters
lemon twist

Add all ingredients except the twist to a rocks glass. Add ice and stir. Garnish with the lemon twist.

FRESH AND FORTIFIED

3. The Fire Within

1-1/4 ounces cognac
3/4 ounce madeira
1/2 ounce honey liqueur, such as Drambuie
1/4 ounce Angostura bitters
grapefruit peel

Stir all ingredients except the peel in a mixing glass with ice. Strain into a chilled glass. Garnish with grapefruit peel.

ELEGANT AND STRONG

4. Platini

1-1/2 ounces cognac
3/4 ounce Cocchi Americano
3/4 ounce Aperol
orange peel

Stir all ingredients except the peel in a mixing glass with ice. Strain into a cordial glass. Garnish with orange peel.