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HAPPY HOUR AT THE SODA FOUNTAIN

Looking for a refreshing new cocktail? Here's the prescription

BEFORE IT WAS the domain of banana splits and bobby soxers, the soda fountain was the province of chemists and creative soda jerks. They crafted invigorating tonics from carbonated water, homemade bitters, fresh cream and fruit syrups—plus a few tools of the pharmaceutical trade, like acid phosphate, which was purported to soothe ills like indigestion and “mental exhaustion,” but was also employed to punch up and balance sweet drinks. During Prohibition, those who could no longer quench their thirst for stingers and sidecars could console themselves with egg creams and cherry phosphates.

Nowadays, we're free to indulge in both types of refreshment—sometimes, thanks to a few historically-minded mixologists, even in the same glass. At the new Portland Penny Diner, in Portland, Ore., bar manager Brandon Wise pays homage to a New York icon (and his mother, who used to work at a soda fountain) with his Portland Egg Cream, which introduces a shot of the herbal digestif Fernet-Branca to the usual mix of milk (or, in this case, cream), chocolate syrup and soda. The result is faintly sweet, bubbly and disarming, like a high-school crush who turns out to be every bit as dreamy all grown up.

Elsewhere, bartenders are using acid phosphate and lactart, a milk-based acid, as chefs do salt, to enhance flavors and add complexity. At Russell House Tavern, in Cambridge, Mass., an intoxicating aroma of smoke and orchard fruit pervades the *Let Me Draw You*, a phosphate-spiked cocktail of Scotch, pear cordial, Bénédictine and the golden aperitif Quinquina. At New York's Evelyn Drinkery, the menu features a trove of imaginative riffs on fountain classics. My favorite, a pretty potion called the *Blossoming New Year*, combines gin, crème de violette, elderflower cordial and lemon, with a dash of lavender bitters and acid phosphate—like springtime in a glass.

You don't have to be a chemist to make these drinks at home. The acid phosphate that anchors many of them in the soda fountain tradition can be ordered online at artofdrink.com, or you can try a dash of fresh lemon juice in its place. Either way, the results will be delicious.

—Sarah Karnasiewicz

Portland Egg Cream

1 ounce Fernet-Branca
1 ounce chocolate syrup
1 ounce heavy cream
Dash Fee Brothers Old Fashion Aromatic bitters
Seltzer

In a chilled sundae or pint glass, layer, in this order: Fernet, chocolate syrup, cream and bitters. Top with seltzer, stir gently and serve. —From Brandon Wise of Portland Penny Diner, Portland, Ore.

Let Me Draw You

2 ounces blended Scotch
1 ounce Tempus Fugit L'Avion Quinquina
½ ounce Rothman & Winter Orchard Pear
¼ ounce Bénédictine
2 dashes acid phosphate (or lemon juice)
1 dash Fee Brothers Whiskey bitters

Fill a shaker with ice. Add ingredients. Stir about 1 minute, then strain into a chilled Martini glass. —From Sam Gabrielli of Russell House Tavern, Cambridge, Mass.

Blossoming New Year

1¼ ounce Bombay Sapphire East gin
¾ ounce Rothman & Winter crème de violette
¾ ounce elderflower cordial
1 ounce fresh lemon juice
2 dashes Lavender bitters
3 dashes acid phosphate (or lemon juice)
1 ounce Seltzer
Lemon twist

Fill a shaker with ice and add all ingredients except seltzer and lemon twist. Shake vigorously 1 minute. Strain into an ice-filled collins glass, top with seltzer and garnish with lemon twist.

—From Jared Shepard of Evelyn Drinkery, New York City



GOOD MEDICINE From left: Blossoming New Year, Portland Egg Cream and Let Me Draw You.

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