

Manhattan at Curio



PHOTO: TIM JOHNSON

SPEAKEASY

CLASSIC COCKTAIL SECRETS REVEALED

Which fruits do you (and don't you) muddle in an old-fashioned? How do you temper the brandy in a sidecar? Just how much absinthe goes into a Sazerac? If you've ever marveled at the history surrounding tried-and-true cocktails, you're not alone. We tapped some of the most studious bartenders across Columbus to get to the bottom of these questions and the secrets that elevate a classic from memorable to unforgettable.

STORY BY ANTHONY DOMINIC



- 2.5 ounces Hochstadter's Slow and Low Rock & Rye whiskey
- 1 brown sugar cube
- A few dashes Fee Brothers Whiskey Barrel Bitters (just enough to coat the cube)
- 1 giant ice cube
- Orange wheel for garnish

Old-Fashioned

VERITAS TAVERN, DELAWARE

Per 19th-century accounts out of New York and Chicago, the old-fashioned is meant to be a cocktail in its simplest form: spirit, sugar, water, bitters. But over 130-odd years, the recipe has been muddled more than the cherry carcasses found too often floating in your glass. (Sorry, Don Draper.) Veritas Tavern bar manager Nicole Hollerman builds the drink (\$8) in an old-fashioned glass, starting with a brown sugar cube coated in Fee Brothers Whiskey Barrel-Aged Bitters. The bitters, she says, highlight the spice notes in Hochstadter's Slow and Low Rock &

Rye whiskey—a rye pre-blended with rock candy syrup—of which she adds two and a half ounces after the sugar is good and pulverized. The drink is finished with a fat ice cube, a gentle stir and a skewered orange wheel. The glass won't be brimming, and it doesn't need to be. "Cocktails are kind of like art; negative space isn't bad," she says. "This gives you room for a nice nose." veritastavern.com

Blood and Sand

PROHIBITION GASTRO LOUNGE, POWELL

"Of all the cocktails out there, this one should be on every bartender's need-to-know list," Prohibition bar manager Nigal Vann says of the Blood and Sand (\$10). The scotch-based cocktail is named after Rudolph Valentino's 1922 bullfighting movie of the same name, Vann says; the Heering cherry liqueur and orange juice are meant to be indicative of spilled blood. (Vann warns against mistaking or substituting clear Luxardo cherry liqueur for brownish-red Heering, the latter being a decidedly sweeter, fruit-forward liqueur.) For the base, Vann prefers Dewar's 12 Year Old Scotch, noting the Blood and Sand isn't as much about scotch as it is about balance. The ingredients are shaken and strained neat into a coupe with an orange peel. prohibitiongastrolounge.com

- 1 ounce Dewar's 12 Year Old scotch
- 1 ounce Heering cherry liqueur
- 1 ounce Carpano Antica
- 1 ounce blood orange juice
- Orange peel for garnish

PHOTOS: LEFT, WILL SHILLING; CENTER, TIM JOHNSON; RIGHT, WILL SHILLING



AVIATION

M AT MIRANOVA, DOWNTOWN

Cris Dehlavi long settled for Creme de Violette in her aviations, but the violet liqueur never sat quite right. "It's a very greedy spirit," the M head bartender says. "Too much, and your drink smells like Grandma's bathroom." So when Creme Yvette—a lighter French liqueur made from berry fruits and dried violet petals—was put back into production after a 40-year dormancy, Dehlavi lobbied the Division of Liquor Control to list the product in Ohio. Now, it's her signature ingredient in the gin-based cocktail. At M, she serves the Aviation (\$14) two ways: traditional or bottled and carbonated. Both wow, but the former is an especially beautiful drink. Dehlavi layers the ingredients for depth of flavor, drizzling the Yvette down the side of the martini glass, where it rests below the gin, cherry liqueur and lemon juice. matmiranova.com

- 1.5 ounces Bombay Sapphire gin
- 3/4 ounce lemon juice
- 2 dashes Luxardo cherry liqueur
- 2 dashes Creme Yvette
- Lemon twist for garnish



Last Word

DENMARK ON HIGH, ARENA DISTRICT

Whenever a customer orders a Last Word (\$11) at Denmark, a smile spreads across the face of bar manager James Patrick Moore. "You know they know fantastic cocktails," he says. "It's one of those really old, pre-Prohibition cocktails. It's not really comparable." Moore uses Beefeater London Dry Gin as the base ("You don't want a super botanical gin," he says), along with Luxardo cherry liqueur, Green Chartreuse and lime juice. To mellow the flavors, particularly the medicinal qualities of chartreuse, he shakes in a little egg white. "It adds a nice, frothy texture and makes the drink a little less pungent, calms it down." The drink is finished neat in a Champagne coupe with a squirt of lemon zest. denmarkonhigh.com

- 3/4 ounce Beefeater London Dry Gin
- 3/4 ounce Green Chartreuse
- 3/4 ounce lime juice
- 3/4 ounce Luxardo cherry liqueur
- A dash of egg white
- Lemon zest for garnish



Negroni

MOUTON, SHORT NORTH

» The quintessential bitter cocktail is a cinch: equal parts Campari, gin and sweet vermouth. But the negroni's true flavor is born from a smart marriage of the latter two ingredients, says Logan Demmy, bar manager

- 1 ounce Hayman's Royal Dock gin
- 1 ounce Campari
- 1 ounce Cocchi Vermouth di Torino (sweet or Italian vermouth)
- 1 giant ice cube
- Flame-expressed orange oils for garnish

at Mouton. He stirs the cocktail (\$10) with Hayman's Royal Dock gin, a stiff Navy-strength spirit, and Cocchi Vermouth di Torino. "I like the Torino style—a little bit of sweetness, and it has a heavier body than Dolin or Martini & Rossi," he says. "It has a bit more chocolate cola notes." The mixture can become unbalanced without ice, so Demmy serves his negroni on the rocks. The final touch—flame-expressed orange oil—is 50 percent garnish, 50 percent theatrics, he says. "We take a canoe, a slice of the peel that has a rigid structure, and hold it in front of flamed match so the oil is expressed through the fire." mouton954.com

French 75

THE MARKET ITALIAN VILLAGE, ITALIAN VILLAGE

» Don't let the bubbly fool you; the French 75 is as boozy as they come. David Moore builds The Market Italian Village's 75 (\$10) with equal parts lemon juice and simple syrup and 2 ounces of Plymouth Gin, which the general manager prefers for its mild juniper profile. The ingredients are shaken with ice, strained into a Champagne flute and topped with sparkling wine. When The Market opened last year, Moore was topping the cocktails with brut (bone-dry) Champagne, but he recently turned to Mionetto Prosecco Brut. "It has a big floral nose but is still a nice, dry sparkling white wine," he says. "It's a well-balanced sparkling wine, too, which works well with the cocktail's level of both acidity and sweetness." themarketiv.com

- 2 ounces Plymouth Gin
- Juice from half a lemon
- Volume of simple syrup equal to that of the lemon juice
- A head of brut Champagne or Mionetto Prosecco Brut

Daiquiri

THE ATHLETIC CLUB OF COLUMBUS, DOWNTOWN

» "The daiquiri just may be the most bastardized drink in the history of the world," laughs Grant Bain, bar manager at The Athletic Club of Columbus. "I've seen them made with ice cream and syrup in a blender. Makes people think of cruise ships and beaches." For his classic Daiquiri (\$9), Bain turns to Smith & Cross Navy Strength rum for its banana and nutmeg flavors, then mixes it with simple syrup and fresh lime juice. The mixture is strained into a chilled rocks glass and served without a garnish. "It's a delicate balance of sweet and sour," he says. "Keeping it simple lets the ingredients shine through wonderfully." (Note: To drink at The Athletic Club, you must be a club member or the guest of visiting a member.) accolumbus.com

- 2 ounces Smith & Cross Navy Strength rum
- 3/4 ounce simple syrup
- 3/4 ounce lime juice



Sidecar

SIDEBAR, DOWNTOWN

» Sure, the sidecar may be a cognac-based cocktail, but the trick, says Sidebar bar manager Chris Spinato, is to subdue the cognac, to wrestle the figgy brandy into a sweet mixture. So he shakes a mild cognac, Hennessy V.S, with rich simple syrup, lemon juice and half an ounce of Laird's Apple Brandy. "The apple brandy adds a brighter quality to the cocktail," he says. "It plays off the lemon for a little more sweetness and makes the drink less big [alcohol-wise]." Lastly, a careful blend of Angostura and house orange bitters is added, the distinguishing touch of the Sidebar Sidecar (\$10.25). "That blend is just right and brings out the cocktail's spice notes," Spinato says. "Bartenders, people in the know, this is a sidecar they prefer, and we're proud of that." sidebarcolumbus.com

- 1.25 ounces Hennessy V.S Cognac
- 1/2 ounce Laird's Apple Brandy
- 1/2 ounce of 2:1 simple syrup
- 1/2 ounce lemon juice
- 5 dashes house orange bitters
- 5 dashes Angostura bitters
- Orange peel oils for garnish, fragrance

Vieux Carre

GIUSEPPE'S RITROVO, BEXLEY

» Order Sean Ward's Vieux Carre (\$14), and the beverage director at Giuseppe's will produce a chilled 6-ounce flask from his bar fridge. Using a funnel, he pre-batches the boozy cocktail: 2 ounces rye whiskey, sweet vermouth and cognac, a bar spoon of Benedictine French liqueur and two dashes each of Peychaud's and Angostura bitters. The generous measurements amount to that of two cocktails, especially as the mixture is never diluted with ice. "Not introducing water really showcases the complexity of all the spirits," he says. "It was produced originally in the late 1930s in the French Quarter, and you can tell—the beautiful notes of vermouth, nice, smooth cognac on the tongue, the Creole and allspice bitters. You get all those nuances." giuseppesritrovo.com

- 2 ounces Bulleit rye
- 2 ounces Carpano Antica sweet vermouth
- 2 ounces Hennessy Cognac
- 1 bar spoon of Benedictine liqueur
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters
- 2 dashes Peychaud's Bitters



PHOTOS: LEFT, WILL SHILLING; CENTER, TESSA BERG; RIGHT, JODI MILLER

PHOTO: TIM JOHNSON



Sazerac

HYDE PARK PRIME STEAKHOUSE, SHORT NORTH

» Absinthe is volatile. When Hyde Park bartender Todd Adam builds a Sazerac (\$10.50), he packs a rocks glass with ice and adds a “very, very finite amount” of the herbal spirit. “A little bit of absinthe goes a long, long way,” he says. In a separate shaker, Adam stirs Bulleit rye whiskey, half an ounce of simple syrup and three dashes of Peychaud’s Bitters. Before pouring into the rocks glass, he gives its contents a stir, too, and then discards the ice and absinthe; both have done their job. The chilled, scented glass is, at last, garnished with a lemon twist. “I will put the discarded ice on the side with a pair of tongs,” he says. “It’s something nice. That way the guest, if they want a cube or two, can chill their drink.”

hydeparkrestaurants.com

- 2 ounces **Bulleit rye whiskey**
- 1/2 ounce **simple syrup**
 - 3 dashes **Peychaud’s Bitters**
 - **Splash absinthe**

- 3/4 ounce **Bombay Sapphire gin**
- 3/4 ounce **Cointreau**
- 3/4 ounce **Cocchi Americano wine**
 - 1/2 ounce **lemon juice**
 - 1/4 ounce **simple syrup**
- **A dash of absinthe**
- **Lemon twist for garnish**

Corpse Reviver No. 2

HINKLEY’S, MARYSVILLE

» True to their name, corpse reviver cocktails were longtime hair-of-the-dog drinks, dating back to the mid-19th century. Perhaps the most popular recipe to survive is the No. 2, distinguished by its use of absinthe. Hinkley’s bar manager Todd Adam (also of Hyde Park Prime Steakhouse) starts his No. 2 (\$11) with three-quarters of an ounce of Bombay Sapphire gin. “Sapphire is more of a mixing gin to me,” he says. “Gin is a unique beast, and you don’t want it to overpower the other flavors at play.” It’s shaken with Cointreau, Cocchi Americano wine, lemon juice and simple syrup, before being strained into a chilled, absinthe-rinsed martini glass. “Just swirl and discard,” he says of the absinthe. “You don’t want it to stick around.” Adam finishes his No. 2 with a lemon twist. hinkleysoh.com

MANHATTAN

CURIO, GERMAN VILLAGE

» Perhaps no classic is better known than the Manhattan. Its origins are widely disputed, but Curio bar manager Rebecca Monday believes the whiskey-based drink was created in 1870 at The Manhattan Club in New York City for Lady Randolph Churchill, the mother of Winston Churchill. Several variations are served at Curio—one is carbonated and mixed with Cynar; another is mixed with Fernet Branca—but the classic is built with Elijah Craig 12 Year Old Bourbon, Carpano Antica sweet vermouth and Angostura or comparable house bitters. (Monday, who prefers rye to bourbon in Manhattans, will serve this stiffer take upon request.) The mixture is stirred and strained as you like it: neat in a chilled coup, or over two fat cubes in a rocks glass. Both renditions are garnished with skewered Luxardo Gourmet Maraschino Cherries. curioharvest.com

- 2 ounces **Elijah Craig 12 Year Old Bourbon**
- 1 ounce **Carpano Antica sweet vermouth**
- 2 dashes **Angostura bitters**
 - **Skewered Luxardo Gourmet Maraschino Cherries for garnish**

PHOTO: TIM JOHNSON