

UNITED

Cyber Sidebar

Good Spirits: More on BYOB—and New Drinks, too

BYOB is already having an effect in widening circles. Thirsty Reader says some restaurants that once rejected the practice are now recognizing it by offering once-a-week BYOB night. That's smart thinking—owners can fill more tables on slow nights that way, and many of the customers may well be people who otherwise wouldn't have come at all. All that many restaurateurs need sometimes is a little encouragement, and all of them know it's smart to listen to their regulars. So it's smart for regulars to speak up.

There are—as with American liquor laws in general—irregularities galore. In Boston proper, for example, BYOB is improper: the city's blue laws just won't go away. Karen Hudes, an editor at Zagat.com told me that's just fine with many restaurants beyond the city limits. "Sweet Basil, in nearby Needham, couldn't get a license because it didn't meet the requirement of seating at least 100 customers." (Killjoys always make up rules like that; they've also refused to license places that are too *big*. So, Karen says, "Owner-chef Dave Becker went to BYOB." Today, Becker says, Sweet Basil is known for BYOB: "People bring everything from Two-Buck Chuck to moldy treasures from the cellar." Even though he plans to expand to meet the 100-seat requirement, he'll continue with BYOB.

By the way: As at many other BYOB restaurants, Sweet Basil's customers often offer tastes of their wines to the staff. According to the perverse logic of the Blue Laws, *that* is illegal.

New York City in general and Manhattan in particular has been a hotbed of BYOB because of its considerable foreign population (dozens of language were spoken in Manhattan when it was still New Amsterdam). Innumerable ethnic restaurants survive today, many of them informal storefront "joints" with few tables and no tablecloths. No to mention no bar licenses. New Yorkers simply took the matter into their own hands, and BYOB continues even though it is, as Zagat's Hudes points out, it is illegal. The law is usually ignored but will be enforced if neighbors complain to the authorities. That usually happens when residents feel that the ambient nightlife is damaging their quality of life.


New Liqueurs, New Cocktails / New drinks usually introduce themselves by way of new cocktails, many of them commissioned by the distillers from master mixologists of rarefied stripe (such as Dale DeGroff and Gary Regan) as well as others who are working their way up in the ranks. One exception here is Nuvo. This French-made sparkling vodka(!) is going for the plain-and-simple approach, at least to start with. So here's an elegant variation: Fill a champagne flute with cracked or shave ice. Make a snow-cone top, for style—just round off the ice with a spoon. Add a couple of ounces of Nuvo and sip through a straw.

The other newcomers offer recipes by the long ton. Let's begin with Smirnoff Cocktail Consultant Cameron Bogue's blueberry-vodka cocktails.

Blue-merang

1½ oz. Smirnoff@blueberry vodka
8 watermelon cubes, made ahead*

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1 oz. lime juice
¼ oz. simple syrup

Blend all ingredients. Garnish with a watermelon slice.



*Sieve watermelon pulp through a chinois or fine-holed colander. Freeze in ice-cube trays.

Blusta

1 oz. Smirnoff®blueberry vodka
2 tsp. Grand Marnier
1 tsp. Maraschino liquor
¼ oz. lemon juice



Shake, then serve in a sugar-rimmed cocktail glass or crusta glass* and garnished with an entire lemon peel.

*A short, tapered glass with a foot, a little like a miniature Pilsner beer glass.

Recipes for Van Gogh's Acai-Blueberry Vodka

Blue Sky Martini

1½ oz. acai-blueberry vodka
1 oz. blue curacao
2 oz. lemonade



Pour ingredients into an ice-filled cocktail shaker; shake, then wait five seconds before straining into a martini glass.

Blueberry Sparkle

4 oz. chilled champagne
¾ oz. acai-blueberry vodka
¼ oz. blue curacao
Splash of simple syrup

Pour ingredients (this is important) into an ice-filled cocktail shaker; shake gently so as not to let the champagne fizz over. Strain ingredients into champagne flute. Drop blueberries into glass.

Fruits of the Forest

1½ oz. acai-blueberry vodka
½ oz. Van Gogh raspberry vodka
½ oz. blueberry liqueur
5 blueberries
4 raspberries
2 blackberries
1 strawberry
½ oz. simple syrup

Muddle berries and simple syrup, add to an ice-filled cocktail shaker. Add vodkas and blueberry liqueur. Shake vigorously and strain mixture into martini glass.

Acai Blueberrylicious

1¼ oz. acai-blueberry vodka
1¼ oz. Van Gogh raspberry vodka
½ oz. blueberry liqueur
Splash of grenadine



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Add ingredients into an ice-filled cocktail shaker, shake vigorously, wait five seconds, and then strain into martini glass.



Blue Lagoon

1½ oz. acai-blueberry vodka
¼ oz. Van Gogh coconut vodka
½ oz. blue curacao
Splash of pineapple juice

Pour ingredients into cocktail shaker and add ice. Let stand for five seconds. Shake vigorously for five seconds; strain into martini glass. Garnish with a slice of pineapple.

Blueberry Pancake

1¼ oz. acai-blueberry vodka
¼ oz. butterscotch schnapps
½ oz. blueberry schnapps
½ oz. cream
Dash of blueberry syrup (if desired)
5 blueberries
½ oz. simple syrup

Muddle blueberries and simple syrup. Add mixture to an ice-filled cocktail shaker, shake vigorously, wait five seconds, and then strain into martini glass.

Cruzan, the rum distiller based in the U.S. Virgin Islands, had recipes using its newest flavor, black cherry.

Cherry Tart

1 part Cruzan black cherry rum
1 part Cruzan light rum
Top with lemonade or sour mix

Garnish with a lemon wheel on the rim.



The Cruzan Flip Flop

¾ part Cruzan black cherry rum
¾ part Cruzan light rum
2 parts orange juice
1 part fresh lime juice
¾ part simple syrup
Lemon-lime soda

Shake ingredients and pour into a high-ball glass with ice. Top with lemon-lime soda. Garnish with an orange wedge and a cherry.

Cruzan Rum Breeze

1 part Cruzan black cherry rum
1 part Cruzan light rum
2 parts pineapple juice
Splash of ginger ale



Build over rocks in highball glass. Garnish with a lime twist

Cruzan Cherry Crème

½ part Cruzan black cherry rum
1 part Cruzan light rum
½ part Cruzan vanilla rum
2 parts half & half
¼ part simple syrup

Shake with ice and strain into a martini glass. Garnish with a cherry and sprinkle with nutmeg.

Cruzan Cherry Mojito

1 part Cruzan Black cherry rum
1 part Cruzan light rum
Juice of 1 lime
¼ part simple syrup
10-12 mint leaves
Club soda



In glass, muddle mint leaves with lime juice and simple syrup. Fill glass with crushed ice and add Cruzan. Stir and top with club soda. Garnish with a mint sprig.

Cruzan Cherry Orchard

1 part Cruzan black cherry rum
1 part Cruzan light rum
1 part pressed apple juice
½ part simple syrup
½ part lemon juice

Shake all ingredients with ice and strain into chilled martini glass. Garnish with apple slices.

Qi is the umbrella name for a pair of new liqueurs based on tea. Qi White uses oranges and white tea; Qi Black blends smoked Lapsang Souchong with fruit and wildflowers.

Qi Float

Created by Andie Ferman of the St. George Tasting Room, Alameda, California

2 oz. Qi Black Tea Liqueur
1 oz. Godiva Chocolate Liqueur
Heavy cream

Rim a chilled cocktail glass with grated dark chocolate, preferably Valrhona or Scharffen Berger). Shake liqueurs in an iced-filled shaker and strain into glass. Float a 1/4-inch layer of heavy cream on top, pouring the cream slowly over the back of a spoon.

Qi & Cocoa

Created by Lou Bustamante of the St. George Tasting Room, Alameda, California

2 oz. Qi Black Tea Liqueur
4 oz. rich hot chocolate

Make steaming hot chocolate (Scharffen Berger with milk or Recchiuti with water) and pour into a tea cup or mug. Add Qi Black and stir.



Photograph: Jan Sturmman

Mojito Negro

Created by Benjamin Chen of The Public, San Francisco

2 oz. Qi Black
1 oz. simple syrup
1 whole lime squeeze
Small splash club soda
Mint sprig, muddled

Combine ingredients in a cocktail shaker. Shake twice, then strain into tall glass with mint muddled over ice. Garnish with lime.

Black Lemon Drop

1 oz. Qi Black
½ oz. lemon juice
3 pieces ginger, 5 mint leaves
1 sugar cube

Muddle mint and ginger. Add Qi and lemon juice. Shake and strain into a sugar-rimmed martini glass with sugar cube at the bottom. Garnish with lemon. Lord it's tasty!

Thai Iced Qi

Another Lou Bustamante creation

1½ oz. Qi Black
½ oz. condensed milk

Combine in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake vigorously and strain into a tumbler with ice.

Tiger Woods

Created by M. Harrington, Cindy's Backstreet Kitchen, St. Helena, California

2 oz. Qi Black
2 oz. iced tea
2 oz. lemonade

Pour into a tall glass over ice. Mix and garnish with lemon.

Qi White and Maraschino

Created by Kieran Walsh of Solstice, San Francisco

1½ oz. Qi White
½ oz. maraschino liqueur, preferably Luxardo
3 dashes Regan's Orange bitters (Regan's is heavy on the cardamom so this is a must)

Stir vigorously with ice (you want a little melt water from the ice) and strain into a port glass. Garnish with an orange twist.

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