

# IMBIBE ART

*From Sake floats to Speakeasies, we share the stories of eight great sexy concoctions.*

WRITTEN BY ANNA RACHEL RICH | PHOTOGRAPHY BY EVAN SIGMUND

## *Sir Sazerac* PANGEA

**Raise a pinky and raise a glass.** Saluting his Creole kin Sazerac, Sir Sazerac raises the bar with a sweet, Earl Grey-infused twist. Keep up, chap. The original Sazerac's New Orleans roots date back to the early 1800s when Creole apothecary Antoine Peychaud crafted it with his favorite Cognac, Sazerac-de-Forge et Fils. He served Cognac and bitters from a double egg cup, or coquetier, which is where the word "cocktail" supposedly originates. The drink was made with brandy until the 1880s when a French phylloxera (a small tick-like pest) epidemic wiped out all grapevines. The shortage led to the skyrocketing of Brandy prices and rye whiskey was used as a substitute. Manufactured in the rugged Ohio River Valley and western Pennsylvania, it was a cheap and easily-accessible domestic alternative. Absinthe, used to rinse the glass, was also replaced by Pernod or Herbsaint when it was banned from the United States in 1912. Nowadays, debates about Sazeracs (presumably transpiring over Sazeracs) revolve around whether to use Cognac or bourbon, sugar cube or Demerara syrup, Herbsaint or absinthe, orange or lemon zest. Pangea's executive mixologist Brad Corburn settles the nonsense with his Sir Sazerac, robustly proclaiming its New Orleans heritage while embracing its mellower side. In a mixing glass, Corburn combines 3 oz. Earl Gray-infused bourbon, ½ oz. Demerara Syrup and 3 drops orange bitters while adding orange peel and a splash of absinthe in a separate rocks glass before setting it aflame. The fire lightly caramelizes the orange oil while releasing absinthe's anise aroma to subtly enhance flavor. Topping the mixing glass with ice, he shakes and strains it into the absinthe-rinsed glass, garnishing with a maple syrup ice cube. Sips are stiff up front with citrusy bergamot notes chiming in before a sweet, maple dénouement.

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## *SakeFloat* KAZU'S 2.0

**What's better, happy hour or dessert?** It's an irksome question that uncomfortably rubs against those hedonistic hankerings deep inside. The decision feels unnatural because it is. Perhaps marrying the two is avoided because of purist logic. Some would call it sacrilege but I say we've underestimated how much fulfillment, ease, soul and bliss-inducing transcendence there can be in a cozy scoop atop a sweet shot of sake. What can I say? Ice cream is my kryptonite. Ice Cream Float's rebellious yet lovable Japanese cousin stumbled onto Kazu's 2.0's menu in 2012, maintaining its quirky, life-of-the-party persona ever since. Incorporating elements of classic childhood American culture, the blast-from-the-past-in-a-glass will have you using "throw back shots!" in its imperative and noun form by the end of your happiest-of-hours. The short and sweet crowd-pleasers are known around the Gulf Gate area as Lychee Mist, Tokyo Bay and Coconut Dream, each distinct with their experimental East-meets-West intrigue.

For more of an adventurous shot, Lychee Mist offers a playful blend of exotic, tart flavor with frosty lychee sherbet and lychee sake. Tokyo Bay's subtle green tea flavor is light, refreshing and mellower than its handcrafted counterparts. Did you hear Carly Simon had a Coconut Dream? They were clouds in her sake. Made with a white, milky Nigori sake that lends its cloudy texture to unfiltered rice, Coconut Dream romances your palate with velvety richness and hints of honeyed tropical fruit. Although drinks are served up in shot glasses, the melting silkiness on top welcomes tongue dips or lingering sips—whatever floats your boat.

**Lychee Mist, Tokyo Bay and Coconut Dream are each distinct in their experimental East-meets-West intrigue.**





Long before conquistadors arrived, natives indulged in a fermented drink made from the sap of the maguey plant.


## *BellRinger* LOUIES MODERN

When life gives you lemons, toss them back and ask for limes, tequila, red bell peppers, agave nectar, egg whites, orange flower water and a dash of bitters for a cure-all. Better yet, salsa on over to Louies Modern for a cure-all-blur-all Bell Ringer cocktail. Underneath its frothy egg white sombrero, the curious cast gathers for a sunken soiree, stirring up a marvelous mouthful of mischief. Tequila, that sly, rebellious savage water slips into the Bell Ringer with a rich history that reaches deep into Mexico's ancient heritage. Long before conquistadors arrived, natives indulged in a fermented drink made from sap of the maguey plant (a variety of agave), turning it into a vitamin-rich beverage called "pulque." After conquistadors settled and ran dry of their own brandy in the 16th century, they started distilling agave to produce one of North America's first indigenous distilled spirits. While tequila infuses essence of Aztec and harsh dew of conquistador into the 'Ringer, peppers are the belles of the ball. Peter Piper picked a peck of rosy bell peppers exclusively for Louies' libation so you can pretend that happy hour is actually healthy. A crisp complement to the thermal tequila, the muddled peppers uplift with a clean freshness. Agave nectar weaves in sweeter warmth while the orange flower water splashes lighter tangy notes for a well-rounded finish.



## Siren JACK DUSTY

Drinking a well-made cocktail is one thing, but add to it an element of allure or visual intrigue and the drink becomes enchanting. In Greek Mythology, Sirens were three dangerous bird-women, depicted as seductresses who summoned nearby sailors with their entrancing voices. Unable to resist the tempting song, Sailors often shipwrecked on the rocky island coast. Odysseus too was once tempted as he set sail in the Mediterranean, passing by a beautiful beach where Sirens sat, endeavoring to charm him to the island. Bound tightly to the mast, Odysseus had his men cover their ears with thick beeswax until they could no longer hear the song. While no steep cliffs or feathery femmes are involved with Jack Dusty's Siren cocktail, there's something about the drink that makes you want to drop your anchor, strip down to your skivvies and take a dip. This floral cocktail makes even the most serious-minded imbibers blush. Perhaps it's the delicate hints of peach, pear and grapefruit from the Elderflower liqueur mixing with the subtle tartness of the freshly squeezed lemon juice—not too cloyingly sweet or sour. Or perhaps the tender rose petal and cucumber undertones from Hendrick's Gin pique your palate as they harmonize with homemade simple syrup and splashes of effervescent Prosecco. Within the curvaceous balloon wine glass sit the main attractions—four vibrant cranberry and grapefruit ice cubes and two oversized ice blocks holding brilliant violet orchids—awaiting your personal pouring of the concoction from the Pyrex pitcher. Both interactive and visually attractive, the Siren summons your sip.



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## *GingerSnap* CROP

**The juicing era is upon us.** No longer are spinach leaves, carrots and kale fated to wilt and wither in the lowly crisper at the base of our fridge. Tired of being mere accessories on sides of plates, chores on to-do lists, accomplices of sugary hate-crimes against lady-figures—fruits and veggies at CROP are stripped down to their raw, organic flesh, packed into pulverizers, masticated into a slurry before having every last drip of unpasteurized juice extracted as they're pressed in cloth. While it sounds like a scene from *Fifty Shades of Green*, the process is actually very gentle and laborious, ensuring nutritional integrity remains uncompromised for three to five days. Unlike many centrifugal juicers that partially “cook” produce with fast-spinning, heated blades, CROP's two-step cold press method protects live enzymes and nutrients from neutralization. Within 10 to 15 minutes, the electric-hued nectar feeds easily absorbable phytonutrients, vitamins and minerals into your bloodstream. That's why you feel that natural high, slightly euphoric sensation shortly after cracking open a chilled glass bottle. The palatable, densely-packed wellness cocktails gleaming in various vibrant shades are jet fuel, superchargers for the active on-the-go types. For those looking to wholly detoxify, partially modify or simply say goodbye to sinful sugary cravings, CROP's cold press green juices are a hot hit with eight servings of vegetables, 3 oz. of leafy greens (equivalent to a 135-leaf salad) and a variety of other voluptuous vegetation.

Ginger Snap (shockingly not a sassy beet red drink), shakes things up as it tangoes across the green drink stage with a colorful cast of charming chard, charismatic kale, insane romaine, attention wh'orange, green-eyed apple, lemon snicket and last but certainly not least, ginger spice (no, they didn't masticate Geri Halliwell). The antioxidant powerhouse wards off viral infections, decreases inflammation and reduces stress levels with a hefty dose of chlorophyll, phytonutrients, flavonoids and vitamins A, C, E and K. Cheers to being lean, green and well-informed about what's fact and what's pulp fiction.



**Ginger snap shakes things up as it tangoes across the green drink stage with a colorful cast.**





Hailing from the Land Down Under, this espresso based milk drink was developed in the 1980s.

## *Flat White* PERQ COFFEE BAR

If you're looking for your daily Venti, sugar-free, non-fat, vanilla soy, double shot, decaf, no foam, extra hot, Peppermint White Chocolate Mocha with light whip and extra syrup, you won't find it at Perq Coffee Bar. Steering clear of diluted, convoluted coffee drinks that mask natural flavor profiles, textures and aromas, Perq charms the microfoam milk-moustaches off Sarasota's java junkies with its Flat White. Hailing from the Land Down Under, the espresso-based milk drink was developed in the 1980s, taking cues from the cappuccino and latte. Because the Aussies and Kiwis don't kid around with their coffee, the Flat White is much more flavor-forward with its double shot of espresso. The proportion of coffee-to-milk is higher and unlike other espresso-based drinks, it has no stiff froth on top. Think of the cappuccino as the "Marge Simpson" of espresso-based drinks with its towering foam hoisted on top like a bee-hive. The latte is more reminiscent of a 1960s 'do—think Jackie O bouffant meets Jackson 5 afro. And the Flat White keeps things sleek with a silky chapeau, evenly dispersing its teased volume throughout the drink. Milk is poured in by hand, seamlessly folding flavors together to ensure no segregation occurs between liquid coffee and foam. In more of a supporting role, milk complements the distinct, single-origin beans that range in having strawberry, chocolate cake and brandy tasting notes in the Ethiopian Kilenso to blueberry, tea and blackberry wine notes in the Misty Valley. Each of the single-origin beans is enhanced to its fullest potential using their green Slayer espresso machine—one of only a handful in the U.S. that produces a sweet, perfectly balanced shot. Despite its unassuming name, the drink has personality. Level-headed, straight forward and slightly sensitive, the smooth sips will have you requesting hearts in your latte art. V-day Flat White pour deux, anyone?

## *SouthSide* STATE STREET EATING HOUSE + COCKTAILS

The ever-elegant and slightly devious South Side classic speaks easy about its elusive past, but a little mint-kissed mystery never hurt anyone. While the gin-based mixed drink is rumored to be a favorite of Prohibition Era gangsters on the South Side of Chicago attempting to disguise the taste of their bathtub gin, many believe it was an invention of the glamorous '21' Club in New York City. One of the most notable speakeasies in the country, the '21' Club was raided several times after cousins Jack Kreindler and Charlie Berns secretly snipped the ribbon in 1929. Kreindler and Berns ingeniously designed an intricate system of pulleys and levers that tilted bar shelves, dumping liquor bottles into sewers if police showed up. Every detail, from camouflaged revolving doors and hidden chutes to a secret wine cellar located in the next-door building was meticulously planned to ensure notables like Gerald Ford, Richard Nixon and Elizabeth Taylor could safely clink glasses away from prying eyes.

State Street Eating House and Cocktails keeps the liquid legend alive with the tall, cooling South Side. Raising a glass to forced sobriety being a thing of the past, they celebrate with a smooth mix of Uncle Val's Gin, fresh squeezed lemon juice, simple syrup and large mint leaves. Uncle Val's, a small batch botanical gin elevates the sipping experience with a complex array of flavors from crisp sage and cucumber to warm, calming lavender. Pairing particularly well with State Street's white, mild flaky fish-of-the-day accompanied with braised kale and wild rice, South Side's subtlety compliments fish rather than dominating its more discrete flavors. **SRQ**

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