



The Queen Park Swizzle from beverage director Dave Purcell is an upscale riff on the mojito.

Daytime Cocktails

Beyond the mimosa and Bloody Mary, mixologists recommend the best brunch drinks

BY TRACY KALER

Brunch first became boozy in the 1890s, and grew in popularity post-Prohibition through the mid-20th century. Since then, daytime libations such as mimosas, Bloody Marys, and Bellinis have paved the way for more unusual elixirs. These days, brunch cocktails are more innovative than ever—ranging from sweet to savory and mellow to strong; highlighting an array of spirits, mixers, fruit, and fresh herbs; and pairing with every dish on the menu.

"During brunch, we are seeing that guests love anything with bubbles," says David English, drink creator and general manager of Carson Kitchen, with locations in Las Vegas, Atlanta, and Salt Lake City. "They're looking to perk up from the night before or relax on the last day of their weekend." Mr. English's cocktail, Tangled Up in Blue, is a "jazzed-up" version of the Moscow mule. He combines vodka with lemon juice, basil simple syrup (equal parts sugar and water with a sprig of fresh basil), and blueberry preserves, before adding a touch of fizz with ginger beer. "It's the perfect balance of fruit, tart, herbaceous, and effervescent," he says.

The Sunny Cove hails from Angus Lugsdin, cofounder of Salcombe Distilling in the U.K. Mr. Lugsdin says, "The cocktail is reminiscent of a traditional British Pimm's cup, refreshing with notes of elderflower, strawberries, cucumber, and mint." To make: place 10 mint leaves in a highball glass and fill it with ice. Muddle three strawberries, two thin slices of cucumber, Salcombe Gin Start Point, and

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elderflower liqueur in an ice-filled shaker. Shake the contents vigorously and pour into a highball glass. Top off the cocktail with Fever-Tree Elderflower tonic water, more ice, half a strawberry, and a mint sprig. This drink complements savory fish, he says.

Greg Kong, head bartender at Kimika, the Japanese-Italian restaurant in New York's Nolita district, likes the fun, easy-to-drink Al Fresco Sour—a medley of Hendrick's Gin, Aperol, grapefruit juice, lemon juice, and cane syrup, then dressed up with cilantro. Mr. Kong explains

that the combo of lemon, grapefruit, and Aperol provides a pleasant but bitter tartness. "Quite often, brunch fare leans on the richer side, so this is a great drink to help cut through some of the heavier flavors you'll encounter," he says.

For those who crave coffee with booze at brunch, the espresso martini-inspired Old Skool promises a caffeinated pick-me-up. "Whiskey and coffee are meant to be," says Nicholas Pollacchi, vice president of Shibui, a company sourcing whiskeys from Japan. Pour Shibui Pure Malt 10-year, espresso, demerara syrup, a dash of Regans orange bitters, and four dashes of Angostura bitters into

a mixing glass and stir. Strain the drink over a large ice cube, and adorn with a wide piece of orange peel. "The chocolate and dark-fruit notes of Shibui offset the sharp espresso and combine to give a spectacular, elegant, and rich mouthfeel," he says.

Lynette Marrero, beverage director at Wonderbar in Beacon, New York, took inspiration from the speakeasies of the Prohibition era when curating the "Clara Bow." Ms. Marrero explains that during that period, "bartenders had to resort to whatever sweeteners were available to create something drinkable, especially with spirits of questionable quality." She uses a high-rye content

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SUNNY COVE
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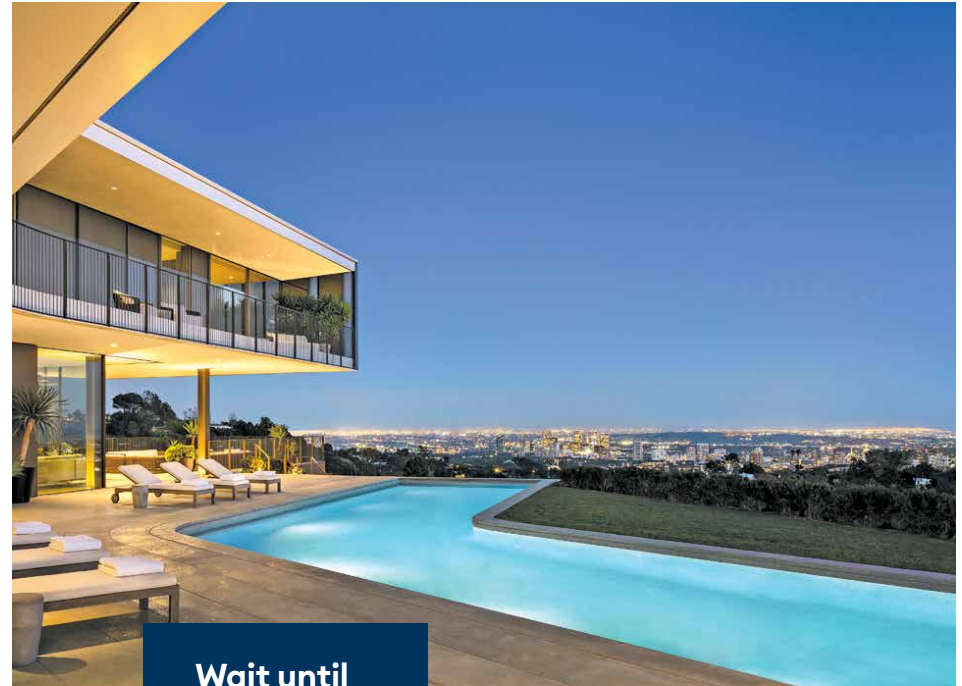
Muddle three strawberries, two thin slices of cucumber, Salcombe Gin Start Point, and elderflower liqueur in an ice-filled shaker.

Shake the contents vigorously, and pour into a highball glass.

Top off the cocktail with Fever-Tree Elderflower tonic water, more ice, half a strawberry, and a mint sprig.

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Salcombe Distilling Co. Gin Start Point



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CACTUS BLOSSOM

Shake up Cradle of Liberty Tequila, Morris Kitchen Grapefruit-Honey Mixer, aquafaba, and Fee Brothers Rose Water.

Add a pinch of salt.

Top with seltzer and ice.

Strain the concoction over rocks in a salt-rimmed Collins glass.

Adorn the drink with edible flowers and crushed pink peppercorns.



She adorns the drink with edible flowers and crushed pink peppercorns for the final touch. "The addition of rose water gives the cocktail a strong perfume, and the salinity paired with the grapefruit really makes the mouth water," Ms. Nevin says. She suggests pairing it with breakfast tacos.

Former bar director of the Nomad Hotel Los Angeles and now beverage director of the North Venice Boardwalk, Dave Purcell imagined Elegance Brands' Queen Park Swizzle—a classier version of the mojito. It's a blend of Bitterales Aromatic Bitters, mint leaves, simple syrup, lime juice, and light and dark rum, stirred with a small amount of ice. Mr. Purcell prefers pancakes with powdered sugar, butter, and maple syrup alongside the cocktail. "Bitterales bitters add sweet notes of baking spices, which can imply an accent in the batter of the cakes, creating a decadent and dessert-y brunch finisher," he says.

For those craving prosecco-based potations, the simple yet elegant Mionetto Limone Spritz mingles Mionetto Brut DOC with soda water and limoncello, adding fresh lemon peel as a garnish. According to Jimmy Bruton, brand director, Freixenet Mionetto USA, this spritz is an ideal match for fruit and fruit-based pastries, or it could feature a bright contrast to hearty breakfast burritos. And with the cocktail's low ABV (alcohol by volume), you can easily day-drink from brunch through late afternoon. ■

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bourbon like Four Roses, along with lemon juice, grenadine, and St. Germain, building the drink over ice and finishing it with mint. Swill the Clara Bow with a plate of sweet-and-savory chicken and waffles.

Mixologist Jackie Nevin from Art in the Age, a tasting room and home-bar supply in Philadelphia, recommends the "Cactus Blossom," a twist on the "Paloma"—usually a combo of tequila, lime juice, and grapefruit soda—but with more body. Ms. Nevin shakes up Cradle of Liberty Tequila, Morris Kitchen Grapefruit-Honey Mixer, aquafaba, Fee Brothers Rose Water, a pinch of salt, and a top of seltzer with ice before straining the concoction over rocks in a salt-rimmed Collins glass.



Philadelphia-based mixologist Jackie Nevin's Cactus Blossom, at top, is a Paloma with more body; while the Al Fresco Sour, from Kimika head bartender Greg Kong in New York, is dressed up to include grapefruit and lemon juice.

From top: Quaker City Mercantile; Barni Sung

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