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TOASTING

'Tis the Season to Imbibe
Looking back at a year of drinking

By Shana Liebman

2015

It could be a glass of champagne. Maybe it's a gingerbread Frappuccino, a mulled wine, or a hot toddy.

Chances are you take the holidays with a glass in hand. This winter is no different—although there are a few new options on the drinks menu. In 2015 we saw cocktails and beer go retro, while coffee got oddly futuristic.

Perhaps the biggest cocktail renaissance of 2015 was the tiki—those flashy Polynesian-inspired rum drinks, like the Zombie, that were popular in the 1970s returned with a splash. Similarly, shrubs, vinegar-laced drinks made

from seasonal fruits and vegetables and used as a tonic in colonial times, became a hot model for mixologists. Sorel, a traditional Caribbean liqueur made with hibiscus, is also now taking off in the US thanks to Jack From Brooklyn, a distiller who sleuthed Sorel's little-known history to create a modern version using organic grain alcohol, ginger, clove, and nutmeg—and perfect for the holidays.

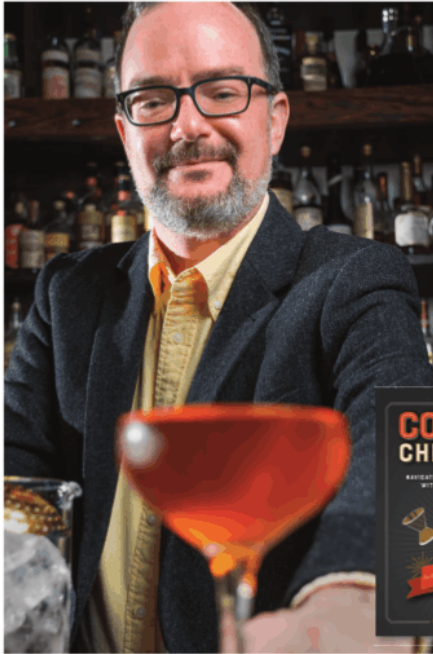
An ancient German-style beer called Gose is craft beer's new competitor. Mead, most famously favored by Vikings, has inspired hundreds of American meaderies and several

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Q&A with Paul Clark

The executive editor of *Imbibe Magazine*, Paul Clark is also an award-winning spirits journalist and the author of *The Cocktail Chronicles*.



What is your favorite drinking trend of 2015?

The aperitif revolution! It has been building over the last few years, with the arrival of wines like Cocchi Aperitivo Americano and Byrrh to the US market, but 2015 seemed to be a turning point.

What is your go-to holiday drink?

It's not really the holiday season if eggnog's not involved. Some holiday seasons I'll stick with a good aged rum and brandy, but

sherry, Madeira, tequila, and even Averna have made their way into my eggnog glass in recent years.

What is your favorite innovative holiday cocktail?

I conduct a seminar each year called "Holiday Drinks That Don't Suck" at Rob Roy in Seattle, and we serve the Réveillon cocktail, which Los Angeles blogger Chuck Taggart (originally from New Orleans) came up with 10 years ago. I think it's a good example of how the cocktail renaissance is reaching into the holiday drink territory.

RÉVEILLON COCKTAIL

Ingredients

2 oz applejack or Calvados
 ½ oz pear brandy (use
 an unaged eau-de-vie)
 ½ oz allspice liqueur
 ¾ oz Punt e Mes
 1 dash aromatic bitters

Glass: cocktail

Garnish: star anise pod

Method: Stir with ice to chill; strain into chilled glass. Garnish.

Note: For the aromatic bitters, Angostura works well; The Bitter Truth or Abbott's work better.

The Cocktail Chronicles,
 Paul Clark, Spring House Press.

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new books on the beer-alternative. The "honey wine," made by fermenting honey with water, which may have been consumed as long ago as 7000 BC, is definitely back.

Meanwhile, on the coffee front, inventors and brewers continue to come up with new ways to brew the bean. Quickly gaining momentum is the Japanese Kyoto cold-drip tower that produces one pot of coffee every five to 24 hours. The JoeTap system, debuted this year at the annual coffee trade show, infuses nitrogen into coffee for a sweet, creamy taste and natural foam. Elixir, an Australian-born beverage now distributed by the US-based Elixir Specialty Coffee, is made from water that is circulated by sound waves; as a result of the gentler infusion, the coffee tastes mellow and herbal, like tea, and delivers a steadier stimulation.

The New Next Best Thing



The New Kombucha:
Kefir Water



The New Decaf:
Roasted Chicory Root



The New Cappuccino:
Bulletproof Coffee



The New Green Tea:
Matcha

Q&A with Julie Reiner

Co-owner of the Clover Club and Flatiron Lounge, Julie Reiner is also the author of *The Craft Cocktail Party: Delicious Drinks for Every Occasion*

What is your favorite new drinking trend of 2015?

The rise of Latin spirits. We are seeing an increased interest in the spirits of Latin America, including sotol, mezcal, pisco, *cachaça*, and tequila. I think that this is just going to continue into the next year.

What is your favorite holiday drink?

For my industry friends, I generally will serve a Manhattan variation. But my favorite drink to serve to my non-bar industry friends and family is the New York sour. It is a delicious variation on the whiskey sour with a red wine float. It is so beautifully festive looking that it just adds to the ambiance in the room.

DANIEL KREIGER



New York Sour

Ingredients

- 2 oz rye whiskey
- $\frac{3}{4}$ oz lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ oz orange juice
- $\frac{3}{4}$ oz simple syrup

Shake with ice and strain into a cocktail glass.

Top with $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce medium-bodied red wine (pour onto a spoon, and gently place on to the top of the cocktail).



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