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GEORG RIEDEL'S HOUSE OF GLASS

Cherry Crush

So long, artificial flavors; Cherry Heering is a natural winner.

OF ALL THE PRODUCTS OF THE NATURAL WORLD that have been tinkered with by food scientists, few have suffered more indignities than the cherry. This meddling is especially evident in the world of mixology: Stoplight-colored cocktail cherries with a half-life surpassing that of plutonium garishly adorn countless Manhattans, and back bars holding bottles of deceptively named “cherry brandy”—which tastes like a cross between Lifesavers and Robitussin, and has a color to match—are depressingly common.

Common, but not ubiquitous, thanks in large part to a liqueur that derives its flavor and color from the orchard rather than the chemistry lab. Created by Peter Heering and produced in Denmark since 1818, Cherry Heering is a ruby-red liqueur made by soaking lightly crushed Danish cherries and a blend of spices in neutral grain spirits, then cask-maturing the mixture for up to five years, adding sugar during the aging process. With an elaborate complexity of flavor that places its character closer to that of *gâteau* than of Ho-Ho, Cherry Heering reclaims the taste of cherries from the candy-colored impostors.

Useful in many cocktail recipes wherever cherry brandy is called for (and not to be confused with kirsch, an unaged, unsweetened *eau de vie* made by distilling fermented cherries, or with maraschino, a liqueur made by sweetening a dry cherry distillate similar to kirsch), Cherry

Heering has a rich flavor that adds depth to a number of drinks, such as the brandy-based Ulysses, the classic gin-based Singapore Sling and the scotch-based Blood and Sand. At Nopa in San Francisco, bar manager Neyah White counts Cherry Heering among his most versatile liqueurs, deploying it in unique drinks such as the Brigadier, which matches Cherry Heering with green Chartreuse and hot chocolate; and in the Cherry Samba, which uses the liqueur to sweeten a mixture of cachaça and deeply smoky single-malt scotch from the southern coast of Islay.

In New York, bartender St. John Frizell—who lists stints at Pegu Club and The Good Fork on his resume, and plans to open his own Brooklyn cafe and bar, Fort Defiance, this spring—is an ardent advocate of one particular Cherry Heering cocktail, the Remember the Maine. “It has a deep, almost chocolatey bittersweet quality from the Heering, which adds this profound depth of flavor to the drink,” says Frizell. Noting that the pairing of anise-rich pastis with the dark, fruity flavor of the liqueur might seem an odd combination, Frizell says in the Remember the Maine—a sort of hybrid between a Manhattan and a Sazerac—this counterintuitive blend of flavors works remarkably well. “You have the rye whiskey and vermouth of a Manhattan with the pastis flavor of a Sazerac,” he says. “The Heering somehow mysteriously forms the bridge.” —Paul Clarke

Remember the Maine (Left)

Brooklyn bartender St. John Frizell describes this intensely flavored relative of the Manhattan as a fine sipping drink that’s especially welcome on a winter night.

2 oz. rye whiskey
 ¾ oz. sweet vermouth
 2 tsp. Cherry Heering
 ½ tsp. absinthe or substitute, such as Herbsaint
 Ice

Tools: mixing glass, strainer, barspoon

Glass: cocktail

Garnish: cherry

Combine ingredients in a mixing glass and fill with ice. Stir briskly for 20 seconds. Strain into chilled glass. Garnish.

Adapted from The Gentleman’s Companion by Charles H. Baker, Jr., 1939

Blood and Sand (Back)

Named after a 1922 film that starred Rudolf Valentino as a bullfighter, this cocktail matches the richness of Cherry Heering with fresh orange juice, sweet vermouth and whisky. Most recipes call for equal parts of the four ingredients; Imbibe columnist Ted “Dr. Cocktail” Haigh suggests reducing the amounts of sweet vermouth and Cherry Heering (as seen below), which makes a less sweet—and more engaging—cocktail.

1 oz. blended scotch whisky
 1 oz. fresh-squeezed orange juice
 ¾ oz. sweet vermouth
 ¾ oz. Cherry Heering
 Ice

Tools: shaker, strainer

Glass: cocktail

Garnish: cherry

Combine ingredients in a cocktail shaker and fill with ice. Shake well for 10 seconds and strain into chilled glass. Garnish.

Adapted from “Cocktail Bill” Boothby’s World Drinks and How to Mix ‘Em, 1934

Cherry Samba (Right)

Nopa bar manager Neyah White employs Cherry Heering in many of his original drinks, including this notable cocktail that combines cachaça with the exceptionally smoky flavor of a Kildalton malt whisky, which is produced on the southern coast of Islay. (For more about Scotland’s distilleries, see our story on page 48.)

1 ½ oz. cachaça
 ¾ oz. Cherry Heering
 ½ oz. Kildalton malt (Ardbeg, Laphroaig or Lagavulin)
 ½ oz. fresh lemon juice
 ¾ oz. fresh egg white (1 egg white is sufficient for 2 drinks)

Ice

Tools: shaker, strainer

Glass: flute

Combine ingredients in a cocktail shaker and shake vigorously, without ice, for about 30 seconds (the spring coil from a cocktail strainer may be added to the container to help aerate the egg white). Open shaker, remove coil if used, and fill with ice; shake vigorously for at least 10 seconds. Strain into chilled glass.

Neyah White, Nopa, San Francisco



