

TheBarkeeper.com

A new website dedicated to the On Premise Drink Industry

March 2009

Volume I, Issue II



COBBLER
MIXER.

AMERICAN DRINKS.

In submitting these drinks to the public we do not recommend them to be taken as enumerated in *The Echo*, dated the 25th March, 1871, viz. :—

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| At 6 a.m. Eye-opener. | At 3 p.m. Cooler. |
| „ 7 „ Appetiser. | „ 4 „ Social drink. |
| „ 8 „ Digester. | „ 5 „ Invigorator. |
| „ 9 „ Big reposer. | „ 6 „ Solid straight. |
| „ 10 „ Refresher. | „ 7 „ Chit-chat. |
| „ 11 „ Stimulant. | „ 8 „ Fancy smile. |
| „ 12 „ Ante lunch. | „ 9 „ Entr'acte. |
| „ 1 p.m. Settler. | „ 10 „ Sparkler. |
| „ 2 „ à la Smyth. | „ 11 „ Rouser. |

12 o'clock p.m. the Nightcap.

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Readers of this site should be of “Legal Drinking Age” in the State or Country where they reside.

Any and all information published in this website are the opinions of the author, who is in no way responsible for the actions of the readers.

Members of the eating and drinking establishment industry are expected to follow the practice of RESPONSIBLE BEVERAGE SERVICE!!!!

Introduction

Our Cover Page Artwork

This fine black and white illustration is taken from a book titled “The Gentleman’s Table Guide: Being Practical Recipes for Wine Cups, American Drinks, Punches, Cordials, Summer & Winter Beverages, Recherche Bills of Fare, with Service of Wines, &c.”, which was published in London in 1871, by the authors Edward Rickett and C. Thomas. From the agenda on page 38 of the book, it seems that the English newspaper The Echo, was under the impression that our adult

beverage consumption habits were on an eighteen hour schedule, which though it might be desirable, requires a physical regimen well beyond most citizen's capabilities at the time.

There were two quite interesting recipes in this book, the first one I will refer to is the “Athole Brose”, which was: "To 1 bottle of “mountain dew”, or Scotch whisky, add and mix thoroughly in a bowl, half pint of heather or virgin honey, the whisky must be added by degrees till the honey is dissolved." I was always under the impression that “mountain dew” was an American term, I stand corrected. But a question does arise, was this old recipe the base formula for Drambuie, which came on the market in 1906?

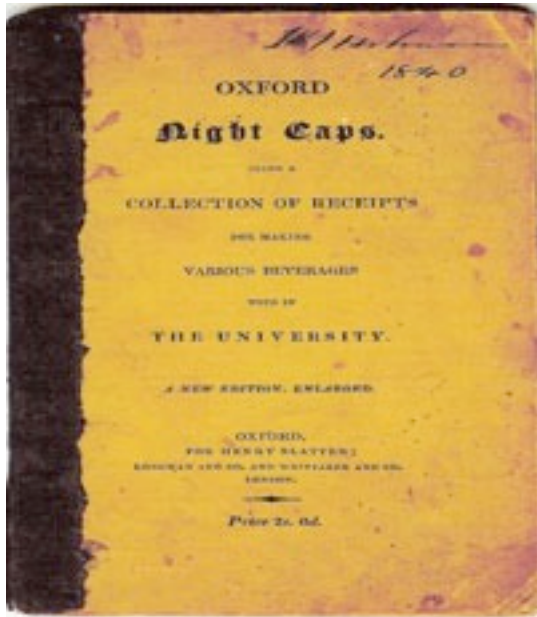
The other recipe that makes for a challenging potion is the Mixed Punch-American. "Take one gill (8 ounces) of mixed spirits-brandy, rum and Irish whisky; a tablespoon and a half of powdered sugar, the peel and the juice of a half lemon; fill with shaved ice, and mix well; ornament with 2 or 3 slices of Tangerine oranges on top. Use 2 straws to imbibe." Many years ago while visiting Cheltenham, England, the barkeeper and I tested this concoction, being that I was paying. We agreed the combination of brandy, rum and Irish whisky requires either an acquired taste, or a death wish. The next morning was the same as the hangover books titled “Wake Up and Die”, or “By Dawn’s Ugly Light”.

Barchives

“Oxford Nightcaps” (the first mixed drink book?)

In 1827 a small 38-page booklet entitled Oxford Nightcaps: A Collection of Receipts for Making Various Beverages Used in the University was published in Oxford by Henry Slatter. No author is given, but the work possibly could be that of Richard Cook (b.1799). A question to be considered is, was this the first book published dedicated to drink recipes prior to the 1862 Jerry Thomas Bartender’s Guide. The book’s primary audience seems to be the faculty and students of Oxford, and this guide would most certainly result in the proper methods of concocting civilized drinks. But in all likelihood, copies were also purchased by local Publicans and Innkeepers in close proximity to the university, so they could provide the same beverages to the locals. And, I would imagine, that numerous copies also traveled to other inns and pubs throughout the region, and on to London, so that in time the book became a very popular mixed-drink guide. If the Dons were responsible for the development and printing of this book, then we must acknowledge a further benefit of a college education, and give them credit for creating a source of revenue for the university.





Oxford Nightcaps must have become a very successful enterprise, as it was reissued numerous times in the 19th century, 1835, 1840, 1847, 1860, 1871, and 1893, and even a 20th century printing in 1931. It was probably the first mixed-drink book to have multiple editions, in the true sense of the word, with additional pages and recipes in each printing. Most other books of this genre, when republished, were merely reprints. It seems with each edition the Dons intended to stay with current drink trends.

Comparing some of the various editions -1835, 1847, 1860, and 1931-provides us with a good look at the contents and changes. The difference is primarily in page count and additional recipes, as well as price increases for the guide. The first edition of 1827 has 38 pages the 1835 has 43 pages and 44 recipes; the 1847 “Fourth Edition, enlarged” has 53 pages with 52 recipes; the 1860 “New Edition, enlarged”, by Slatter and Rose has 54 pages and 53 recipes. The 1931 edition has just 31 pages, with 60 recipes. In addition, the recipes are now listed in categories, such as Ale; Wine; Punch; Honey; Soft drinks. Surprisingly, the foreword states the book first appeared in 1847.

All editions contain numerous ancient quotations (many in Latin), as well as historical tales and references, and quite charming origins and descriptions of the recipes. Until the 1931 edition, the recipes were not in any alphabetical or categorical sequence.

BISHOP, or SPICED WINE

The first drink recipe in all the editions I have seen is for “Bishop, or Spiced Wine”. It is prefaced by an “Ancient Fragment” that states:

Three cups of this a prudent man may take;
The first of these for constitution sake,
The second to the girl he loves best,
The third and last to lull him to his rest.

The introduction is followed by a brief history recap.

The recipe is as follows:

“Make several incisions in the rind of a lemon, stick cloves in the incisions, and roast the lemon over a slow fire. Put small but equal quantities of cinnamon, cloves, mace, and all-spice, and a race of ginger, into a saucepan, with a half pint of water; let it boil until it is reduced one half. Boil one bottle of port wine, burn a portion of the spirit out of it, applying a lighted paper to the saucepan. Put the roasted lemons and spice into the wine;

stir it up well, and let it stand near the fire ten minutes. Rub a few knobs of sugar on the rind of the lemon, put the sugar into a bowl or jug, with the juice of a half lemon (not roasted), pour the wine into it, grate some nutmeg into it, sweeten it to your taste, and serve it up with the lemon and spice floating in it.”

-This is a simple, well balanced recipe, though I am not sure it is worth all the effort, but.....maybe it's a ceremony or tradition. But almost a full bottle of Port Wine should be able to lull you to sleep as stated. Then the question arises, does one wear a nightcap while consuming?

The most challenging recipe is the Rumfustian, which contains the yolks of twelve eggs, one quart of strong beer, one bottle of white wine, half a pint of gin, a grated nutmeg, the juice from the peeling of a lemon, a small quantity of cinnamon, and sufficient sugar to sweeten it; prepared precisely in the same way as Rum Booze. The next paragraph states: "So is the intoxicating property of this liquor, that none but hard drinkers will venture to regale themselves with it a second time". Now if we only knew the size of the serving portions, or.....was this a single serving ?

Some recipes in the book contain Borage, with an appropriate explanation of the benefits of this herb, stated by various experts.

- “The sprigs of borage in wine are a known virtue, to revive the hypochondriac, and cheer the hard student”
- “Borage is one of four cordial flowers, it comforts the heart, cheers melancholy, and revives fainting spirits”
- “Borage has the credit of being a great cordial, throwing it into cold wine is better than all medicinal preparations”
- “Borage is very good to help digestion, and obstructions of the brain, and hath so much purging quality in it, as to expel those melancholy vapors from the spirits and blood which are in the heart and arteries, although it cannot do so in other parts of the body”

-Well, with all these endorsements, I would imagine it's definitely time for a “Boragetini”. Maybe a six-pack?

“H.C. Ramos Gin Fizz Saloon”

I would assume most bartenders are familiar with the Ramos Gin Fizz, and probably a substantial number of them have a love/hate relationship with the concoction due to the construction of same. Separating the egg white and yolk was always a pain in the ass, and quite often the crap spilled all over, with the resultant mess.

One of my bartending jobs eons ago, was in a very successful, fine food restaurant in Los Angeles, with a high volume Sunday Brunch Business, and the resultant 300 to 400 orders of



Ramos Gin Fizzes.

This was not a pretty picture, especially as this was only a three station bar, with two stations for the bar crowd, and one station for Ramos service. One bartender and a bar back were responsible for all the production of this PITA cocktail, and shaking them for the correct count and time was a disaster. So we

assigned two bartenders to the shaking team, and service was still abysmal, no less the cleaning process problems.

So...we went out and purchased two Hamilton Beach Spindle Mixers, and placed them behind the bar. After closing we ran a test run of twenty Ramoses', and they were great (no matter what you think). It was a fast process, drink consistency was very good, and the frothing factor was perfect, and...it only took about ten or eleven seconds to blend, just enough before you had the dilution problem.

Before the next Sunday Brunch, we also decided to pre-separate the yolks and whites in the kitchen (wonder why it took so long to figure that out?). Brunch came, and it was marvelous! About 385 Ramos Gin Fizzes, and not one single customer complaint...Nirvana. I can still remember the bar top with a case of gin (to start), ½ gallon containers of cream, flats of eggs, baskets of lemons and limes, two juice squeezers, trays of glasses, orange flower water, and panting bar backs. It was really an Adult Beverage Cocktail Production Facility. And...be assured we were not washing the glasses behind the bar, as you know what that is like.

Over the years, actually decades, there has been controversy about the so-called proper recipe, and shaking time, which depends a lot upon a bartender's shaking style and capability. We will just address the recipe aspect at this time:

Formula I (turn of the century, and NO, not the last one)

½ teaspoon orange flower water

juice of a ½ lemon

juice of a ½ lime

1 teaspoon powdered sugar

1 egg white, beaten well

½ glass crushed ice

2 teaspoons rich cream

1 ounce seltzer water

Mix in this order: crushed ice, fruit juices, orange flower water. Shake vigorously. Add beaten egg and shake until tired. Then shake again. I rather like this formula.

Formula II (Stanley Clisby Arthur's book "Famous New Orleans Drinks and how to mix 'em"-1937)

1 tablespoon of powdered sugar

3-4 drops orange flower water

½ lime-juice only ½ lemon-juice only

1 jigger dry gin

1 white of egg

1 jigger rich milk or cream

1 squirt seltzer water

2 drops vanilla extract (optional)

and...long, steady shaking until mixture gets body-"ropy"

Formula III (the one I was trained to do in the late 1940's, eons ago)

1 teaspoon fine granulated sugar

juice of ½ lime, and ½ lemon

1 ½ ounces Plymouth Gin

white of 1 egg

1 ½ ounces cream

...serious, extensive shaking for a thirty count. Strain into Collins glass, add 1 ounce of soda, and 2-3 dashes Orange Flower Water. No vanilla extract option, so I guess it evolved in the 1920's or early 1930's.

But...I do remember certain old time customers asking for two or three dashes of grenadine in the drink. Reviewing the Sloppy Joe's Bar Season 1933 Cocktails Manual, you will find listed "Raimund's Gin Fizz", which contains 1 Teaspoonful of sugar, 1 White of an Egg, 1 Part of Milk, 1 Part of Gin, Drops of Grenadine, ½ ounce of lemon juice, drops of orange blossom water. Shake with ice, and serve in a tall glass.

-Who knows, it could work.

Sidebar

Years ago someone, somewhere, decided to do a takeoff on employee reviews, and here are the results. But on some recent visits to some rather nice drinking and eating establishments, a few of these comments would have been a moment of truth.

Employee Reviews (Humor or Satire)

- I would not allow this employee to breed.
- This young lady has delusions of adequacy.
- He sets low personal standards and the consistently fails to achieve them.
- The wheel is turning, but the hamster is dead.
- I would like to go hunting with him sometime.
- He has been working with glue to much.
- Gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn't coming.
- He brings joy whenever he leaves the room.
- A prime candidate for natural de-selection.
- This employee should go far, and the sooner he starts, the better.
- If you gave him a penny for his thoughts, you would get change.
- Some drink from the fountain of knowledge, he only gargled.
- It's hard to believe he beat out 1 million other sperm.
- Takes him an hour and a half to watch 60 minutes.
- If she was any dumber, she'd have to be watered twice a week.
- If his IQ reaches 50, he should sell.

A Shot of History



This is the cover of a laminated Angostura Bitters Recipe book in 1898. A little racy?

Improving Bar and Beverage Sales

“Your Customers, the Regulars”

Today the challenge is to maintain and keep your current steady customers (the regulars) happy, because:

1. Steady customers usually order faster than new or occasional customers, which results in higher sales and profits.
2. Established customers are more willing to try new products (food & beverage), if they are satisfied with present items.
3. Steady customers often view you as an authority on food and beverage.

4. Steady customers feel comfortable offering unsolicited feedback and suggestions that can assist you in operating a more successful business. And yes.....there are numerous times where they act like they own the place.
5. Satisfied customers are sure to talk about your operation with other potential customers.

In an attempt to maintain this core of important customers, it might be nice to try to influence them further by occasional acts of kindness. An occasional complimentary adult beverage, an appetizer, or maybe a bottle of wine, or a dessert. But do not make this a constant habit, otherwise it diminishes the value of same.

Many, many years ago, when I was managing a rather successful establishment, one of our favorite strategies was to select six of our regulars to become part of our Food and Beverage Tasting Team (we used to change our food and beverage menus on a seasonal basis, so every quarter we would be introducing some new items). Our test team would provide feedback on the items we were considering for the new menu, and their decisions helped us finalize the choices.

Each member of the team received business cards listing their name, the team title, and obviously the name and address of our establishment. You cannot believe how many business cards they handed out to friends and acquaintances, which resulted in many new customers. At the end of six months, they were treated to a nice dinner, where we distributed laminated plaques of appreciation. Then we selected six more of our regulars to be part of the next team, and the process was repeated. A minor problem that arose about two years later was now every customer wanted to be a team member, so it was necessary to have a drawing to keep everyone happy.

Even though all of this happened about forty some years ago, I believe it has some merit even in today's difficult economic climate.

Industry Trends

“Curmudgeon Comments- The Economy”

I would imagine by this time, everyone is definitely tired of being exposed to the constant media blitz about the state of the economy, as if we aren't already impacted by this situation. Those damn' fools just don't realize they make business conditions even worse with their constant barrage of doom and gloom.

Be that as it may, let me address in a KISS (Keep It Simple, Succinct) fashion, a few points that our industry should be aware of:

1. We have absolutely no control of the economic situation.
2. On Premise Bar/Beverage Sales will experience declines of anywhere from 5% to 20%, dependent on their style of operation. But.....there will still be some very successful establishments.
3. The unemployment rate could possibly increase to 12 ½%, which means at least 85% of the working population will still be employed.
4. The 85%, or more, employed group will need to make purchases, and primarily it will be food, beverages, clothing, housing, etc. More expensive items such as cars, appliances, entertainment systems, luxury vacations, etc., will be placed on hold.
5. Customers will still want to eat and drink outside the home, but the frequency of these events will decline. Today's consumer is apprehensive about spending their dollars, they have become more price and value oriented, and will be seeking establishments that focus on those elements, as well as quality, ambience, and improved customer service.
6. Management must understand that to maintain, and, possibly increase sales may require changes to their operations. More concerted effort will be required to attract, cultivate, and improve relationships with their customers, as well as insure their return visits.
7. Operators must be made aware that there is no real growth projected for our industry, and all future sales will come from taking business from your competitors, also known as stealing market share.
8. Therefore, now is the time to differentiate your establishment from others by focusing on the customer, insuring quality service and products, reasonable pricing that enhances value, and making your place a destination, rather than a convenience. Achieving this goal results in very satisfied customers, and offers the opportunity to have them influence potential new customers.
9. If you are determined to differentiate your establishment from others, realize that to achieve that level of customer satisfaction, and sales, you must have all departments (bar staff, floor staff, kitchen staff, hosts, and management), be part of the effort, and its implementation, as their livelihoods also depend upon the outcome.

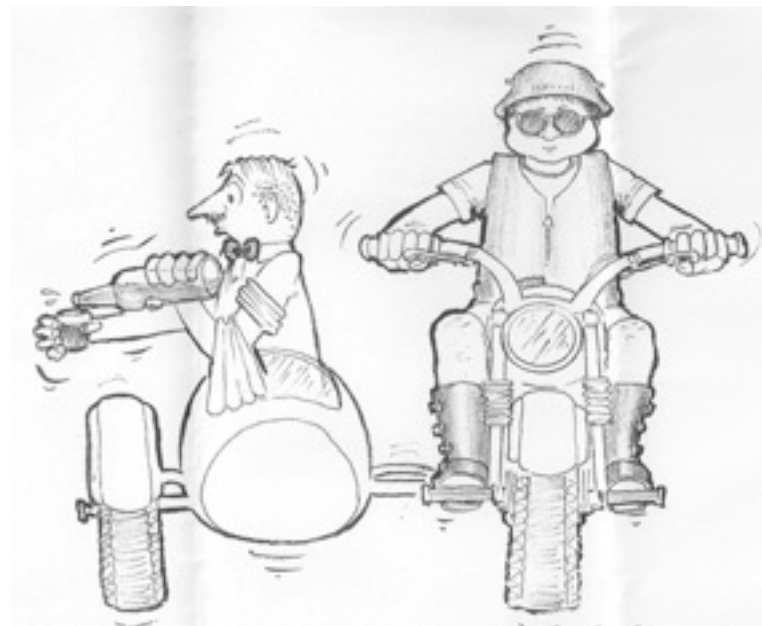
And last but not least, management must realize that you bank sales dollars, not percentage points, and restaurants must turn tables, while bar/cocktail lounges, must develop relationships. We will discuss these issues further, in future newsletters

Sidebar

Vodka

When I first became a bartender in the late 1940's (yikes), vodka was just beginning to become popular. Many bartender's were somewhat mystified as to why this product began to become a favorite of so many customers, especially with the lunch crowd. It seems the Smirnoff Company was promoting the vodka as being breathless, which supposedly meant that when you went back to work after lunch, and a few Vodkatinis, or Bloody Mary's, your breath had no signs of having consumed same.

Still numerous bartenders were saying, "If you can't smell it, taste it, or see it, why drink it?". They didn't understand that the basic element that sold the vodka was it's versatility, you could mix it with anything, tomato juice, orange juice, grapefruit juice, tonic, coke, 7Up, you name it. A few of the bartender's suggested a unique new concoction, vodka and prune juice. They titled the drink a Blockbuster, or a Piledriver.



Last Call Cocktail-an oldie goldie.

Skip and Go Naked

Into a mixing glass pour 1 ½ ounces of gin, 1 ounce lemon juice, ½ ounce grenadine, 1/2 teaspoon sugar.

Shake with ice, and strain into a Collins glass ½ filled with ice cubes and beer.

-Be brave.... try it, you'll like it.

Last Call Weirdo cocktail

Mick Jagger

Into a ¾ full glass of ice cold Michelob, pour 1 ½ ounces of Jagermeister.

Last Call Note

“It’s more fun to eat in the bar, than drink in the restaurant”.