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MIXMASTER

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5 Cocktail Trends for a New Decade



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If craft cocktails have ever been ascendant, it has been the latter half of the last decade. Cocktails of all kinds were in vogue with every mixologist/bartender from here to Topeka donning a vest and learning the "hard shake": ones made with foams and "caviar", good old-fashioned *old fashioned*s, and even *solid cocktails*. It almost got a little tiresome to hear the word "speakeasy" and even the new pioneers of craft cocktails were surprised at how far we had come.

With all of that momentum, I keep getting asked the question: when is the jig up? One might ask the same question of craft beers or fine wine--I mean why drink IPAs and Oregon Pinot Noir when you can drink light beer and white zinfandel, right? So if craft cocktails are here to stay, and surely they will, what's next?

Here's my stab at it. Certainly you can find examples of these already. It's just a question of them becoming the common language of bartenders and consumers. One thing you'll note is that I'm focusing in on ingredients. Ingredients are what drive bartenders, much like they drive chefs.

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Hopefully, we will see a flourishing of new techniques but I suspect that rather than learning how to dehydrate White Russians, bartenders will focus on stirring, shaking and rendering drinks in the most classic of ways.

1.) Cocktail and Food Pairing Cocktails and food can go magnificently together, and great bartenders are already offering pairings alongside chef's creations. It's just a short time before our suited brethren in fine dining restaurants see cocktails as a fun and inspired way to pair with foods and not just something to start the meal with. Expect to see cocktails accompanying your food in 2010. "Please sir, may I have a Sidecar to accompany my duck *a l'orange*?"

2.) Monk-made Liqueurs It's the quincentennial of [Benedictine](#), once known only in conjunction with brandy and then only by the oldest guy at your bar, and yet its popularity is fast growing among the mixology-inclined. Among my favorite recipes are two greats from New Orleans, the [Vieux Carré](#) and [Cocktail à la Louisiane](#). I've also found myself using the [Chartreuse family](#) of products as indispensable ingredients. What is it with these monk-made liqueurs? Perhaps the old friars got it right!

3.) Get Wet! Vermouth has been staging a comeback for years, but now it's almost criminal to use only one brand of vermouth if you consider yourself a serious mixologist and even more so if that brand is one of the commercially available duds like Stock or Martini & Rossi. Dolin dry for gin Martinis, Carpano Antica Formula for top-shelf Manhattans. Throw in some Dubbonet and Noilly Pratt, perhaps Vya Dry or Sweet and Carpano Punt e Mes. Now you're talking!

4.) Orange You Glad I reach for Cointreau, Grand Marnier, or some orange-flavored liqueur more often than I reach for almost any other mixer these days. A simple gin, Grand Marnier, and bitters combo has been my favorite call for the past few months (known as a Fancy Gin). [Combiar](#) is making a comeback, and since I use orange-flavored liqueurs so much I started making my own. Toss the cheap triple-sec and get in the game.

5.) Ice, Ice Baby Ice has been such a buzz in the world of craft cocktails that it may reach "speakeasy" status by the year's end, but it has yet to completely reach non-cocktail focused bars. Whether using different varieties, compositions, and shapes or a simpler product of the machine you inherited at work, ice is an essential ingredient in cocktails. So much that I've stopped saying that the Martini has three ingredients: Gin, Vermouth, and bitters. It has got four; add water (ice). With the help of Macallan's [ice ball machine](#) and a few [brave souls](#) with their tireless experiments, you'll be able to take your pick ice of choice right along with your favorite brand of booze.