The Reverse Manhattan

A low alcohol treat….the fruity richness of Carpano with spicy rye and a touch of coffee, pecans & chocolate. Perfect on a crisp Autumn evening!

- 2 oz. Italian Vermouth such as Carpano Antica
- 1 oz. Rye Whiskey
- 1 Bar spoon Coffee Liqueur
- 1 Dash *Doc Elliott's Coffee Pecan Bitters*
- Maraschino cherry for garnish

1. Chill a cocktail glass with ice and water
2. Combine first 3 ingredients in a mixing glass with ice & stir to chill
3. Strain into chilled glass
4. Garnish with the maraschino cherry

Cheers!

Vermouth Panache Revisited

Our friends over at Swizzzlestick reintroduced us to the Vermouth Panache for the MxMo XCI – Shims. A drink first described by Hemingway, it is light, refreshing and low ABV. I used Carpano Antica and Dolans Dry vermouth. I also changed the ratio slightly adding more sweet vermouth less dry – more like a 2:1 1/2 ratio rather than 2:1. Here is the original recipe:

- 2 oz. Dry French Vermouth
- 1 oz. Sweet Italian Vermouth
- 1 Dash Angostura Bitters
- 1 Lemon peel

1. Combine the first 3 ingredients in a mixing glass with ice and stir to chill
2. Strain into a chilled double old fashioned with fresh ice
3. Express the lemon peel and float.

Now for the revisiting part:

I decided to try this substituting Lillet for the dry vermouth. This I did 1:1 but I think it would be equally good as 2:1 Lillet to Carpano. I also used Orange Bitters.

- 1 1/2 oz. Lillet
- 1 1/2 oz. Sweet Italian Vermouth
- 1 Dash Angostura Orange Bitters
- 1 Lemon peel

1. Combine the first 3 ingredients in a mixing glass with ice and stir to chill
2. Strain into a chilled double old fashioned with fresh ice
3. Express the lemon peel and float.

You should check out Swizzzlestick, our fellow MxMo’r

Cheers!

In Search of the Perfectly Balanced Manhattan

This came out of my recent exploration of the venerable Manhattan. A few weeks ago, we attended a dinner where the chef paired each course with a specific libation. He included

an excellent Manhattan with a small batch bourbon and an Italian Vermouth. Inspired by this, I have determinedly pursued the perfectly balanced Manhattan.

“Well,” one may ask, “what makes any drink ‘perfect’?”

The answer is, of course, the one for whom the drink is made. Recipes for the Manhattan from the turn of the 20th Century, call for vermouth in a much higher ratio than those from the last 20 years. In fact, the vermouth in the Manhattan suffered the same fate as vermouth in the Martini – it practically vanished.

The Manhattan is a simple, yet complex drink. Some time back, I noted Gary Regan’s discussion of the Manhattan in his book The Joy of Mixology. He points out that the ratio of whiskey to vermouth varies with the chosen ingredients. Anywhere from 2:1 – 2:1/2 whiskey to vermouth. The stronger the flavors of the whiskey, the more vermouth it can handle. The goal is to construct a cocktail that balances the sweet spice of the base whiskey with the complexity of the vermouth.

With that goal in mind, creating your “perfectly balanced” Manhattan will require premium ingredients and some trial and error. In other words, purchase your favorite bourbon or rye along with a good sweet vermouth and start mixing and tasting! I suggest that you start with a whiskey that you enjoy straight. I also suggest that you spring for a couple of different sweet vermouth’s, maybe a French and an Italian.

Our Butler Al serves a wonderful Manhattan!

Start building your drink with a high whiskey:vermouth ratio – say 2:1/2 or even 2:1/4. Chill with ice in a mixing glass and taste from a shot glass. You can then add a little more vermouth as you taste. When your ratio is getting close, start thinking about what bitters you would try and any sweetener the drink might need. To try bitters, taste the bitters on your finger followed by a sip from your shot glass. You can do the same with the sweetener.

When you think you are close, stir up a fresh drink and strain into a cocktail glass. What does your nose tell you? What is the first thing you taste with the first sip? What garnish will enhance these? The classic is a brandied cherry and possibly a citrus peel. Here I used Grand Marnier as the sweetener and brandied cherries for the garnish. I did not think that either orange or lemon oils added much.

For the vermouth I chose Carpano Antica, a sweet Italian. I found this quote concerning Carpano Antica from the Wine Enthusiast dated 2011: "This dark, mysterious vermouth is rich, complex and layered, boasting aromas of mint and other herbs, plums and figs, reminiscent of Madeira. The rich flavors are hard to pin down: cocoa, red wine, almonds, bitter marmalade, hints of spice and toffee all play across the palate, finishing with a bracing bitter edge. This delectable sweet vermouth would shine in a Manhattan." I think that sums up the Carpano Antica!

So, here are my recipes:

Irish Manhattan

While rye and bourbon are the classics in the Manhattan, I don't see any reason not to try an Irish Whiskey. Specifically the Tullamore Dew 10 year old Single Malt. As I've noted before, the Tullamore Dew has the earthy, grassy flavors of Irish whiskey with the flavors of fruit, (apricot, pineapple, raisin) and wood. Just the depth of flavors that blend with vermouth.

- 1 1/2 oz. Tullamore Dew 10 year old Single Malt Irish

Whiskey

- 3/4 oz. Sweet Italian Vermouth
- 1 dash Grand Marnier (1/8 tsp)
- 1 – 2 dashes Angostura Orange Bitters
- brandied cherries for garnish

1. Chill a cocktail glass with ice and water.
2. Stir to combine all ingredients, sans cherries, in a mixing glass with ice.
3. Strain into chilled cocktail glass and garnish with the cherries

Bourbon Manhattan

For the bourbon Manhattan, I used Russell's Reserve 10 Year Old. This is a bit of a lighter bourbon, but still has the sweet and spicy notes you expect from a quality aged bourbon. Note that in addition to using a higher ratio of vermouth, the recipe includes more Grand Marnier.

- 2 oz. Russell's Reserve 10 Year Old Bourbon
- 1 1/2 oz. Italian Vermouth (sweet)
- 1 tsp Grand Marnier
- 1 – 2 dashes Angostura Orange Bitters

- brandied cherries for garnish

1. Chill a cocktail glass with ice and water.
2. Stir to combine all ingredients, sans cherries, in a mixing glass with ice.
3. Strain into chilled cocktail glass and garnish with the cherries

Rye Manhattan

Sazerac is my rye whiskey of choice. Made at the Buffalo Trace Distillery, it is spicy and sweet with flavors of orange peels, pepper and allspice. It blends very well with the Italian Vermouth. Note that this is the same recipe as the Irish Manhattan, just substituting the Irish Whiskey for the rye.

- 1 1/2 oz. Sazerac Rye Whiskey
- 3/4 oz. Italian Vermouth (sweet)
- 1 dash Grand Marnier (1/8 tsp)
- 1 – 2 dashes Angostura Orange Bitters
- brandied cherries for garnish

1. Chill a cocktail glass with ice and water.
2. Stir to combine all ingredients, sans cherries, in a mixing glass with ice.
3. Strain into chilled cocktail glass and garnish with the cherries

When your guest asks for a Manhattan, he or she is probably expecting a drink that is long on the bourbon or rye and very short on the vermouth. It will be up to you to introduce them to your version of the perfectly balanced Manhattan!

Cheers!