

Belle Meade Bourbon

We had a magnificent time at the Cured – Belle Meade Bourbon Paired Dinner this past week in San Antonio. A meal at Cured Charcuterie is always a treat and this 5 course pairing was no exception. Visiting with Andy Nelson of Green Briar Distillery and hearing about the resurrection of his family's legacy was fascinating. (You can find the complete story on their web site [here](#)). The cocktails, featuring their Belle Meade Bourbon, Sherry Cask Finished Bourbon and Tennessee White Whiskey, were excellent and complimented the, as usual, superb food.

Well, this set me to creating some libations with Green Briar Distillery's most excellent Bourbon. At Cured, they served a sour and a bourbon/amaro cocktail. The "Chas Sour" contained their Sherry Cask Finished Bourbon, cardamom syrup and lemon juice. The bourbon/amaro, the "Old No. 5", used Belle Meade Bourbon, Averna and bitters. I guessed at and came up with my version of the "Old No. 5. However, I decided to also make a bourbon sour and a Manhattan both using Belle Meade Bourbon.

First, lets talk about Belle Meade Bourbon. I tasted this neat, both at the Paired Dinner and home. Let me start by saying that the Nelson brothers have a winner out of the gate! Belle Meade bourbon is worth drinking neat, on the rocks or in cocktails. Full disclosure note: I am partial to high rye bourbons which includes Belle Meade. That being said, here are my tasting notes:



- Nose: Maple syrup and caramel with grapefruit
- Taste: Rye spice with caramel, smoke and tobacco with vanilla
- Finish: Smooth. Several reviewers report that it has a

short finish but I disagree. It is a smooth, long finish with distinct cherry and spice. If you “chew” it, you up the spice.



Old No. 5

So, on with the drinks. Here is my version of the Old No. 5:

- 1 1/2 oz. Belle Meade Bourbon
 - 3/4 oz. Averna
 - 1 dash Fee Brothers Barrel Aged Bitters
 - Orange peel for garnish
1. Add all ingredients to a mixing glass with ice and stir until chilled
 2. Strain into a chilled coup
 3. Express the orange peel over the drink and float

Belle Meade Manhattan



Belle Meade Manhattan

This bourbon has legs, so I went straight to a 2:1 bourbon:vermouth ratio. You can go with more vermouth, but I like the flavors of the Belle Meade and prefer that the vermouth complements and not over powers. I used Angostura for the bitters and Grand Marnier for the sweetener.

- 1 1/2 oz. Belle Meade Bourbon
 - 3/4 oz. Carpano Antica Vermouth
 - 1 dash Grand Marnier
 - 1 dash Angostura Bitters
 - Orange peel and maraschino cherry for garnish
1. Add everything but the garnish to a mixing glass with ice and stir to chill
 2. Strain into a chilled coup
 3. Express the orange peel and float then drop the cherry into the drink.

Belle Meade Sour

I like my whiskey sours 1:1 bourbon and lemon sour. For the lemon sour, I prefer 2:1 lemon to simple syrup. I also like the mouth feel of egg white.



- 1 1/2 oz. Belle Meade Bourbon
- 1 oz. Fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 oz. Simple syrup
- 1 large egg white (can use 3 Tbl. pasteurized egg whites but it will not be the same)

1. Add all ingredients, in order to a shaker and shake for 30 sec without ice to emulsify the egg white.
2. Add 3 regular sized ice cubes plus on large cube (1 1/2 – 2 inches)* to the shaker and shake to chill 10 – 15 sec.
3. Double strain into a chilled coup and serve

* using a large ice cube creates a silky finish that complements the egg white. You can omit this and use regular ice but you should get a large ice cube tray!

So there are three drinks using Belle Meade Bourbon. I will soon be posting cocktails using Green Briar Distillery's Tennessee White Whiskey.

Cheers!

Mixology Monday XCII – Apples

It is Mixology Monday for December and it's all about apples. This most excellent theme is the brain child of Frederic at Cocktail ~~Virgin~~ Slut, this month's host.



Once again, we have two drinks to offer: Cider Punch and the Plymouth Old Fashioned.

Cider Punch



This drink combines apples in the form of calvados and hard cider with the flavors of ginger and cranberries. The aroma is apples and lemon. The taste begins with apple and a touch of sweet ginger and cranberry, finishing with musty cider.

- 1 oz. Calvados
- 1/2 oz. Ginger Liqueur
- 1/2 oz. Cranberry Syrup (see below)
- 1 oz. Chilled hard cider

- Lemon twist

1. Stir the first four ingredients in a mixing glass with ice until well chilled.
2. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass.
3. Express the lemon oils over the drink and discard the lemon.

Cranberry Syrup

This is from Chris Tunstall at abarabov. The syrup is extremely easy. You will need:

- 1 – 14 oz can jellied cranberry sauce
 - 2/3 cup sugar
 - 2/3 cup water
1. In a quart sized microwavable container, melt the cranberry sauce on high in 30 second intervals, stirring in between.
 2. Meanwhile, using a small sauce pan on the stove, dissolve the sugar in the water.
 3. When the the sugar is dissolved, add the melted cranberry sauce and stir to combine.
 4. Allow to cool. This will keep refrigerated in a sealed glass bottle for at least a week.

The Plymouth Old Fashioned

A few years ago, I came across a post by Jamie Boudreau where he described his “Old Fashioned Simple Syrup.” He uses a base liquor, sugar and bitters for the sweetener. Playing with his idea, I have made a number of drinks with various base liquors, sugars and bitters. For this drink I have chosen Applejack, brown sugar and black



walnut bitters to use in the syrup. It is then combined with calvados, bourbon and rum.

This is a big drink in size, strength and flavor. The taste of apple blends with the vanilla and spice from the rum and the combined smoky notes of the rum and bourbon. The black walnut bitters really stand out. I initially used Fees Brothers Aztec Chocolate Bitters, but I think that Angostura Bitters with the Fees Brothers Black Walnut Bitters and Orange Bitters is better.

You can easily lighten up this drink by substituting Cruzan Dark Aged Rum for the Zaya and/or Russell's 10 year old Bourbon for the Basil Hayden's.

Here is the recipe:

- 1 oz. Calvados
 - 1 oz. Aged rum such as Zaya 12 Year Old
 - 1 oz. Aged bourbon such as Basil Hayden's
 - 1 oz. Black Walnut Syrup (See below)
 - 1 bar spoon honey syrup (1 part honey dissolved in 1 part water)
 - 2 dashes Fees Brothers Black Walnut Bitters
 - 2 dashes Fees Brothers Orange Bitters
 - 2 dashes Fees Brothers Aztec Bitters or Angostura Bitters
 - Thick orange peel for garnish
1. Stir all ingredients, except the garnish, in a mixing glass with ice.
 2. Strain into a chilled old fashioned glass with fresh ice – preferably a single large cube or sphere
 3. Express the orange oils over the drink and float the peel.

Black Walnut Syrup

- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 oz. Applejack
- 1 oz. Fees Brothers Black Walnut Bitters

1. In a small sauce pan over medium heat, dissolve the sugar in the liquid, stirring frequently.
2. Allow to cool
3. Will keep in the refrigerator for a few weeks

Thanks to Frederic at Cocktail ~~Virgin~~ Slut for hosting this month's Mixology Monday. Go check out their site and be sure to come back for the roundup of Mixology Monday XCII.

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!

Old Fashioned Tent Revival

This drink requires Bad Dog Barcraft's Fire and Damnation Bitters available here. You want several dashes of the bitters to enable the flavors to come through. Then balance the bitterness with the agave. Be careful not to make it sweet.



- 2 ozs. Good aged bourbon such as Russell's Reserve 10 Year Old or Basil Hayden
- 3-4 dashes Bad Dog Barcraft's Fire and Damnation Bitters – about 1 barspoon
- 1/4 oz Agave Nectar or more to taste
- Lemon or orange zest

1. Chill a single old fashioned glass with ice and water.
2. Add all ingredients to a mixing glass with ice and stir.

3. Pour over a large fresh ice cube in chilled glass.
 4. Twist zest over glass and discard
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Amaretto Sour

This is Jeffery Morgenthaler's version. He's right: It's awesome.

- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. amaretto
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. good bourbon
 - 1 oz. lemon juice
 - 1 tsp. 2:1 simple syrup
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. or 1 Tbl egg white
1. Chill old fashioned glass
 2. Add all ingredients to a shaker and dry shake to break down egg whites
 3. Add ice and shake well 10 – 15 sec.
 4. Strain into chilled glass with fresh ice
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Wild Turkey in Heat



This cocktail is a bourbon and orange sour with the almond sweetness of the orgeat and the kick of habanero. The name originated during a family ski trip to Steamboat Springs a number of years ago. We would always eat at the Tugboat Saloon on our first night and, so, cold and tired, I spotted a bottle of Wild Turkey behind the bar. I asked the waitress if they had Wild Turkey 101. She replied, "Yes." To which I said, "I'll have that neat." She then repeated my order, "A Wild Turkey neat." Now, from the other end of the table, with great incredulity, our teenage daughter asked: "What's a Wild Turkey in Heat?"

- 2 oz. Wild Turkey 101
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Orange juice
- $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. Lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. orgeat
- $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. simple syrup
- 2 dashes habanero bitters or habanero shrub

1. Chill a Double Old Fashioned glass with ice and water
2. Add all ingredients to shaker and shake with ice
3. Add unstrained to chilled Double Old Fashioned

Cheers!

Cubed Old Fashioned

- 1 part cognac
- 1 part aged rum
- 1 part aged bourbon
- 2 dashes Angostura Bitters
- 2 dashes Bitter Truth Chocolate Bitters
- 2 dashes Angostura Orange Bitters
- 1 part Old Fashioned Simple Syrup

1. Chill an old fashioned glass with ice and water
2. Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass and stir with ice
3. Strain over fresh ice in chilled glass

Garnish with a thick orange zest and a cherry

Whiskey Sour

A very simple version of the classic.

- 2 oz. good bourbon
- 2 oz. Lemon Sour
 - or: 1 1/3 oz. lemon juice and 2/3 oz. simple syrup (1/3 oz = 1 tsp.)

1. Chill cocktail glass with water and ice
2. Add all ingredients to shaker
3. Shake well with ice 10 – 15 sec.
4. Strain into chilled glass

“Old Fashioned” Simple Syrup

I got this idea from Jamie Boudreau – famous mixologist. I make this with WheyLow, which goes into solution, but I can only get 3/4 cup to dissolve. Plus, the WheyLow will start to come out of solution after a few days. I prefer my house made bitters, of course, but Angostura works well. I don't think Splenda would work here since it will not make a syrup.

This syrup lends itself to several different drinks. By changing the bitters and the base liquor, you can make a Winter Old Fashioned or a Tequila Traditional al Cubo

- 1 cup Turbinado Sugar, or 3/4 cup WheyLow
- 4 ozs. Good Bourbon
- 2 ozs. Angostura Bitters

1. Add all ingredients to a sauce pan over medium heat
2. Stir constantly until the sugar has dissolved

Winter Old Fashioned

This is based on the Cubed Old Fashioned. I changed the syrup and the bitters. This has a bigger cinnamon flavor than the original and is perfect for those cold winter's nights, (which in San Antonio means anything under 50 degrees). The syrup is made with brown sugar so it is not as sweet. If the drink is too bitter for your taste, try adding a little more syrup. Decreasing the bitters will decrease the spice.

- 1 oz. cognac

- 1 oz. aged rum
- 1 oz. aged bourbon
- 2 dashes Fee Brothers Aromatic Bitters
- 2 dashes Fee Brothers Aztec Chocolate Bitters
- 2 dashes Angostura Orange Bitters
- 1 oz. Winter Old Fashioned Simple Syrup

1. Chill an old fashioned glass with ice and water
2. Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass and stir with ice
3. Strain over fresh ice in chilled glass

Garnish with a thick orange zest and a cherry