

The Intoxicologist Is In

Posts Tagged 'Bartender Competition'

Averna Cocktail Competition Introduces Diversity of Rum

without comments



My curiosity got the better of me the other day after looking up the contestant recipes in the [Averna](#) cocktail competition. Two of the creations used three unusual rums; [Gosling's Black Seal Rum](#), Demerara Rum and Zacapa 23. While I have heard of Gosling's Black Seal Rum, I have never had the pleasure of sampling it. The other two rums required a little research to find some information.

While vodka has the reputation of playing well with others, thus making an excellent base mixing liquor, rum sometimes gets the short end of the stick being relegated only to fruity concoctions found in Caribbean cocktails alone. This is not always the case as Don Lee and Damon Dyer demonstrate with the La Cola Nostra and Tuesday's with Mole. These recipes and others may be found at [Averna Cocktail Competition Finalist Recipes: Thinking Outside the Box](#).

According to the official website, Gosling's Black Seal Rum "has a rich, intricate flavor, well balanced and nuanced with butterscotch, vanilla and caramel." The Beverage Tasting Institute said: "Deep, assertive and highly flavoured. Very fragrant with herbal sharpness. At the finish there is a softness and elegance. A most complex, unusual spirit." The cocktail Gosling's Black Seal Rum is most commonly known for is the Dark 'n Stormy. This is a simply made cocktail, yet complex in flavor as it is created with the Gosling's Black Seal Rum and Ginger Beer. [Smoke Signals](#) has two recipes using Black Seal Rum, which you might find interesting: [Dark 'n Stormy](#) and [The Midnight Express Cocktail](#). If you are someone who enjoys an occasional cigar with your cocktail, this is the blog for you. Oh, and there is coffee too, for the morning after.

Demerara Rum is dark rum from Guyana distilled from fermented molasses. It was difficult for me to decipher which Demerara Rum Damon Dyer used in his cocktail, Tuesdays with Mole. What I did find however was fascinating. In researching Demerara I came across [Edward Hamilton's blogsite](#) which is everything about rum. While the latest posting on this site was May 2007, there is still a wealth of information available here.

Zacapa 23 or what I eventually found the nearest thing to: Ron Zacapa Centenario 23-Year-Old. I actually found a fabulous review. Rather than tell you about this rum, I would rather you read it straight from the lips that tasted it. Scott Steeves has a site at <http://scottesrum.com>. Scott does not profess to be a professional taster, but rather someone who will tell you what he likes, what he does not and why. He endeavors to consider sweetness, complexity, smoothness, flavor, overall quality and value. A pretty good deal considering he is most likely a guy who just enjoys sharing what he likes. Sounds a bit like me. To go directly to his take on Zacapa 23 follow the link: [Ron Zacapa Centenario 23-Year-Old](#).

There are plenty of good rums out there to serve a variety of different purposes. Pick up a bottle and start sampling. If you do not care to purchase an entire bottle, stop in at your favorite cocktail lounge for a sip. The point is, start trying something new. Begin to expand your horizons. How will you know if there is something else out there that excites your taste buds like no other if you don't sample something new?

Averna Cocktail Competition Finalist Recipes: Thinking Outside the Box

without comments



I had to know. Didn't you? Which one of the lucky Averna competition finalists will win and which Averna cocktail will it be. These creative bartenders from around the nation have already made their way to Sicily by way of their talent and original recipes where they will compete at the Averna distillery. One of them will also receive a \$1,500 American Express gift card. Hope they spend it all in one place; having a grand time in Sicily!

After reading through the cocktail creations these bartenders are shaking up, I can already say my work is cut out for me. Not only do they sound tempting, but now I need to round up the ingredients.

Damon Dyer's cocktail, Tuesdays with Mole is an interesting concoction using two rums and egg white. I found a slight variation of this on the new [Ardent Spirits website](#) using demerara syrup rather than Demerara Rum, but both created by Damon. Hey, if it made the Regan's Ardent Spirits cocktail listing this one must be unusually fabulous!

Don Lee's La Cola Nostra is rather different as a tall drink over ice. What is so unusual about that? It is topped off with champagne. But the real rarity is the inclusion of Pimento Dram. According to my research Pimento Dram is a liqueur from the Caribbean created from a small spicy pimento berry which concentrates the flavors of cinnamon, nutmeg and clove together within one taste, thus allspice.

Jeff Hollinger's Midnight in Sicily is a mystery. It is the only cocktail I have not been able to get a photo of, so my apologies. However, Midnight in Sicily also stands apart from the other four using "Sicilian Style" Blood Orange agrodolce. When speaking about cuisine, agrodolce is a traditional sweet and sour sauce made by reducing the elements of vinegar and sugar with the additions of wine, fruit and sometimes chocolate. How Jeff manipulates the traditional into cutting edge in this cocktail will be intriguing.

Thomas Waugh's Hierba Buena Cocktail proves tequila is no longer reserved for the margarita. Thomas takes the peppery spice of Don Julio Reposado and merges it with the multifaceted zest of [Averna](#) and the sweetness of Crème de Cacao. The Hierba Buena Cocktail goes a step further in flavor complexity with the addition of mint cream on top.

Debbie Peek's Anima Bella cocktail is creative for a number of reasons. Once you see the photo, take a look at that garnish. Now that is a garnish you do not see in the average lemon, lime, orange, olive, maraschino cherry garnish tray. This avant-garde bartender really thought outside the box. The inclusion of fresh raspberries and blackberries with fresh citrus juice also makes this a standout selection for the competition. Fresh fruits infuse more color and unique layering of flavor into a drink than spirits alone. Another look at the photo and you will see the rich color shine through so well in the Anima Bella you can almost taste it.

Surely it is five o'clock somewhere. Cheers!





Tuesdays with Mole

Tuesdays with Mole – Damon Dyer

- 2 ounces Goslings Black Seal Rum
- 3/4 ounce Averna
- 1/2 ounce Demerara Rum
- 1/2 ounce Lemon Juice
- Egg White
- Xocolatl Mole Bitters

Shake, shake, shake, strain into coupe glass. Float 5 drops Xocolatl Mole Bitters.



La Cola Nostra

La Cola Nostra – Don Lee

- 1-1/2 ounce Zacapa 23
- 1 ounce Averna
- 3/4 ounce Lime Juice
- 1/2 ounce Simple Syrup
- 1/4 ounce Pimento Dram
- 2 ounces Moet White Star Champagne

Shake ingredients with ice, strain into a long glass with ice. Top with champagne.

Midnight in Sicily – Jeff Hollinger

- 1-1/2 ounce Amaro Averna
- 1 ounce Tanqueray Gin
- 1/2 ounce "Sicilian Style" Blood Orange Agrodolce
- 5 to 6 Mint Leaves
- Flamed Blood Orange Rind for Garnish

Combine ingredients in an ice filled cocktail shaker and shake for 20 to 30 seconds, or until well chilled. Double strain through a fine meshed strainer into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with the flamed blood orange rind.



Hierba Buena Cocktail

Hierba Buena Cocktail – Thomas Waugh

- 1-1/4 ounce Averna
- 1-1/4 ounce Don Julio Reposado Tequila
- 1/4 ounce White Crème de Cacao
- 1 ounce Heavy Whipping Cream
- 3 dashes Fees Mint Bitters

First make bitter mint cream: add mint bitters and heavy cream to a cocktail shaker. Dry shake (no ice) for 30 seconds. Set aside. Then stir Averna, tequila and cacao in a mixing glass full of ice for 45 seconds. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Using a bar spoon, carefully layer the cream on top of the cocktail. Garnish with shaved chocolate and fresh mint sprig.



Anima Bella

Anima Bella – Debbie Peek

1-1/2 ounce Averna
1/2 ounce Plymouth Gin
1 ounce Mineola Orange Juice
1/2 ounce Orange Juice
1/4 ounce Simple Syrup
5 Fresh Raspberries
3 Fresh Blackberries

In a Boston shaker add berries and fresh citrus. Muddle. Add Averna and gin. Shake with ice. Double strain into a chilled eight-ounce cocktail glass. Using a wooden pick horizontally, place 2 citrus leaves vertically through the pick, then in a fan shape add thin slices of half moon lime wheels and then a raspberry. On the lime slices, add the peel of the Mineola on top on the outside of the lime. Place on the edge of the cocktail glass.
