

FREE

# my ROUSES everyday

JULY/AUGUST 2016

## WHISKEY- BUSINESS

DONALD ROUSE & BILL GOLDRING  
TALK BUSINESS, FAMILY & FRIENDSHIP

## 93 PROOF

THE LEGENDARY LEAH CHASE

## MEET YOUR MAKERS

LOCAL DISTILLERIES

## THE COCKTAIL ISSUE





**THE LEGEND HAS EVOLVED.** The one-of-a-kind taste of Whataburger's famous condiments has been bottled by popular demand and is ready for your dinner table. **WHATABURGER.**



## Up to Snuff

We take what we sell so seriously that we travel to major distilleries like Buffalo Trace in Frankfort, Kentucky, to choose our own barrels. The bourbons are then bottled exclusively for our customers and in our stores within 6 or 7 weeks.

Each barrel of the same bourbon has subtle differences based on where it is aged in the warehouse. It's always cooler on the first floor, dryer and hotter on the upper floors. Distillers either bottle single barrels or marry together ones from specific spots in the warehouse to get a consistent taste. But when you buy your own barrel, you get to hand pick which one tastes the best, and you'd be amazed at the subtle differences between barrels in both smell and taste that had sat side-by-side in the warehouse for eight, ten, twelve years or even longer!

The process we use for tasting bourbon is the same as for wine: sniff, sip and spit. You don't swirl it before sniffing, the way you do wine; you just put your nose in the snifter and inhale. Tasting is done at barrel-strength and again at 60 proof so you can get an idea of what the finished product will taste like. The snifter is shaped like a tulip to help distill the aromas coming off the bourbon. You can smell and taste vanilla and caramel in most bourbon, just in different proportions, and there are other notes, too, like fruits, spices and nuts. Some bourbons smell stronger than they taste; some taste stronger than they smell.



▲ Donny Rouse — photo by Frank Aymami

Choosing our own barrels of bourbon is a lot more fun than picking our own field of potatoes in Idaho and Vidalia onions in Georgia, but we do that too. We go all over the country and all over the world to taste what we sell in order to bring the best products to you.

We also want you to have the chance to taste before you buy. That's why we hold regular free food and drink tastings in all of our stores. We'll also slice and sample any of our cut-to-order deli meats and more than 300 cheeses. Just ask us for a taste!

*Donny Rouse*  
3<sup>rd</sup> Generation

### > On the Cover

*Tequila Cured Salmon with Chimichurri Crème Fraîche*  
Recipe on page 37.

cover photo by **Romney Caruso**

• • •

### WHAT I'M DRINKING

My taste tends towards longer-aged bourbons, but in the summertime, when I'm on the boat or at the beach, I'm all about Fireball Cinnamon Whisky. Fireball is made with real, natural cinnamon and Canadian Whisky and aged in used American bourbon barrels. Fireball mixes so well with so many things, no wonder it's a number one seller.

### WHAT I'M EATING

I fish and cook fish all summer long. I'll be in Grand Isle for the International Tarpon Rodeo in July. The waters around Grand Isle are nationally recognized as some of the best sport fishing anywhere. There's no trouble finding speckled trout, redfish, yellowfin tuna, blue marlin and red snapper.

• • •

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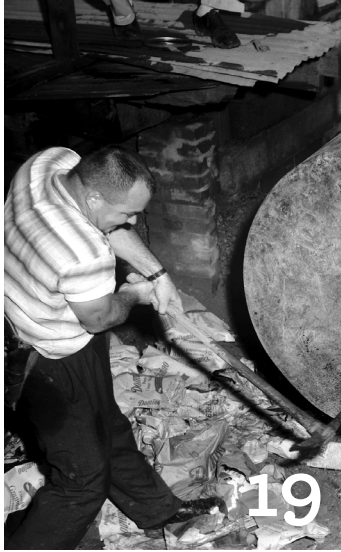
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### > Hungry for more?

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### ➤ **Tales of the Cocktail**

Learn more about cocktails from pre-Prohibition to present day at *Tales of the Cocktail*, July 19<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>, in New Orleans' French Quarter, presented by Rouses.

# SUMMERIPE

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## Supporting Our Local Culture

**“We love that there are so many festivals, and that we get to participate in so many different events. At Rouses, we’re as dedicated to local culture as we are to the local farmers, fishermen, ranchers and manufacturers we partner with.”**

*—Ali Rouse Royster, 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation*

### Cheers to Ali Rouse Royster!

#### PROGRESSIVE GROCER 2016 TOP WOMEN IN GROCERY

This prestigious award honors outstanding female leaders in the retail community for both their innovative business approaches and community leadership.

#### JOIN OUR TEAM

Our team members share a strong work ethic and dedication to providing our customers the best quality and service. If you’re looking for a career you’ll love, apply online at [www.rouses.com](http://www.rouses.com) or e-mail [human.resources@rouses.com](mailto:human.resources@rouses.com).



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#### Tales of the Cocktail July 19<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>

Vodka is a common base for cocktails. It’s a neutral spirit, so it mixes well. But because it’s generally flavorless, vodka doesn’t get the love of, say bourbon or gin. Until now. This year Tales of the Cocktail (July 19<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> in New Orleans), of which Rouses is an Official Sponsor, has anointed a vodka drink, The Moscow Mule, as its Official Cocktail for 2016. Each year, Tales of the Cocktail challenges bartenders from all over the world to submit recipes for its Official Cocktail Competition. Vying for bragging rights and to have their drink named the Official Cocktail of Tales this year, more than 400 entries were submitted by bartenders reimagining what the Mule can be. The Moscow Mule is traditionally made with vodka (Smirnoff, to be exact) and spicy ginger beer and served in a copper mug. All submissions were required to have a base spirit, ginger and effervescence; from there it was all creativity and innovation. Competition entries include Tiki, Asian and Mexican-inspired Mules, and bourbon variations. *Founded in 2002, Tales of the Cocktail has grown from a small gathering of cocktail lovers into the world’s premier cocktail festival.*

#### Grand Isle Tarpon Rodeo July 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>

The International Grand Isle Tarpon Rodeo is the oldest and most successful saltwater fishing rodeo in the country. Donny Rouse is the president of the rodeo this year. It promises to be the biggest in history with over 1,000 registered anglers.

#### Delcambre Shrimp Festival & Blessing of the Fleets August 17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>

The Town of Delcambre, Louisiana, located about 20 miles southwest of Lafayette, is home to one of Louisiana’s most productive shrimp fleets. The 66<sup>th</sup> annual festival includes a shrimp cook-off, fais do-do’s, pageants, food booths and carnival rides.

#### The Wharf Uncorked Food & Wine Festival September 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>

Join us at The Wharf in Orange Beach for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Wharf Uncorked Food & Wine Festival. This three-day event combines tastings of delicious food and tantalizing wines and live entertainment. It will raise funds for Make-A-Wish® Alabama—an organization devoted to granting wishes to Alabama children with life-threatening medical conditions.

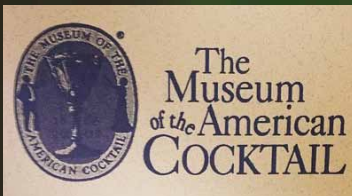
#### Feeding Our Community

We support a lot of charities, but feeding the hungry is our number one priority. Our family, customers and team members have donated almost two million dollars to local foods banks, which help feed the elderly, the working poor and their families in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

### Mississippi, thank you for voting us BEST GROCERY STORE again this year!

We’re thrilled to once again win The Sun Herald’s 2016 People’s Choice Award for best grocery store. Thanks to everyone who voted.

# RAISE A GLASS TO OUR GREAT AMERICAN COCKTAIL HISTORY



The Museum of the American Cocktail is a non-profit museum dedicated to raising awareness and respect for the American cocktail and its rich culinary history.

The Museum of the American Cocktail celebrates this true American cultural icon and its two-century-old history.

The New Orleans Collection of The Museum of the American Cocktail is located inside the Southern Food & Beverage Museum at 1504 Oretha C. Haley Boulevard, New Orleans LA.



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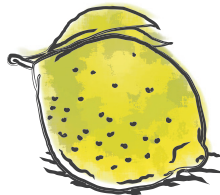
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# Whiskey Business

by Mary Beth Romig + photo by Pableaux Johnson



**B**ill Goldring is on a quest. “I’m in search of the Holy Grail,” he says, with a mischievous grin.

But unlike the stuff of Arthurian legends—where the Holy Grail is usually a cup filled with food in infinite abundance—Goldring’s vessel would be brimming with the perfect whiskey, ideally one that would come from one of the many distilleries that are in his own current portfolio.

William Goldring, known to everyone as “Bill,” is from the third generation to lead the family in the beverage alcohol business. His grandfather, Newman Goldring, was in the business in 1898 in Florida before Prohibition. Newman’s son, Stephen, was born in Pensacola, Florida in 1908 and moved with his family to Chicago during Prohibition. Following the repeal of Prohibition in December 1933, the second generation Goldring returned to Florida in 1939, opening a small wholesale liquor distributorship.

In 1944, Stephen Goldring expanded his business into New Orleans, a city known for its love of all things spirits, founding the Magnolia Liquor Company, a wholesale liquor company, with his long-time business partner, Malcolm Woldenberg. The two had become acquainted when the Canadian-born Woldenberg, one of the first employees of Seagram’s distillers in the United States, paid a sales call to Goldring. Seagram was Montreal-based at the time.

Among the partners’ earliest acquisitions was the Sazerac Company in 1949, one of the oldest family-owned business in New Orleans, dating back to 1850s.

Both men, steeped in the philosophy that to whom much is given, much is expected, created foundations to support civic endeavors to serve the greater good.

**> Look for at Rouses**

*We stock and sell more spirits than anyone on the Gulf Coast. Sazerac brands including Buffalo Trace and Benchmark Bourbons, Fireball Whisky, Taaka Vodka and Southern Comfort, are among our biggest sellers.*

◀ *Bill Goldring and Donald Rouse*

## A Family Business is Born

“I’ve never thought of doing anything else,” says the third generation Goldring, recalling his desire to work for his father in the family business. The father insisted the son first get a college education, and so Bill did, finishing Tulane University in three years, a business degree in hand. He honed his beverage skills for a year, working for Seagram’s in New York, New Jersey and Maryland, always with an eye on returning home to work under his father’s tutelage.

And so he did, and within five years the younger Goldring had earned the role of executive vice president of Magnolia, responsible for all day-to-day operations of the growing company. He assumed the role of Chief Operating Officer in 1972 and renamed the company Magnolia Marketing Company, while growing and expanding the company’s holdings. He succeeded his father as president in 1982 and was named chairman of the company in 1991. He also was named chairman of the Sazerac Company. Under Bill’s leadership and vision, the businesses experienced unprecedented growth and acquisitions, eventually evolving into one of the nation’s largest and most successful wholesale liquor and distribution companies.

Along the way, there were corporate name changes and mergers as well, and by 2006, Goldring’s business interests were under the banner Republic National Distributing Company.

The year 2010 found Goldring reevaluating his future, and he shifted his attention to The Sazerac Company, which had experienced steady growth since his father’s days at the helm of Magnolia. Goldring wanted to strengthen his acumen as a distiller. At a time

when most men of his age may have considered retirement, perhaps to perfect his already sharp skills on the tennis court, Goldring immersed himself in his newest business interests. And the quest for the Holy Grail continued.

Today, bottles of Sazerac brands line shelves of retailers across the nation and the world.

“As a distiller you sell your own brands, and as of today we produce over 300 brands, and are in all 50 states and over 100 countries,” Goldring says, his modesty on display as he delivers this statistic with his trademark unassuming manner. And his holdings continue to grow; The Sazerac Company is one of America’s largest distillers, and still proud to call New Orleans home.

“It’s eat or be eaten,” he says, explaining a part of his business philosophy. “I’m always looking for opportunities to expand, especially abroad, to have as much business outside the United States as in, and we are getting there.”

Goldring recently acquired two more major brands—the iconic Southern Comfort, and Paddy Irish Whiskey, a triple distilled blended Irish whiskey produced in Cork, and one of the top selling Irish Whiskey brands in the world.

And in January 2016, The Sazerac Company resurrected the beloved Ojen (pronounced O-hen) brand, a sweet, anise-flavored liqueur and long a favorite in New Orleans during Mardi Gras. Production of Ojen ceased at a Spanish distillery in the 1990s leaving the product out of the marketplace until Sazerac developed its own version.



### > Sazerac Rye

American rye whiskey dates back to the late 1700s around the time distillers in the Northeast were shipping their whiskey downriver to New Orleans. By the 1820s, bars disguised as coffee houses began popping up all over New Orleans. In the 1850s The Sazerac Cocktail, America’s first cocktail and now the official cocktail of the city of New Orleans, was invented at the Merchants Exchange Coffee House on Exchange Alley in the French Quarter, which later became known as the Sazerac Coffeehouse. The cocktail’s original recipe featured Sazerac-de-Forge et Fils (a cognac), and Peychaud’s Bitters. Cognac was eventually replaced with American Rye, and a dash of Absinthe was added. In the 1930s bartenders substituted Herbsaint for absinthe.



▲ Buffalo Trace Distillery



Sazerac has operations in Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland, California, New Hampshire, Maine, Virginia and Montreal and produces a wide range of offerings in whiskey, vodka, gin, tequila, rum, brandy, cognac, cocktails, cordials, liqueurs, “shooters” and other categories. The names of Goldring’s more recognizable labels roll easily off his tongue ... the wildly popular Fireball, Sazerac Rye, Peychaud’s Bitters, George T. Stagg, W. L. Weller, Old Charter, Pappy Van Winkle and Buffalo Trace among them.

Among the distilleries owned by Sazerac, it is the Buffalo Trace Distillery that whiskey writers from across the globe consider to be the best in the world, consistently recognized for its outstanding quality and innovation, and as such garnering world wide media attention. In 2013 Buffalo Trace Distillery was named a National Historic Landmark, one of only 2,500 designations in the United States. The attention is well deserved, and something Goldring has never taken for granted.

“You can’t just go out and open a distillery, as it takes a long aging process to make a good bourbon,” explains Goldring. “We are aging whiskey anywhere from three to 23 years, and there are dozens of formulas in the process. I am constantly looking for improvement in the product lines, never settling for anything less. Sometimes I believe it’s tough to create anything better than what we have, but we’re going to continue to work at it.”

It’s that Holy Grail thing again ...

Today, labels from Goldring’s deep portfolio are the top-selling brands in their categories in Rouses Markets across the South.

But the greatest benefit to the retail history with Rouses Markets rests well beyond the well-stocked liquor shelves.

### Fast Friends

While products from Goldring’s holdings have sold at Rouses Markets for generations, the two had never crossed until they met at an event both were attending. As Donald Rouse recalls, “Everybody was dressed immaculately except for me and this one other guy, both of us in our traditional, more casual clothes. And we just sort of gravitated toward one another and introduced ourselves.”

“Kindred spirits is how I describe us,” says Goldring, the two businessmen sitting at opposite ends of a sofa in an office above the Rouses Market on Baronne Street in New Orleans’ Warehouse District on a rainy afternoon.

“My father had recently passed away, and meeting Bill and gaining him as a trusted friend filled a void for me at a time when I needed it. All these years later, being able to pick up the phone and pick his brain on things is something I greatly appreciate. Bill has been an extraordinary presence because of his knowledge and his experiences.”

It was around the same time when Rouse was looking to expand his retail operations to include a location in downtown New Orleans, and he set his sights on acquiring the old Sewell Cadillac building on



### > Southern Comfort

*The story goes that Southern Comfort, aka SoCo, was created in 1874 by bartender Martin Wilkes Heron at McCauley’s Tavern in the lower Garden District of New Orleans. Heron took harsh, unrefined whiskeys and mixed them with his own blend of spices and fruits. He initially called his new peach-apricot whiskey Cuffs & Buttons. The name was changed to Southern Comfort in 1885 for the World’s Industrial & Cotton Exposition in New Orleans where it was touted as “The Grand Old Drink of the South.” SoCo went on to win gold medals at the World’s Fair in Paris in 1900 and again at the World’s Fair in St. Louis in 1904. The iconic Southern Comfort label depicting Woodland Plantation in West Point à la Hache debuted in 1934.*



Baronne Street. But there were a few last minute hurdles Rouse was having difficulty navigating with regard to licensing and permitting.

“One phone call to Bill and he helped us get across the finish line and land the location, just as we were on the brink of losing the opportunity, and I’ll always value that support,” said Rouse. The market opened in November 2011 and has since garnered national attention. The Baronne Street location, it is fair to say, has spurred the burgeoning growth of the city’s business district.

“Our relationship is not based on business,” says Goldring. “We both share common passions for family and for our work, and neither of us are fond of letting grass grow under our feet.”

Among the things they share is the tradition of carrying on the family business. Donald Rouse and his brother Tommy inherited a grocery business started by his father, Anthony J. Rouse, Sr., in Houma, Louisiana in 1960. Today, there are nearly four dozen Rouses Markets across three states, with a reputation for supporting local products in all their stores, and employing nearly 6,000 people. And both are passing on the family tradition to a new generation.

“We feed off one another, especially because we both came up the same way, always knowing we wanted to follow in our fathers’ footsteps,” says Rouse. “We both grew up in that same way, and our fathers did well in their own right, taking businesses and growing them to be successes.”

“Although they were involved in different industries, our fathers taught us the same thing ... to be a success takes hard work, to set a clear path but remember to have fun at the same time,” adds Goldring.

“It’s fun to be sitting at a bar with Bill and seeing someone sipping a drink made with Buffalo Trace or another brand Bill owns, and say to the person, ‘You know who owns that ... this man right here,’” laughs Donald, pointing to his friend at the other end of the sofa. “Bill is so friendly and down-to-earth, you would never know he is a worldwide leader in his business.”

Goldring describes his friend in a similar fashion.

“Donald is the original undercover boss, and when he walks around one of his stores, you can see that everyone loves him—customers and employees alike,” says Goldring. “He is not above anyone. There is no pretense.”

Their shared business culture—one of open door policies, approachable attitudes, strong leadership skills and rich family histories—also finds commonality in their devotion to their hometowns. Despite his worldwide business presence, Goldring has never thought of relocating his headquarters to another city.



### > **Storming the Sazerac**

*The Sazerac Bar at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans has long been synonymous with the city’s most iconic cocktail. The Storming of the Sazerac, a 1949 publicity stunt, drew attention to the famous watering hole and ended the bar’s “men only” policy.*

New Orleans is home. Rouse feels the same way about the Houma/Thibodaux area and the Gulf Coast.

“For me, there’s no other option,” says Rouse. An outdoorsman with a passion for hunting, Rouse also owns a small ranch in Mississippi where Bill is a frequent visitor.

“I do not hunt, and Donald doesn’t play tennis” laughs Goldring. “But we both enjoy a good meal.”

It’s also in Mississippi where Goldring also tried turkey necks for the first time, and fried Spam.

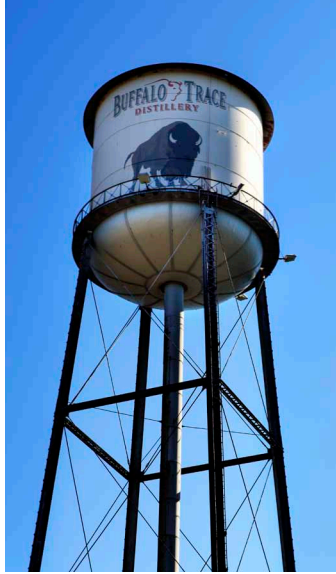
“We enjoy a great comradery, it is that simple,” says Rouse. He’s also had the opportunity to visit Goldring’s distilleries, sampling the aging whiskies, some of which are bottled specifically for Rouses stores. Donald’s son Donny, managing partner of Rouses Markets, hand chose the bottles.

Perhaps the most important thing that Goldring and Rouse share is a quiet passion for philanthropy.

Goldring continues to lead the Goldring Family Foundation and the Woldenberg Foundation, giving millions of dollars to enrich a broad list of educational, arts-related, religious, civic and health-related initiatives, and serving as a mentor to people and organizations alike.

“It’s always better to give than to receive,” says Goldring. “It’s something that was





**W**e asked master bartender Chris McMillian for his thoughts on some of the Buffalo Trace brands. For more from McMillian, turn to page 28.

**Buffalo Trace**

*I think the Buffalo Trace Distillery is the most innovative distillery in the United States, maybe in the world. They are redefining American whiskey. Buffalo Trace is their namesake bourbon. It's just fantastic.*

**Elmer T. Lee**

*This one is named after Master Distiller Emeritus Elmer T. Lee. His name says it all.*

**Blanton's Single Barrel**

*Blanton's was the first to bottle single barrels. If I made five barrels of bourbon, and I put each one on a different floor in a warehouse, I'd have five different bourbons because there are five different climates in the warehouse. The floors, even exact spots on those floors, break down into microclimates. You're getting bourbon from one barrel from one spot. This is truly a unique bourbon experience, plus it's just plain fun.*

**George T. Stagg**

*There's a reason you don't age tequila for more than five years. Any longer and you taste the wood instead of the agave, and you want to taste the agave. The upper limit for bourbon is typically 10 years because of the climate conditions in Kentucky. Stagg is aged for no less than 15 years, but it has the incredible quality of having all that heat, while still being so drinkable. To have a product like Stagg where you taste the bourbon first is an incredible achievement. Extremely limited.*

**Eagle Rare**

*This one is aged for no less than ten years. The 17-year-old is my desert island bourbon.*

**W.L. Weller**

*All of the wheated bourbons trace their DNA to Stitzel Weller distillery. Weller is bottled at 90 proof. It has an exceptionally smooth taste.*



instilled in me by my parents as a young man ... the idea that you can derive much happiness by helping others. I believe you must serve your community.”

“What I appreciate about Bill is that he is always in it for others, never himself,” says Rouse.

Rouse walks the philanthropic walk as well and is a big proponent of supporting local farmers, fishermen and manufacturers under the corporate mantra “locals supporting locals.”

He also shares Goldring’s philosophy of “eat or be eaten.”

“I compete with the largest grocers in the country,” says Rouse, “and Bill is the largest in his industry. Like Bill, I’m always trying to improve, always continuing to grow, working to keep up with the times and the trends. I believe we have gone from simply being a place to sell groceries to being a destination.”

“I’ve always told my family if you wake up in the morning and think you have a J-O-B, then you are in the wrong business. If you don’t love what you do, you are in the wrong business.”

Both gentlemen are in the right place at exactly the right time, and to be sure, wake up happy every day. And both have found the Holy Grail of friendship.

**> Herbsaint**

*J. Marion Legendre learned about absinthe while stationed in France during WWI. Upon his return to New Orleans during Prohibition, Legendre, an apothecarist, began secretly making it in his Uptown home. When Prohibition ended, he also began legally selling it as Legendre Absinthe. When the government forced him in 1934 to remove the name absinthe from his product because of the ban on absinthe from 1912 (which was still in effect), Legendre renamed his product Herbsaint. In commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Herbsaint production, the Sazerac Company launched Legendre Herbsaint Original in 2009.*

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# WET & DRY

by Liz Williams

Although there is no evidence to substantiate the story, New Orleansians insist that when Prohibition was repealed, church bells rang all over the city in celebration. After over a decade of being deprived of legal alcohol, the joy of its return caused at least the memory of the church bells.

Despite what others might consider early warning signs, Prohibition took New Orleans by surprise. Imagine this town where drinking is as important as breathing. How could anyone believe that the sale of alcohol would be voluntarily prohibited? But the American Temperance Movement had given the moral impetus to a predisposed U.S. government, concerned about the power of the liquor industry, to pass the legislation, amend the U.S. Constitution by adding the 18th Amendment, and begin an era that was to be alcohol-free.

North Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama were ready to embrace this new social experiment. The Noble Experiment lasted from 1920 to 1933. This period was different in different parts of the country. Some places merely honored the new law. Other places became overrun by organized crime, allowing criminals to break the law for the regular citizens who patronized the illegal speakeasies.

New Orleans followed a different path. Drinking was and is an important part of most, if not all, occasions in New Orleans. People used alcohol to celebrate and also to commiserate. Organizations had signature drinks, which they drank in ceremonial as well as social ways. In this Roman Catholic city, alcohol in the form of wine was also used as a part of religious worship. The idea that the government might take that away was inconceivable. It was a blow to the very culture of the city. And the people of the city, with the acquiescence of local and state government, chose to embrace their culture instead of obeying the law.

New Orleans wasn't the only party city during Prohibition. Alabama adopted its own version of Prohibition on a statewide basis in 1909, so the city of Mobile had had a decade to adapt to the concept before the federal law took effect. Mobile, another city with deep French roots, also found it hard to accept the new regime. Like New Orleans, Mobile was also a port city, making it easier than many other places to smuggle. And the city was also largely Roman Catholic, adding a level of tolerance as well as a belief that alcohol was part of religious celebration.

Being so close to Alabama and Mississippi, which had passed its own statewide Prohibition law long before the Volstead Act, it is surprising that New Orleans was unprepared for Prohibition. But belief in the rightness of drinking no doubt clouded judgment. In the weeks before Prohibition took effect, bars in New Orleans began to stockpile alcohol. This gave them a headstart as they eased themselves into being speakeasies. Restaurants also continued to serve alcohol.

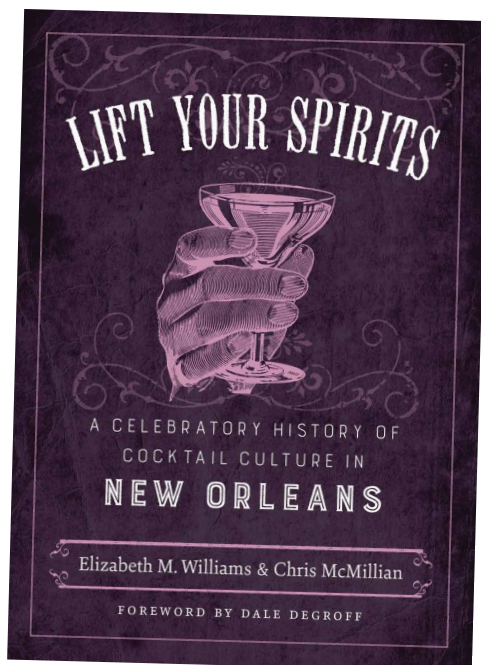
Photos of Tujague's bar from the period show empty shelves in the back of the bar, but the room behind the bar was quite active.

By the end of 1926, New Orleans had more padlocked speakeasies and saloons selling alcohol than any city in the country. The stories of New Orleans bar owners and restaurateurs being convicted, yet being sentenced to time served while waiting for trial, abound. Being arrested during Prohibition was seen as a badge of honor, meaning that the bar owner was willing to uphold and protect the culture of the city. Izzy Einstein, a federal agent who has been in many stories of Prohibition in the Gulf South, was assigned the job of determining how long it would take to find a drink in New Orleans. He got into a taxi at the airport in New Orleans, on his way to his hotel. He started the clock and asked the taxi driver if he knew where he could get a drink in the city. The driver reached under his seat and passed a flask over his shoulder saying, "That will be \$5.00." That was the quickest drink that Izzy found in America, earning the city the reputation as the wettest city during Prohibition. The city does not dispute that reputation.

A 1924 report by the US Attorney General's office stated that South Louisiana was 90 percent wet. Rum running was a natural thing for those outside of New Orleans. It was simple to resurrect the smuggling lanes that had been well established by professional smugglers during the various eras in the city's history. Those who brought in alcohol were endlessly creative. They used gasoline cans, coffins and even hot water bottles. Let it be said that there was no shortage of alcohol during this

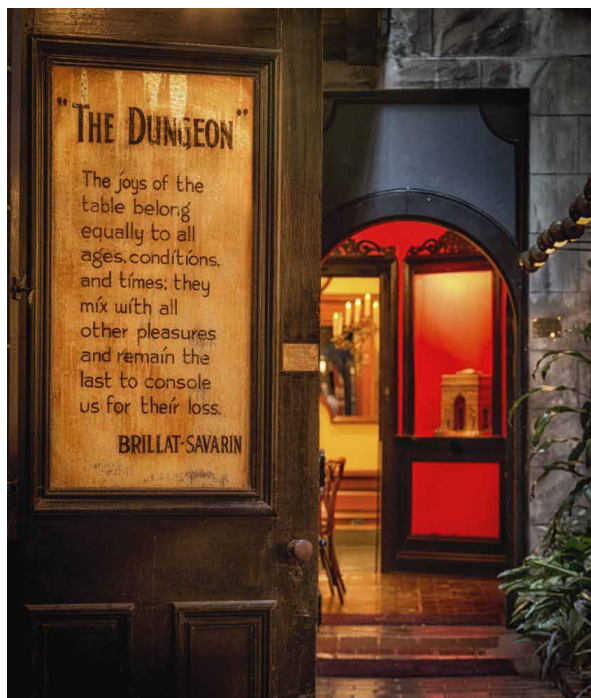
period. In fact, alcohol consumption appears to have increased in New Orleans during Prohibition.

New Orleans continued to cause problems for federal agents throughout the years of Prohibition. Prohibition also created cultural changes. For example, women



## > **Lift Your Spirits: A Celebratory History of Cocktail Culture in New Orleans**

Elizabeth M. Williams is the founder and director of the Southern Food & Beverage Museum, which houses the Museum of the American Cocktail. Her new book written with legendary barman Chris McMillian, *Lift Your Spirits: A Celebratory History of Cocktail Culture in New Orleans* is available at local bookstores and online.



▲ photo courtesy Antoine's Restaurant



▲ Interior of the Old Absinthe House, 1903

**“Illegal bars were called speakeasies. Secret knocks, peepholes in doors and passwords provided entry. Prominent customers were recognized and readily accommodated.” —Kit Wohl**

began to drink openly in speakeasies and other places serving alcohol during this period. The new attitudes caused a permanent change, so that after the repeal of Prohibition, women continued to be welcome at most drinking establishments (it would be 1949 before women stormed the Sazerac, one of the last men-only holdouts). Records indicate that by the end of Prohibition the city boasted more drinking holes and places to lift a glass than had been documented before the Great Experiment. And during the first week of resumed legality, over 900 beer permits were issued in the city.

## Bathtub Gin

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- ½ liter grain alcohol like Everclear
- ½ liter water
- The peel of one lemon
- ¼ cup dried juniper berries

### HOW TO PREP

Place all ingredients in a jar with a cover and keep in a cool, dark place. Shake the mixture each day. After a week, strain out the solids.

### ➤ Want to know more?

Check out *Spirited: Prohibition in America*, based on the book by Daniel Okrent, *Last Call: the Rise and Fall of Prohibition*, on exhibit now through August 14, 2016 at the West Baton Rouge Museum, and check out *Huey Long and the Noble Experiment: Prohibition in Louisiana*, on exhibit now through September 4th. For more information, visit [www.westbatonrougemuseum.com](http://www.westbatonrougemuseum.com).



## HIDING THE Hooch

by Kit Wohl

Most New Orleanians captured the essence of the moment during Prohibition and believed that wine and spirits were natural companions of good food and good living. The fact that these were against the law seemed a minor obstacle.

Temperance was an alien concept in many local restaurants where liquor flowed freely.

It's no surprise that the citizens threw a parade in protest. New Orleans' former Mayor Martin Behrman was quoted when Prohibition was enacted for saying "You can make it illegal, but you can't make it unpopular."

Restaurateurs, knowing that their guests were inclined to tipple, operated largely in a stealthy manner to avoid confiscation of their illegal wet inventory and used the dry law to build fortunes.

The proprietors of Commander's Palace and one of their bartenders were distinguished by the first jail sentences in New Orleans for persons found guilty of selling or possessing liquor in violation of the Volstead Act. The federal agents seized about 100 quarts of liquors of all kinds and 216 bottles of wine. The booze was found behind the bar, in the kitchen and in a room upstairs.

They were busted during the heat of summer in 1921 and relieved of the contraband. The two proprietors were subsequently sentenced to thirty days in the House of Detention and \$200 fines. The bartender

was sentenced to thirty days and a \$25 fine.

Delmonico's restaurant was also busted the same year, and 20 gallons of wine, 75 bottles of "good liquor" (as opposed to "bad" liquor?), one case of whiskey and two dozen bottles of beer were found.

Giddy patrons of establishments were comfortable navigating hidden passageways. It was all part of the wicked thrill of being naughty. Illegal bars were called speakeasies. Secret knocks, peepholes in doors and passwords provided entry. Prominent customers were recognized and readily accommodated.

Authorities didn't care that Antoine's, the country's oldest continuously operating family-owned restaurant established in 1840, had a seemingly unisex bathroom. But they did care that once inside, a door led to a secret bar named the Mystery Room. Gentlemen would saunter through the ladies room, then depart with coffee cups containing their favorite libation.

It was unfortunate that Count Arnaud Cazenave, bon vivant and former liquor salesman, opened his eponymous restaurant in 1918, the year before the Volstead Act was passed.

Arnaud's dodge was also to serve liquor in coffee cups. Luncheon was interrupted by the feds "turning an

inspection into a raid when they discovered coffee cups on some tables which contained a liquid of an amber hue too pronounced to be tea, and not dark enough to be coffee," according to *The Times-Picayune* on January 22, 1922. The federal agents discovered 16 bottles of assorted liquors, several bottles of Italian vermouth and two bottles of Champagne in a storeroom. The self-titled count used his mansion at the corner of Royal at Esplanade to hide bootleg and cases of wine.

Operating several different establishments, he consistently ran afoul of the federal agents. Nevertheless, the law finally caught up with the count. He was imprisoned for his flagrant violations and the restaurant briefly padlocked. A convincing explanation of his spirited philosophy won over the jury of like-minded New Orleanians, and he was acquitted. The count turned his infamy into promotion for his restaurant.

The Old Absinthe House fell victim to the Eighteenth Amendment's dry agents and was padlocked for a year by an injunction of the U.S. Court in 1926. The handsome marble absinthe fountain and antebellum bar were removed and languished forgotten in a warehouse. They were finally returned to the Bourbon Street establishment.

Maylie's Restaurant had the temerity to serve wine during a banquet earlier that year and was subsequently raided. Equally audacious, Tujague's waiters circulated throughout their establishment with bottles secreted in their aprons. Curtained booths at the Crescent City Steakhouse allowed sly additions to a cup of coffee. Galatoire's on Bourbon Street took advantage of its second floor dining rooms in a well-mannered nod to discretion.

Thinking ahead, a member of the Stratford Club custom built and stocked two huge new cellars with over 5,000 bottles of wine, taking advantage of a loophole that stated liquor purchased before the act could be legally consumed for personal use.

Stockpiling alcoholic beverages became the norm. The Southern Yacht Club served their signature cocktail, The Pink Lady, under the personal use provision. The Holland House, now Ralph's on the Park, was also known to provide a drink or two. Or more.

Not to be left out, the Press Club was a popular watering hole for reporters after covering raids, legal proceedings and trials. It was a haven where they quoted federal agents saying the offending places were "alive" with "joy-riding" parties.

Yet when it came time to announce the end of Prohibition, the local newspaper *The Times-Picayune* devoted only one column to the story.

Certainly, few in the city had waited nearly 14 years for a drink.

New Orleans greeted the news with a shrug.



▲ [TOP] *The Old Absinthe House* [BOTTOM RIGHT] photo courtesy Arnaud's Restaurant



# BONE Dry

by Marcy, Rouses Creative Director

In 1907, as the first seeds of Prohibition began to take root, Mobile Mayor Patrick J. Lyons organized a delegation of prominent local citizens to lobby the Alabama Legislature to oppose a statewide Prohibition bill. Lyons, a brewery owner, had an especially vested interest in the mission, but he was hardly the bill's most vocal opponent. N.J. McDermott, president of the Bank of Mobile, threatened Mobile County legislatures. "Unless anti-prohibitionists win," McDermott wrote, "please give notice that Mobile is prepared to secede from the State of Alabama."

The delegation and McDermott were ultimately unsuccessful, and Alabama went cold turkey five full years before the rest of the nation when its legislature passed the "bone dry" law.

Statewide Prohibition, even national Prohibition, didn't stop the flow of booze into Alabama; sales and consumption just went underground. Mobile's port made smuggling easy, and the state's caves made easy hiding places. Underground tunnels were built, and bars and restaurants became speakeasies.

Most people turned a blind eye to the blind tigers (disguised liquor shops), but not the feds. In 1920, the first year of Prohibition, Alabama led the country in the number of illegal moonshine stills exposed by the government. And in November 1923, federal agents netted 23 people and \$100,000 worth of scotch, cognac and champagne in a raid of warehouses, offices and underground liquor shops. Further efforts to enforce Prohibition led to alcohol-related corruption and violence, police shootings, court battles and indictments against some of the city's most prominent citizens.

The US would repeal Prohibition in 1933, but most of Alabama would remain dry until 1937. Some counties and cities held out longer. Ashland and Lineville, the last remaining cities in opposition, threw out Prohibition in March of this year. Over two-dozen counties in neighboring Mississippi remain mostly dry.

Sources include the *Mobile-Press Register*, *Birmingham News* and *AL.com*. To learn more visit *AL.com*. [ABOVE PHOTO] Norman Dean / *Birmingham News* / *AL.com*. For more historic photos, visit [topics.al.com/tag/vintage](http://topics.al.com/tag/vintage).



## EXTRA! EXTRA!

Mississippi was the first state to approve the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment and the last one to repeal it. This story appeared in the *Mobile Press Register* the day after the law was appealed.

Biloxi, Miss., July 28 (AP)—Police cruisers, sirens screaming and lights flashing, escorted the big truck into Biloxi. The van sped to the plush Broadwater Beach Hotel.

The crowd of onlookers cheered when the truck's rear doors were opened, revealing 77 cases. They were carried into the hotel by waiters.

Louis Cobb opened one, took out a bottle of Scotch whiskey. He poured some into a glass with ice, added a dash of soda, and handed it to T.M. Dorsett, the hotel manager.

"Ahh," said Dorsett, lifting the glass.

As Dorsett downed the drink in the glare of a floodlight, Mayor Dan Guice and other officials snipped a tricolor ribbon stretched across the entrance to the lounge.

There were more cheers.

It was 6:55 last night.

Drinking on the Mississippi Gulf Coast isn't uncommon.

But Dorsette's tippling has special significance. It was the first legal drink of whiskey poured in Mississippi after 58 years of Prohibition, which really never did work.

The Gulf Coast, particularly, never paid any attention to Prohibition.

A score of more rushed into the Broadwater's lounge when the ribbon was severed by the mayor and County Supervisors Laz Quave.

"It's on the house," cried Dorsett.

And it was until three cases were consumed. Then the cash register began to ring.

"It still tastes the same," said one drinker. "But somehow it seems better because it's legal."



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# Lafitte's

by Chris Rose





**L**afitte's Blacksmith Shop. Those three words conjure as much history, romance, mystery, piracy and intrigue as any barroom or saloon that ever existed in the city of New Orleans. And that's saying a lot.

In a city renown for its barrooms filled with historic music, unregulated gambling, unbridled revelry, underworld enterprise, fabled celebrity foibles, legendary ghosts, famed duels, scores unsettled and more personal drama than any ten seasons of *Downton Abbey* could ever offer, there alone stands Lafitte's.

History suggests it is—if not the oldest barroom in America—at least the oldest building to house a business dedicated to the distribution of spirits and other forms of easy peace to soothe troubled minds, bolster the courage of the coy and otherwise set free the inhibitions of regulars and passersby alike.

The structure itself would look more at home in the back fields of a French Provençal country villa than on one of the world's most decadent modern thoroughways. It's an old, gray, sideways-leaning hovel that looks more like what it once was—a blacksmith shop—than what it is—one of the city's most celebrated nightlife hotspots in a city filled with celebrated nightlife hotspots.

It is, in a word—or four—one of a kind. Built in the early 1700s, it's one of few buildings to have survived the two massive fires of the late 18th century that consumed virtually every structure that was "French" in the French Quarter. Because it housed the workings of daily smithery—open fire and flame, glowing flames of steel—its brick and mortar and slate construction, all of which would be written into the city's building code after the fires, saved it from the two ravaging blazes that leveled the city in roaring torrents of flame in 1788 and 1794.

And so it sits humbly, darkly, lit only by candles and firelight at the corner of Bourbon and St. Philip Street—an homage to a most romantic period of New Orleans history.

Bourbon Street was once a sexy, luxuriant, jazzy and lush dreamy landscape of the past that made New Orleans a destination for travelers from all over the world, drawn to experience the unknown and the unspoken mystery and sensual promise that made us the Amsterdam, the Buenos Aires and the

Casablanca of North America.

Thankfully, mercifully, there remain all these centuries later a few remaining dregs of what once was—these damp, dark, inscrutable hideaways where strangers become friends, friends become lovers and music hovers at decibels lower than conversation so that secrets may be shared and sins confessed. The candlelight, walls, slate rooftops and bargeboard wooden walls still hold stories of what it used to be like, what this place once was—both in its realm of saints and sinners and then just those happening to pass by and think: Hey, this looks like a cool place to hang out.

The conversation is soft, the tinkling of the piano man in the back is ready with any Sinatra, Nat King Cole or Billy Joel melody that might soothe your troubled mind, and the madness of the city fades to a grayer melody than song.

And here's the cool thing about Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop. It was, indeed a blacksmith shop. And it was, indeed, operated by the privateer brothers Jean and Pierre to hawk the treasures they culled from international trade ships along the Gulf Coast, Barataria Bay and Caribbean seaports. It was among the finest purveyors of wrought iron in the entire region but was also the most renown pawn shop in the South.

What saved the Lafitte brothers their eventual fate from the gallows was their willing union with General Andrew Jackson as the British fleet came up the Mississippi River in the waning days of the War of 1812, with every expectation of taking the city of New Orleans in a matter of days, if

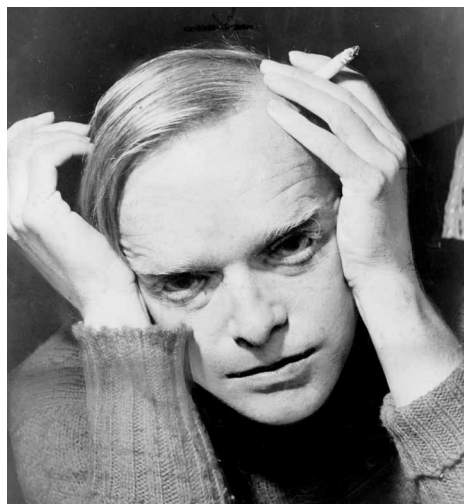
not hours. But Lafitte and his burly band of mercenaries joined forces with Jackson's army regulars with the promise of amnesty should they destroy the British assault on the city. Which they did with quick and easy dispatch.

The war was won, the Lafittes were set free and New Orleans once again became the wild and free city of settlers, slave traders, outlaws, gun runners, rum runners and general vagabonds. And as the story goes, a dealer of looted treasure under cover as a munitions warehouse undercover as a blacksmith shop, became the most revered and popular public house in the city.

And then there's this, just for extra color to this story: the other Lafitte's. Café Lafitte in Exile, just down the block on Bourbon Street from the Blacksmith Shop in the area locals calls Boy's Town.

To match its namesake, Café Lafitte in Exile is believed to be the oldest continuously operating gay bar in the United States. Whereas the Blacksmith Shop has carried on its own intrigue for all these years, Café Lafitte in Exile has lived up to its own name: a place for once outcast denizens to carry on in their own lusty revelry away from the prying eyes of the general public.

Notable New Orleans scribes such as Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote frequented this hideaway long before rainbow flags publicly announced a welcoming to any and all who wished to step inside the dark, air-conditioned and considerably more raucous saloon than its namesake up the block. It's the Blacksmith Shop with a disco beat.



▲ Truman Capote



▲ Tennessee Williams

# America's OLDEST STAND-UP BAR

by Poppy Tooker

“Step right up to the bar” has been the warm welcome at Tujague’s since 1856. Tujague’s Restaurant, currently celebrating their 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is the home of America’s oldest standup bar. America’s early barrooms often lacked bar stools. Customers (all male, of course!) stood at the bar, often with one foot resting on the brass floor rail. Very few bars of that style still remain today.

Customers and bartenders alike are reflected in the ancient mirror that backs the bar’s wall. The mirror, which arrived in New Orleans in the mid-1850s, spent its first century in a Parisian bistro. Today, as in centuries past, neighborhood locals stand side by side with visitors toasting occasions large and small or just catching an after work beer.

The original Tujague’s was located on Decatur three doors down from the 19<sup>th</sup> century New Orleans pre-eminent restaurant, Begue’s Exchange. In 1917, when young Philip Guichet, Sr. moved his restaurant into the vacated Begue’s space, big things began happening in the bar.

Young, competitively natured Guichet travelled to New York City in 1918 on the eve of Prohibition where he invented a sweet, creamy, green concoction, dubbed the Grasshopper. He took second place in that competition but from then on the cocktail was a fixture at Tujague’s.

Despite the nuisance of Prohibition, the bar at Tujague’s never closed.

Photos from those days show sober gentlemen gathered at a bar that doesn’t seem to offer more than soda water and near beer. But the bar was far from dry.

Waiters carried bottles in the pockets of their voluminous white aprons to accommodate thirsty customers, a practice not totally ignored by the authorities.

The Times-Picayune reported in 1931, “New Orleanian, Philip Guichet was seized by a raider after serving absinthe. He denied

selling liquor despite the accusations of a Prohibition agent who claimed to have seen him serving absinthe to a patron in the restaurant below his apartment.” Luckily, Mr. Guichet eventually escaped the charges.

His love of competitive bartending never left him. Almost forty years after inventing the Grasshopper, Guichet travelled again to New York City to compete in the Early Times National Cocktail Competition. This time, he captured first place with a drink he called the Whiskey Punch.

The Whiskey Punch never achieved the international fame of the Grasshopper, and was in fact completely lost in time until early 2015 when four photos and the first place red ribbon were discovered in Tujague’s third floor attic.

The greatest discovery was an envelope on the back of the framed piece. Inside the envelope was a typewritten page with Guichet’s winning recipe for the Whiskey Punch.

In 1982, the late Steven Latter purchased Tujague’s from the Guichet family proudly keeping the 125-year-old tradition alive. Judges and lawyers kept lively company in the bar, often whiling away the hours playing poker dice at a round table. Not much of a drinker himself, when Steven did imbibe, his drink of choice was Crown Royal. Just a few years before his death, Steven saw a purple, velvet Crown Royal throne on display at his Rouses. He heckled the local distributor for one of those thrones, until finally it was installed in the bar’s back corner, where Steven held court over America’s oldest standup bar.

## The Grasshopper

Serves 1

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- ¾ ounce green crème de menthe
- ¾ ounce crème de cacao
- ¾ ounce white crème de menthe
- ½ ounce brandy
- ¾ ounce heavy cream
- ¾ ounce whole milk
- ½ teaspoon brandy for topper

### HOW TO PREP

Combine all ingredients, except for the brandy, in a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake vigorously. Strain into a champagne flute and top with brandy.



▲ Interior Tujague's, New Orleans, LA

# THE Bitter TRUTH

by Suzette Norris + photo courtesy Roosevelt Hotel, New Orleans



## Sazerac Serves 1

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1 sugar cube
- 3 dashes Peychaud's bitters
- 2 ounces Sazerac Rye
- ¼ ounce Herbsaint
- Lemon peel for garnish

### HOW TO PREP

Fill an Old Fashioned glass with ice. Set aside. In a separate mixing glass muddle sugar cube and three dashes of Peychaud's Bitters. Add Sazerac rye. Add ice to mixing glass and stir 35 times. Empty ice from Old Fashioned glass. Coat glass with Herbsaint then discard. Strain drink into the Old Fashioned glass and garnish with a lemon twist.

**M**y father Michael became obsessed with family history years ago. At times he will invite the world of social media to compare the face of a distant relation with the one of his children's faces. When that happens, it's time for a cocktail.

And whenever the topic of cocktails comes up, the story of bitters must be told—and it comes with a little family history of its own. We'll start with punch.

British Lord Admiral Edward Russell in 1694 ordered a pool filled with punch for an officer party. According to the tale recounted in books and articles, the concoction included (don't try this at home): four large barrels of brandy, eight barrels of water, 125 gallons of Malaga wine, 1,400 pounds of sugar, 2,500 lemons, 20 gallons of lime juice, and five pounds of nutmeg. A boy in a small boat reportedly rowed about the punch, serving it to the guests.

But that was a rich man's punch. "For most people back then, things like citrus, nutmeg and clove were expensive and hard to come by," said Dale DeGroff, master mixologist, author and founding president of The Museum of the American Cocktail. "Adding bitters was a way to make the poor man's punch taste like the rich man's punch."

Bitters are high-proof spirits infused with fruit, spices, tree bark, roots and other aromatics that were first developed and marketed for medicinal purposes. Angostura, one of the world's most famous brands, came into existence around 1824 when Johann Siegert, a doctor in Venezuela, used bitters to help the troops with malaria and upset stomachs. The famous Peychaud's Bitters were invented around 1830 by Antoine Amédée Peychaud, a Creole apothecary from Haiti who settled in New Orleans. When friends gathered for late night parties at his pharmacy on Royal Street, Peychaud would mix brandy, absinthe and a dash of bitters for his guests—a drink that later came to be known as the Sazerac.

"The role of bitters was to create a new classification of mixed drink called the cocktail," DeGroff said. "Today, bitters serve as a foil for the sweet but also certain types of bitters can be used as flavor enhancers."

The category "bitters" has grown, including classic cocktail bitters, French apéritif bitters, Italian Amari and newer American counterparts.

The classics—Angostura and Peychaud's—can be found at Rouses along with Bittermens, Bar Keep, El Guapo (made in New Orleans) and Dale DeGroff's Pimento Aromatic Bitters.

While promoting his Pimento Aromatic Bitters in New Orleans and around the world, DeGroff said he's found a renewed interest in more complex tasting cocktails. During a taste test he conducts on tour, DeGroff fills five sauce cups with different aromatic bitters. He then lines them up with five glasses filled with a "generic" batch of Manhattans (sweet and dry vermouth, rye whiskey). "It's stunning ... what you end up with are five completely different cocktails," he said. Mojitos are another cocktail that tastes better with bitters, he added. "In Cuba all the mojitos are served with bitters."

## Kissing Cousins

Like all good family history, bitters have "cousins." Long before bitters and cocktails, shrubs were prepared as a base for punches by pounding sugar and lemon rinds together and then leaving the lemons to do their work extracting the lemon oil. Once the sugar was gooey with lemon oil, lemon juice and water were added, changing the mixture from a simple oleo-saccharum to a shrub.

Vinegar shrubs were first used in colonial America by folks who had difficulty getting fresh lemons. Vinegar served as a substitute acid to offset the sugar, but lemons were much preferred when they were available, according to DeGroff. "Vinegar is difficult to use since one has to work very hard to disguise an unpleasant vinegar taste and aroma in the final punch or drink," he said.

Other close relatives are fruit and herb syrups used in cocktails such as a mint julep. Liber & Co. offers both shrubs and syrups, and New Orleans-based Cocktail & Sons offer a suite of bar syrups to sweeten up cocktails.

But as family history goes, bitters appear to be entering a golden age. After almost disappearing after the U.S. government's crackdown on alcohol during Prohibition in the early part of the 20th century, bitters are making a come back. Today, the number of brands on the market is exploding, reflecting a new generation of cocktail culture that reaches way beyond a vintage punch.



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*Chris McMillian is*  
**RAISING THE BAR**

*story and photo by Bobby Childs*

Let's get something straight: Chris McMillian forgets more about cocktails in one day than I'll know in a lifetime. Unfamiliar with who Mr. McMillian is? He's one of the most influential cocktail figures of the last century, according to *Imbibe Magazine*. He is a fourth generation bartender. His mother even served drinks to baseball legend Mickey Mantle while tending bar at the Howard Johnson in Dallas. However, McMillian wasn't born into the bartending business. He entered the business "accidentally," or rather he needed a job to pay the bills.

Here in New Orleans, he's worked as chief bartender at the Library Lounge at the Ritz, Bar UnCommon and Kingfish. Oh and he's the co-founder of the Museum of the American Cocktail.

On a recent rainy Saturday, I met with McMillian at his new mid-city bar and restaurant, Revel, a couple of blocks from the Rouses Market in New Orleans' mid city. It's a family affair. He's the lead bartender. His wife, Laura, runs the front of house, while his son-in-law José is in charge of the kitchen. Chris was a bit pressed for time as the restaurant was expecting a local cocktail club later that afternoon. I assured him the interview wasn't going to take long. 30 to 45 minutes, I thought. Boy, was I wrong.

Once Chris McMillian gets to talking about cocktails, be prepared to take in a world of knowledge. We covered several subjects during our chat. Curious, I asked McMillian if he remembered the first cocktail that fascinated him. He remembers everything. In this case, it was the whiskey sour. Sometime in the 1990s, McMillian used fresh lemon juice to craft a whiskey sour instead of using prepackaged mixers. Just like in the culinary world, fresh ingredients make for better cocktails. He said, "We're in the same trends as the culinary world of fresh, seasonally ripened, regionally grown ingredients. We're really just mimicking, to some extent, the culinary trends that are going on in the broader society."

Then we touched on the origins of the modern drink. Punch was the preferred method for drinking distilled spirits in the 18th century in Britain. We crafty Americans decided to deconstruct the punch. All drinks made today are variations of one of four forms: the grog, the sling, the sour or the bittered sling. Let's start with the simplest form, the grog. Also known as a toddy, it is made by simply adding water to a distilled spirit to bring down the alcohol content. Our next innovation was adding sugar, which made it a sling. McMillian said, "Sugar does two things: it masks the intensity of the alcohol, and it gives us pleasure. Our brains are hardwired to like the taste of sugar." Next, the sling is modified in one of two ways. First, a souring agent is added, typically in the form of citrus. "We can describe this as a single serving punch, or a sour," McMillian points out. "Or we add a bittering agent to it, creating a balance of bitter and sweet. You know, one of the oldest culinary balancing acts. This would be known as a bittered sling, otherwise known as the cocktail." That is the historical definition of a cocktail. Nowadays the word

"cocktail" means just about any mixed drink.

"Cocktails come in and out of fashion generationally. Whatever our parents did, we reject." McMillian said when asked about cocktail trends. "You can track the popularity of cocktails based on the publication of cocktail books."

When McMillian opened Revel, he created an original drinks menu for the first time in his long career. "I'm a guy that might go a year without a new drink," he said. "That's not what's important to me. For me, it started out with the idea that drinks are supposed to taste good. They didn't. I looked at the classics because I made the assumption that they were classics because they were the best tasting drinks. So I tried to learn to make those drinks." McMillian's current cocktail menu is an exploration of the classic cocktails.

Though he is a walking encyclopedia of drink knowledge, McMillian might be most famous for his mint julep. In addition to making a killer julep, he sometimes recites a piece of 19th century literature written by Joshua Soule Smith that was dedicated to the mint julep. To watch McMillian recite this while crafting a mint julep is admiring a piece of art. "It's something I do if I have the time, if the moment's right, and I think the person will appreciate and enjoy," he said. "Sometimes you do it for the crowd. Sometimes you do it for just one person."

That attention to the customer is important in McMillian's line of work. "You have to establish a connection with no matter who's sitting on the other side (of the bar). People who are sitting at a bar versus sitting at a table want interaction." It's a fundamental skill of a good bartender, along with having the ability to multitask. In the greater sense, it can spell success or failure for a bar.

"Every restaurant you've ever been to, no matter how nice or modest it is, when you walk out of the door you don't take anything with you except your memory of what happened and how you felt about it." McMillian continued, "When you step on the other side of the door, our goal is for you to think 'Didn't we have a good time?' or 'Wasn't that fun? Let's come back and bring friends with us.' If we've accomplished that, we've succeeded. Every one of these places, it's all for that moment. If we don't please you, we have no reason to be here, and we fail."

An hour and a half after walking into Revel, I walked away in awe of the stream of knowledge Chris McMillian shared. If you're even slightly curious about classic cocktails, do yourself a favor and visit Mr. McMillian at Revel or pick up his new book, *Lift Your Spirits: A Celebratory History of Cocktail Culture in New Orleans* at a local bookstore. His co-author is Liz Williams, founder and director of the Southern Food & Beverage Museum and contributor to our magazine.



➤ **Mint Julep**

Get the recipe for Chris McMillian's famous mint julep in the new book *Lift Your Spirits* and online at [www.rouses.com](http://www.rouses.com).



I have a standalone two-car garage that sets to the back of my lot. There are no cars in it; they wouldn't fit. 19 years ago I converted the space into a shot-and-beer bar, a spot to watch football. I dubbed it the Pavilion. Over the years the Pavilion became more pub, less beer joint. There's an L-shaped wooden bar that's part relic from the old Jefferson Downs horse track in Kenner, part hired workmanship. I also added vintage décor and accoutrements from shops along the Highway 61 corridor between Baton Rouge and Natchez, Mississippi. My wife, Melissa, and I scoured these stores for vintage cocktail items and early 20<sup>th</sup> century items that would work as accents or even practical use.

Mine is a tight-knit neighborhood. We get together for barbecues,

crawfish boils and to watch football. Once a month, eleven of us gather in the Pavilion to "Contemplate, Debate, and Celebrate" a classic cocktail.

We'd dreamed up the idea of the Old Metairie Cocktail Club over Manhattans at a neighborhood barbecue Joe Messina was hosting. Another neighbor, Tommy Barbier, mentioned that he used to be a bartender. Our plan quickly unfolded from there.

Our first meeting was less than auspicious, though. It was the Thursday night before Katrina. We wrote our mission statement, some bylaws, planned out membership, and drank a Pimm's Cup. It would be awhile before our next meeting.





We've covered 95 different cocktails thus far. Throughout the year, we each nominate drinks, things we tasted on trips or read about in books or magazines. At the end of the year, we meet, talk and vote. The top 10 vote getters are scheduled for the next year.

We all agree there are cocktails everyone should know, like the Sazerac, the Manhattan, and the Old Fashioned. I can't go any further without mentioning my favorite the Mint Julep, which, historically speaking is arguably the greatest drink of all time. First off it belongs to Maryland. Kentucky hijacked it. The first mention of the Mint Julep—"dram of spirituous liquor that has mint in it, taken by the Virginians in the morning"—was made in 1803. The Mint Julep was originally made with rye whiskey, but historically it has also been made with rum, brandy and ultimately bourbon. The drink has such a deep, complex and debated history that I am amazed at how often shows up in history books. And I assure you it was not only a southern thing, as New York City and even Washington DC have early ties to the drink. In reality wherever you are—as long as the temperature is above 70 degrees—they can be enjoyed as historically intended.

A historically made Mai Tai with fresh juice is one of the most amazing potions you could ever drink. Would you believe a guy from Mandeville helped invent it? (see page 34) Make the correct version of Huey Long's favorite—a Ramos Gin Fizz—and you'll never order a Sunday morning mimosa again. The simple real original Daiquiri of rum, lime, and sugar belongs on every cocktail list.

The person who originally nominated the drink of the month is responsible for making it the night the club meets. We are faithful to the original then discuss variations. I'm personally a stickler for historically accurate

drinks. But I can certainly appreciate what today's mixologists bring to classic cocktails. And I'm all for using ingredients to match your own personal tastes, even if they veer from the classic recipe. There's one thing that shouldn't be fiddled with by anyone—the ice. Ice is the most important ingredient in any cocktail. A drink should be served the way the inventor intended (shaken, stirred, on the rocks, straight up). How it's served is based on the makeup of the cocktail. Daiquiris should always be served shaken on ice. A shaken drink chilled by the ice melting. Once strained and served the first sip and last sip will taste the same. A drink served over ice, like a Mint Julep, will continue to change because the ice continually melts and waters the drink.

The Old Metairie Cocktail Club is not a drinking club. It's a culture club. It's my job, as club historian, to present an overview of the drink's origins and influences at our monthly meeting. I'm a cocktail nerd. I like tracing a drink back to the first recognizable recipe. The differences between classic cocktails sometimes come down to a single detail—seltzer versus soda, lime juice rather than lemon, a shake instead of a stir.

*If you're interested in starting your own Cocktail Club, the Museum of the American Cocktail inside the Southern Food & Beverage Museum is a great place to start.*

## Mai Tai *Serves 1*

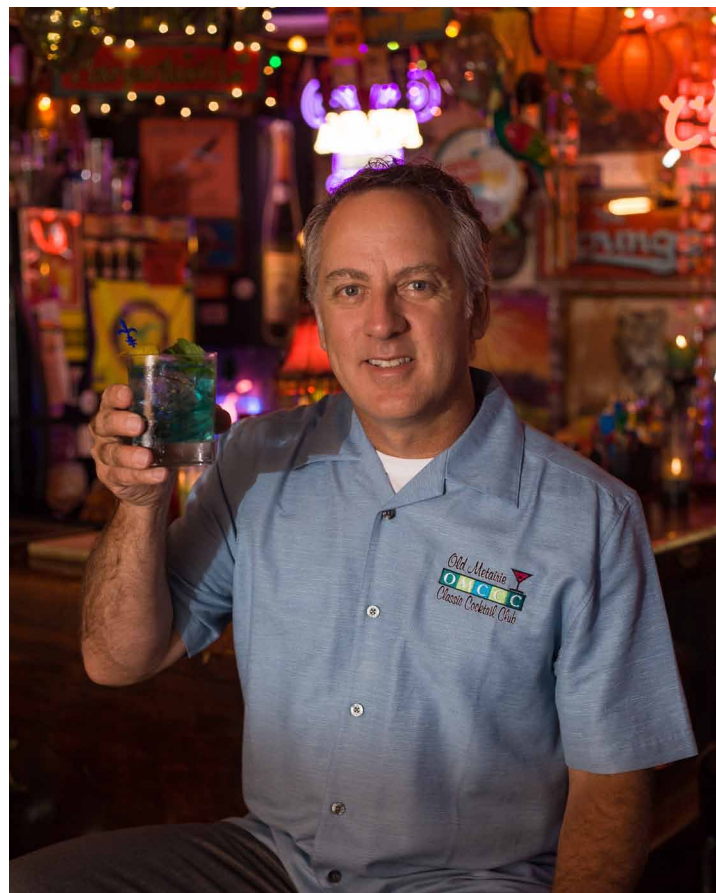
*Restaurant rivals Victor J. Bergeron of Trader's Vic's and Don the Beachcomber both claimed credit for the Mai Tai.*

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1 ounce Appleton Estate Jamaican Rum
  - 1 ounce dark rum
  - 1 ounce fresh lime juice
  - ½ ounce orange curaçao
  - ¼ ounce rich simple syrup
  - ½ ounce orgeat (almond syrup)
- Lime wheel and fresh mint for garnish

### HOW TO PREP

Shake with ice and strain into a double Old Fashioned glass with fresh crushed ice. Garnish with a lime wheel and fresh mint.



▲ John Cruse — photo by Bobby Childs



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Transfer hot wings to the large bowl and toss until wings are well coated. Serve immediately.

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# Tiki Talk

by Wayne Curtis

If you were to travel to the headwaters of the midcentury tiki movement—in an outrigger, obviously, with a torch in one hand and a rum drink in the other—you'd discover that you'd arrived in New Orleans of the 1920s.

Ernest Raymond Beaumont Gantt—the man who single-handedly launched the tiki trend (sometimes called “Polynesian Pop”)—as raised in Mandeville and New Orleans by his grandfather, a raconteur and rum-runner who also ran a legitimate import-export business.

Gantt was smitten by the exotic world of New Orleans and the West Indies, which he discovered on sailing trips with his grandfather. As a young man, he opted to travel the world rather than attend college, and finally washed ashore for a spell in Los Angeles. In 1934, the year after Prohibition ended, he opened up a small bar called Don the Beachcomber's. He served flamboyant, tropical-inflected drinks made of rums and fruit juices. He decorated his place with stuff he'd foraged on his travels and collected around town—blowfish lamps, rusty anchors and woven grass mats on the walls.

His raffish bar attracted Hollywood actors and writers, and soon attracted another breed: copycats. Among them was a man named Victor Bergeron, who in 1937 would convert his Oakland restaurant, called Hinky Dink's, into another South Pacific fantasy world. He named it Trader Vic's.

And so tiki—a style named after South Pacific statues depicting the other worldly—grew and blossomed, soon establishing itself as the American rococo. It was as if the Florentine and Baroque ages had honeymooned on a Thai bus while quaffing served high-proof cocktails. Customers often entered a tiki temple through a grotto, crossing a bridge over burbling waters to let them know they were departing the familiar world. Most lacked windows—no one wanted to be reminded of the grey and gritty present or dine with a dispiriting view of a parking lot. Inside it was faux parrots and fake thunder, hula dancers and flaming cocktails. Tiki fully embraced the motto “if it's worth doing, it's worth overdoing.”

Which was also the philosophy of the drinks. Tiki drinks had names that sounded like a map of a Pacific archipelago: Nui Nui, Pago Pago, Aku-Aku Lapu. They were served in water buffalo horns and tiki heads and volcano blows sputtering with blue flame. The drinks also had one other characteristic: many were outstanding. They were

made with fresh fruit juices and top-shelf rums; many places mixed a variety of rums in single drink, with each bringing its own distinctive character to the drink.

Tiki established its roots before World War II, but not until the war ended and squadrons of sailors and soldiers returned from the South Pacific did it hit its stride. This was the age of High Tiki, when the fanciest restaurants with the most sought-

after seats were adorned with thatch, where a gong sounded when the “famous mystery drink” was served. (The menu of a famous tiki bar and restaurant in Columbus, Ohio, helpfully noted that the serving “symbolizes an ancient sacrifice, which reportedly stopped volcanoes from erupting.”)

New Orleans had its own tiki temple, of course—the Bali Hai, part of the Pontchartrain Beach amusement park, which served Mai Tais and other exotica from 1958 well into the 1980s. It was launched by Harry J. Batt, Sr. (grandfather of local notables Bryan and Jay Batt), who created the park, naming his restaurant after a song in *South Pacific*. It was also about this time that Pat O'Brien's became more widely famous for its Hurricane, which they've served since the 1930s. The Hurricane isn't technically a tiki drink—after all, it's not served in a tiki bar and doesn't stop volcanoes from erupting. But it soared in popularity in the 1950s and 1960s, and ordering one before you even unpacked your suitcase became a traveler's right of passage.

Tiki put the “life” in “lifestyle,” but it was soon eclipsed. A new generation was less interested in drink and more fascinated by other intoxicants, trading tiki mugs for rolling papers. Many of the tiki joints that survived did so by cutting corners, using cheap rum and canned juices, then hiding it all under a small, colorful parasol. Like a lost Atlantis, the tiki world slipped beneath the waves.

The good news? Tiki is back. Tiki temples have opened in the past few years in cities like San Francisco, Chicago and both Portland, Maine and Oregon. And they're attracting attention not through the knowing wink and a forklift full of kitsch, but via their outstanding drinks—some made with eight or more ingredients, allowing visitors to rediscover a lost world, one sip at a time.

Virtually everyone who's embraced the recent tiki revival credits one person with bringing it back: Jeff “Beachbum” Berry. A southern California native who was making a living as a screenwriter in the 1990s, he spent several decades tracking down the secret recipes for drinks served in the sacked temples, interviewing retired bartenders and decoding notebooks filled with secret recipes. Berry published his research in six books, which have attracted a devoted following. (Virtually every tiki bar that's opened in the past decade relies heavily on Berry's rediscovered drinks.)

**It's Tiki Time at Rouses. Catch a Tiki cooking class with Chef John D. Meisler's this summer at a Rouses near you. Visit [www.rouses.com](http://www.rouses.com) for class schedules and details.**



▲ [TOP LEFT] Jeff “Beachbum” Berry — photo by **Olivier Konig** [TOP RIGHT] Bali Hai — photo courtesy *The Times-Picayune/NOLA.com*  
 [BOTTOM LEFT] Don the Beachcomber, Ernest Raymond Beaumont Gantt, center, and friends.

Several years ago, Berry and his wife, Annene Kaye, returned to the headwaters of tiki. They moved to New Orleans and two years ago opened a restaurant and bar in the French Quarter not too far from the Rouses Market, called Latitude 29. Located on the ground floor of the Bienville House Hotel, it’s a portal not just into another world, but into a lost American past. There’s the stylized map of the tiki world marked by barware over the backbar, and a vitrine with Berry’s collection of tiki artifacts from the golden era.

And then there are the drinks. Berry’s cocktail menu includes classics like the Missionary’s Downfall (1948), Nui Nui (1937)

and Suffering Bastard (1942). He’s recently added the popular Jet Pilot, which he rediscovered when researching the Kon Tiki chain of restaurants popular in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Berry’s capable bar staff serves another notable vintage drink, but don’t look for it on the menu. It’s the General Patton’s Tank, and if you ask for it you’ll get a recreation of a tasty drink once consumed by the gallon at the Bali Hai on Lake Pontchartrain. Berry got an enticing but incomplete recipe from Jay Batt and filled in the gaps, tweaking it for contemporary tastes.

It turns out, you can go home again.



# TEQUILA *vs* MEZCAL

*Miles Landrem Calls the Shots at Johnny Sánchez*

by Tim Acosta, Rouses Marketing Director + photos by Romney Caruso

**C**hef John Besh likes to point out that he and protégé Miles Landrem are both graduates of St. Stanislaus, a day and boarding school in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, known for its tough love approach. “I absolutely loved Stanislaus,” says Landrem. “But you knew if you got into trouble it was next stop reform school.”

Landrem started his restaurant career as a dishwasher at Taco Tico on Veterans Highway in Metairie. “Taco Tico was a rite of passage in my family. My dad and two brothers also did time there when they were in high school.” His dishwashing skills would come in handy after a lousy report card his sophomore year of college

at Ole Miss in Oxford, Mississippi. “Dad laid down the law. It was get a job and pay for college yourself or come home to New Orleans. I got a job dishwashing at Proud Larry’s. I worked there until I graduated.”

After culinary school in New York City and restaurant stints in New Orleans, Landrem got the chance to stage at Restaurant August with then chef de cuisine Michael Gulotta. The interview led to a job and fast friendship with John Besh.

“I worked on John’s TV show *My Family Table*. We shot two episodes a day for two weeks at his house in Slidell. I did all the prep work. I would get up at 6am, drive to Rouses in Slidell, shoot half a day, then go back to Rouses. Some days I’d have to hit multiple Rouses because we were using so much stuff.” When filming wrapped, Landrem became Besh’s sous chef. “If John traveled, I went. If John did TV, I went.” Landrem still travels with Besh. “Now I go with Aarón, too.”

Besh, Landrem and chef Aarón Sánchez are partners at Johnny Sánchez in downtown New Orleans where Landrem is chef de cuisine. The three have more in common than food. Instead of boarding school, Sánchez’s restaurateur mother shipped her 16-year-old son to New Orleans to live and train with chef Paul Prudhomme. “It changed my life,” he says.

The idea for Johnny Sánchez came about at Besh’s camp in North Alabama. “I’d only met Aarón once before in Miami, but he and John were friends. We all ended up at John’s hunting camp together. We shot a pig, then made tacos using all of these great ingredients that Aarón brought with him. Suddenly we were talking restaurant.”

Landrem spent a month in Mexico before they opened the restaurant. “I staged at Pujol in Mexico City, one of the top restaurants in the world. I went back of the house at several other restaurants. I wanted to see the masa actually being made. Aarón knew a young sous chef who acted as his guide in Guadalajara. “Rodrigo took me everywhere. We ate and drank everything.”

Guadalajara is about 30 minutes south of Jalisco, which is where most of the world’s tequila is made. Tequila is bottled at various stages. The longer it’s aged the darker it gets. *Blanco* is bottled immediately. *Golden reposada* is oak aged for a minimum of two

**“Both are made with agave, but tequila and mezcal are very different spirits,” explains principal bartender Sara Rowden. Taste for yourself. Recipes for Johnny Sanchez’s tequila and mezcal cocktails are available at [www.rouses.com](http://www.rouses.com).**

months. Darker *añejos* and extra *añejos* stay in the barrel at least one year. We sampled *blanco*, *reposada* and *añejo* at Johnny Sánchez.

“Good tequila isn’t harsh. You’re not going to make a funny face when you drink it,” Landrem explained when the glasses arrived. “You don’t have to shoot it, and you can skip the lime and salt. Those are just training wheels.”

Landrem spent the last leg of his trip in Oaxaca where Rodrigo also acted as guide. “There were mezcal tours leaving every minute, but he insisted we avoid them.” Instead they visited private places tourists rarely see. “I got a real education in mezcal.”

All tequila is mezcal, but not all mezcal is tequila. “All Champagne is sparkling wine, but not all sparkling wine can be called Champagne. It has to be produced in the Champagne region of France. Tequila has to be produced in certain regions.”

Tequila and mezcal are both made with agave, but while tequila can only be made with blue agave, mezcal can be made with almost any variety. Tequila is made with raw agave. Mezcal is made with roasted agave, which gives it that smoky flavor. The agave is roasted in hand-dug pits filled with volcanic stone.

You can taste the difference between each batch of mezcal. That’s a source of pride and worry in Oaxaca. “They’re that religious about their mezcal,” Landrem explained. “They build altars to the batches before they cook. It’s similar to what we do on St. Joseph’s Day.

Landrem explained the right way to drink mezcal. “You taste it once, just sort of swish it around. Then you taste it again. The second sip is better. The

third sip is perfect.” At Johnny Sánchez, sliced oranges and chili salt or worm salt are served alongside shots of tequila and mezcal. “They kiss everything they eat and drink in Mexico with a little acid and a little salt. That’s probably where our American idea of salt, tequila and lime came from.”

The worm salt or “sal de gusano” is made from salt ground with dried Oaxacan chiles and toasted maguey worms—edible worms that live and feed on the agave plants. A few mezcal producers have been known to place a maguey worm at the bottom of the bottle, probably for marketing purposes.

Mexicans certainly aren’t afraid to eat bugs. “They eat grasshoppers like we eat peanuts.” If you’re feeling a bit buggy after a round of mezcal at Johnny Sánchez, order the grasshopper guacamole.



▲ Myles Landrem

## Tequila Cured Salmon

Serves 2 — On the Cover

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1 pound salmon, skin removed
- 3 dried chipotles, seeded and stemmed and broken into small pieces
- ¼ cup kosher salt
- ½ cup tequila

### HOW TO PREP

Place the chipotle pieces in a spice grinder and grind until they are smaller. Add the kosher salt and grind until the chipotle and salt is blended. Set aside.

Place the salmon in a shallow dish that can hold it comfortably. Brush the fish with half of the tequila. Cover and let sit for an hour. Add the chipotle salt to both sides of the fish, recover, and let sit for four hours.

Place the fish on a plate lined with enough cling wrap to cover it. Pour the juices on top along with the remaining tequila. Wrap the fish tightly in the plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least four more hours to overnight.

Unwrap the fish, rinse well, and slice 1-inch thin.

Serve cold with chimichurri crème fraîche. Garnish with pickled red onions and sliced raw radishes. *Get the recipe for Aarón Sánchez’s pickled onions at [www.rouses.com](http://www.rouses.com).*

## Chimichurri Crème Fraîche

Makes 1 cup

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1 cup crème fraîche (available in Rouses Dairy Department)
- 1 tablespoon capers, with juice
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled,
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cups cilantro
- ¼ cup parsley
- ¼ cup oregano
- 1 tablespoon tarragon
- 1 tablespoon chives
- Juice and zest of ½ lemon
- salt to taste

### HOW TO PREP

Roughly chop the garlic, capers and all the herbs, add to a food processor and blend together with the caper juice and drizzle in the olive oil. Season with salt and finish with the lemon juice and zest.

Before serving gently whisk together the crème fraîche and chimichurri sauce.

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### Beef Fajitas

- 8 oz John Soules Foods Beef Fajitas, thawed
- 1 Sliced Pepper (green, red, yellow or combination)
- 1 Sliced Onion
- 1 cup Shredded Cheese
- 1 cup Topping (salsa, guacamole, sour cream or combination)
- 4-6 Tortillas (flour or corn)
- 1 tbsp Olive Oil

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add the John Soules Foods Beef Fajitas and cook until 160°F. Add peppers and onions and cook for an additional 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

Take the remaining ingredients and place on serving platter. Place cooked meat, peppers and onions on serving platter. Fill tortillas with desired ingredients. Serve.

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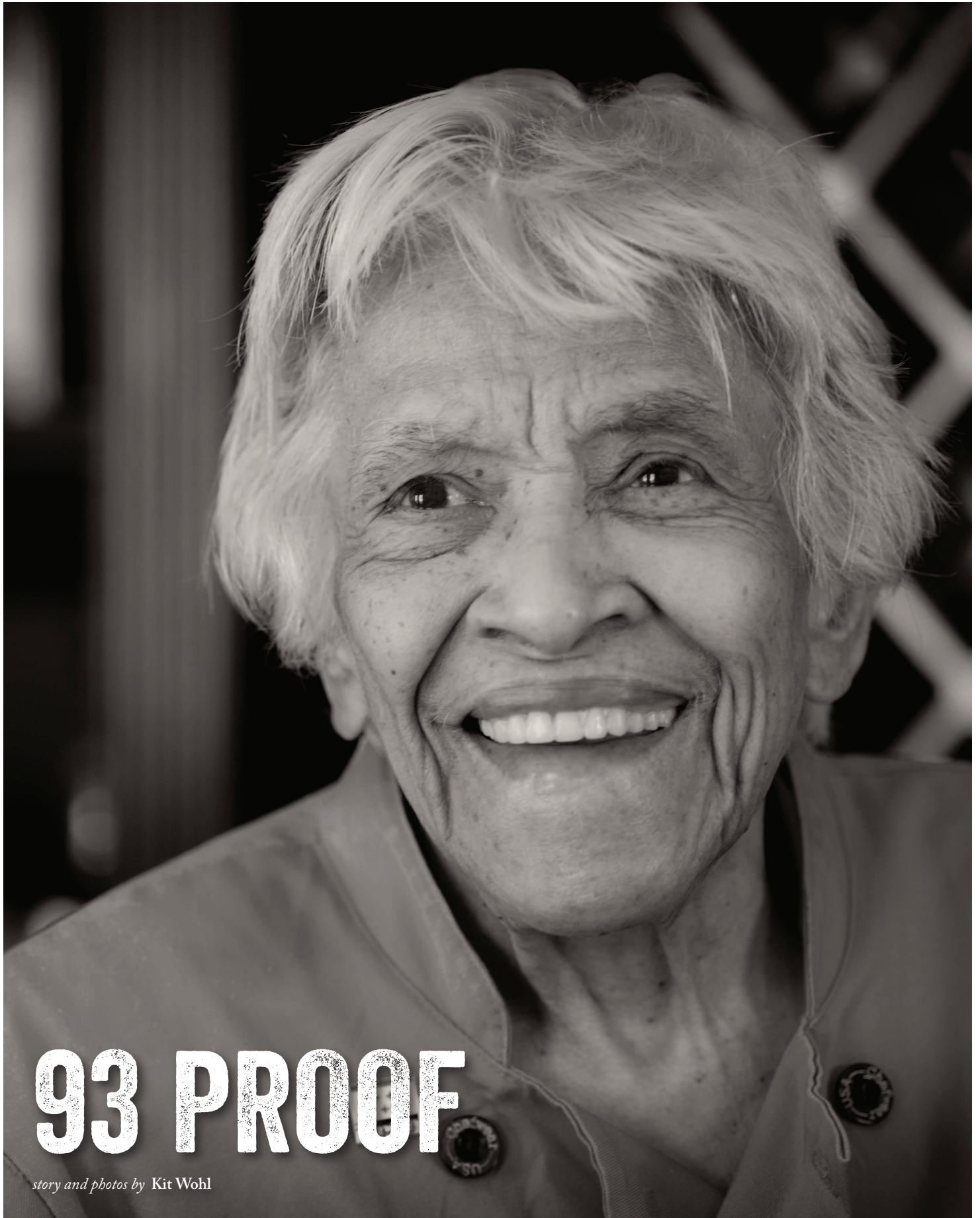
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# 93 PROOF

*story and photos by Kit Wohl*

Leah Chase is spoken of with reverence, respect and awe. People will tell you Leah Chase is an icon.

Those who know her say that beneath her zeal for manners, for propriety, for procedure, is a thoughtful lady. They also understand that she's a force of nature wearing a wrap-around smile and a chef's jacket.

When she married Dooky Chase in 1945 and began working at his family's restaurant, she discovered that she would rather cook. Eventually she converted the menu to her treasured Creole recipes. "I don't like to tend bar," she says, probably because it means standing in one place too long. "No, no, no. But I'll bring you a drink. A good mixologist is as important as a chef."

"Virgie Castle, activist Oretta Castle Haley's mother, was our bartender for 42 years. Virgie didn't want to be called a bartender; she wanted to be called a barmaid. She loved to play the horses, and she knew every drink by heart. Tom Collins, Planter's Punch. We'd see a new cocktail and say show it to Virgie."

Back then liquor was sold by the half pint with a mixer on the side. Guests would order their half pint, a mixer, and ask for dressed ice. Dressed? Dressed ice?

"Dressed meant a bucket of ice served with lemon slices and cherries for the customer to add to their drink," Leah remembers. "One couple would come in every day. They would order a half pint of Schenley whiskey with dressed ice, mixing their cocktails and talking all day."

Leah broke the city's segregation laws decades ago by serving white and black customers, including civil rights leaders like Thurgood Marshall after the 1954 landmark ruling of *Brown vs. Board of Education*. "People would meet upstairs over drinks and a meal. They never got drunk, just sipped."

Overindulging is as inappropriate as arriving at her restaurant improperly dressed. When civil rights workers would come in disheveled, she sent them down the street to a friend's house for a shower and clean clothes before dinner. Gentlemen were then and are still not allowed to wear a hat indoors.

The Queen of Creole Cuisine had her first drink when she was about three years old, sipped at her parent's table in Madisonville, Louisiana, similar to European traditions. "It was a glass of water or a cold drink with some sugar and tablespoon of wine," she remembered. "A little more wine was added to the glass as you got older until finally you had a full glass of wine."

"My daddy made the best strawberry wine. It was clear as crystal, aged right. Delicious. And we had cherry bounce. At

Christmas, we'd have his cherry bounce in a little glass."

"During Prohibition, whenever a stranger drove around, everyone was frightened and dumped their home brew. In the country, they didn't understand that you could make liquor for yourself, but it was against the law to sell it. So they were afraid and would throw it away, fast. My daddy would never throw his out. We drank it. There's a winery, Amato's in Independence, that makes a strawberry wine now, almost as good. They sell it at Rouses."

Coming to New Orleans from the country to attend high school, Leah soon began her 70-year career in the restaurant business. One of her first jobs was at the Colonial Restaurant in the French Quarter. There she embraced the notion of accommodating guests. "The Colonial didn't have a liquor license, so if a customer wanted a drink we'd go across the street to the back door at Victor's, get the drink and bring it back," she says.

Dooky Chase's now has a handsome bar to the left of the art-filled dining room. Following the restaurant's extensive Hurricane Katrina devastation, it was rebuilt with the support of the restaurant community—the estimate to rebuild the old bar was far too much for her budget's appetite. Chef John Folse, a longtime friend, found a generous contributor and had it built for her. There, surrounded by framed photographs of other friends, celebrities and jazz musicians, she still enjoys a drink. "I ask my grandchildren to give my Sprite some color, add some Crown Royal." Just like at her parent's table 90 years ago.

She created this cocktail to toast Disney's 2009 movie *The Princess and the Frog*. Leah served as part of the inspiration for Tiana, an African-American girl who dreams of opening the finest restaurant in New Orleans.

Asked if the recipe was a secret, she laughed. "I don't have any secrets," she says.

It's sunshine in a glass, perfect for a New Orleans summer.

**"Virgie Castle, activist Oretta Castle Haley's mother, was our bartender for 42 years. Virgie didn't want to be called a bartender; she wanted to be called a barmaid. She loved to play the horses, and she knew every drink by heart."**



**Hoppin' Frog** Serves 1

**WHAT YOU WILL NEED**

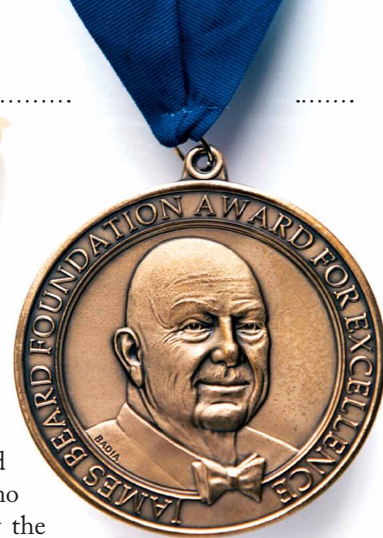
- Ice
- Juice of two lemons
- 1 teaspoon of simple syrup
- 6 ounces of water
- 1 ounce of limoncello
- Fresh mint and a lemon curl for garnish

**HOW TO PREP**

Fill a glass with crushed ice. Combine water, lemon juice and simple syrup. Taste to correct sweetness. Add limoncello and garnish.

# James Beard

by Marcelle Biennu



## > Who is James Beard?

The James Beard Foundation's mission is to celebrate, nurture and honor America's diverse culinary heritage through programs that educate and inspire.

In 1970, I was visiting the Time-Life Books test kitchen in New York City when I observed a gentleman stirring a pot of roux that seemed to be bubbling up like a witch's brew. Uh-oh, I thought to myself. Was he using self-rising flour and thus this *gonflé* (swollen and puffy) mixture?

The jovial fellow pulled the pot off the fire (thank goodness) and introduced himself as James Beard. The name didn't ring a bell, but it appeared he was someone important. It was during dinner that evening that I learned he was a much-published cookbook author and bon vivant. I found him to be absolutely charming.

A few years later I was asked by Ella Brennan (whom I met while working as the local consultant for the Time-Life Books' Foods of the World Series on *American Cooking: Creole and Acadian*) to come to work at Commander's Palace.

My first reaction to her invitation was an absolute "no." I knew that restaurants are open days and nights, weekends and holidays and I wasn't ready to give up my social life, but Ella was persuasive. Within a week, I was set up in the catering department and thus began my long friendship with the matriarch of the Brennan family. We often had late afternoon chats on the patio sipping on Sazeracs discussing the cuisines of south Louisiana. It was during one of these cocktail

hour visits that James Beard came up in conversation. It was no surprise that Ella knew not only the renowned Mr. Beard but also Julia Child and Jacques Pepin—my culinary idols. And in fact, my cookbook collection began with books by Child and Beard.

My interest in Beard progressed further when the late Patrick Angelico, a colleague at Commander's Palace, mentioned that he collected Beard's books. Our friendship led us to find some of Beard's out-of-print books to add to our culinary libraries. (One I cherish is *Hors d'Oeuvre and Canapés*, his first book, published in 1940.)

As I became more involved in the world of gastronomy, I made it a point to learn about the players who were involved in shaping and redefining American cuisine during the 60s, 70s and 80s.

This is what I know about Mr. Beard. He was born in 1903 in Oregon and was exposed to good cooking as a youngster. Not only did his mother operate a boarding house, but he and his family also spent summers at the beach on Oregon's coast gathering shellfish and wild berries, and cooking meals with whatever they could find. As a young man, his interests turned to the theater rather than cuisine.

He travelled abroad for several years and studied voice and theater, but returned to the United States in 1927. When he realized being in the theater was not lucrative, he began a catering business, opening a food shop called Hors d'Oeuvre, Inc. in 1937, and he finally realized that "his future lay in the world of food and cooking."

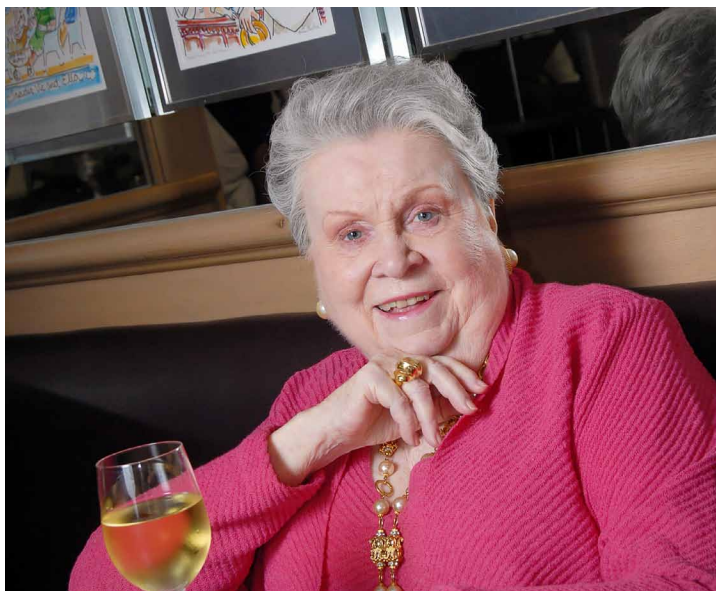
The James Beard Foundation website tells us that during the war years, Beard "served with the United Seaman's Service, setting up sailors' canteens in Puerto Rico, Rio de Janeiro, Marseilles and Panama."

After returning to New York in 1945, he became very involved in the culinary world, and by 1955 had written several influential cookbooks. In 1946, he appeared on television's first cooking show on NBC. Through the years, he contributed articles in magazines such as *Woman's Day*, *Gourmet* and *House & Garden* and consulted with restaurateurs and food producers. He established the James Beard Cooking School in 1955 and continued to teach for the next 30 years.

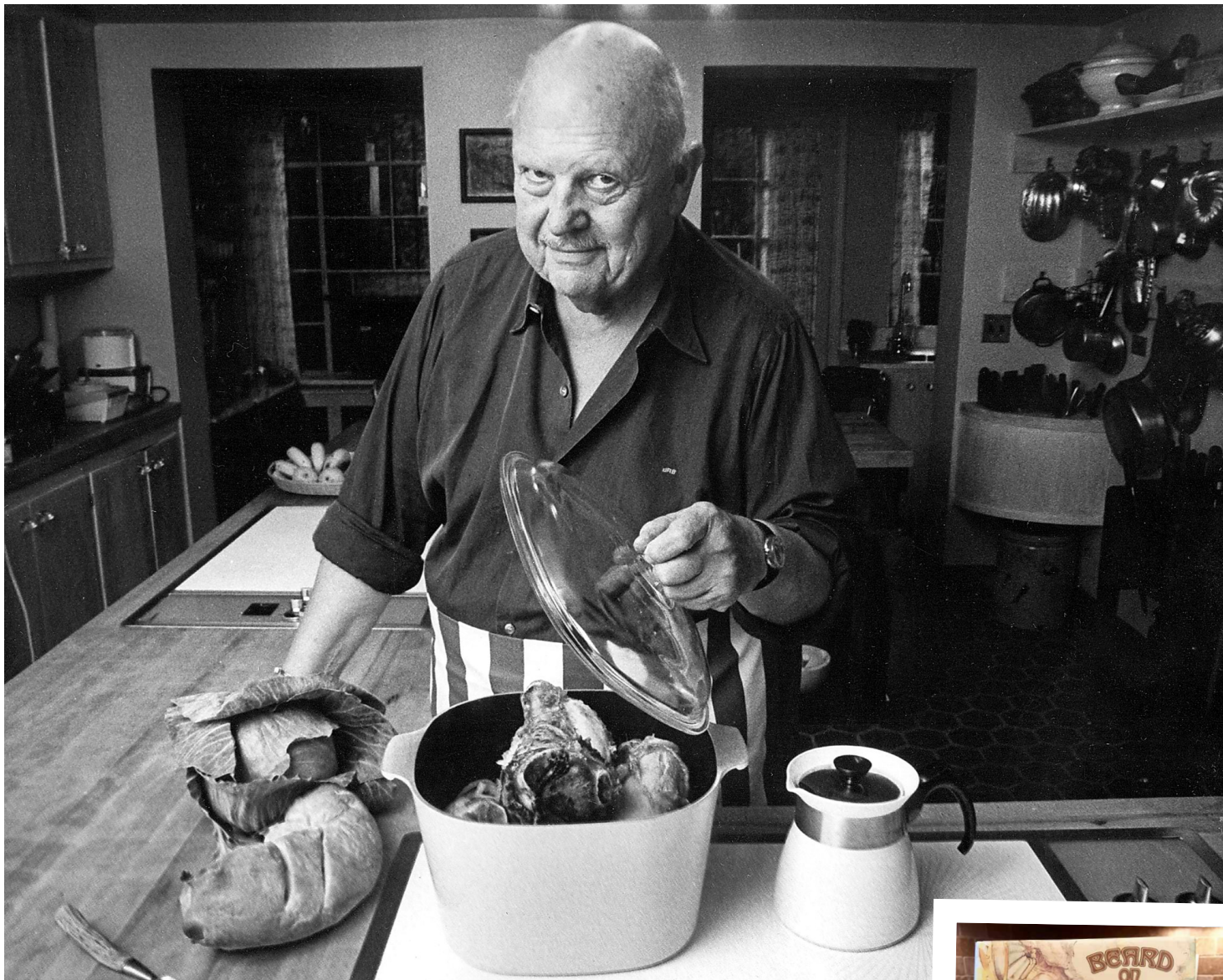
Beard, Julia Child and Craig Claiborne unknowingly began the revolution of American gastronomy in the post-war years. (A must-read for those interested in American culinary history is *The United States of Arugula: How We Became a Gourmet Nation* by David Kamp.)

James Beard died at 81 on January 21, 1985, leaving the country with a "legacy of culinary excellence and integrity to generations of home cooks and professional chefs."

After Beard's death, Julia Child prodded his friends and colleagues to do something with his house. On November 5, 1986, the James



▲ Ella Brennan — photo by Frank Aymami



▲ James Beard

Beard Foundation officially opened the James Beard House “to provide a center for the culinary arts and to continue to foster the interest James Beard inspired in all aspects of food, its preparation presentation, and of course, enjoyment,” according to a press release issued that day. In 1990, the James Beard Foundation made another leap forward by establishing the James Beard Foundation Awards for excellence in food and beverage and related industries. When the first awards were given out in 1991, New Orleans chef Emeril Lagasse won Best Restaurant and Chef in the Southeast that year. (He opened Emeril’s in the Warehouse District in New Orleans in 1990.)

Since then, New Orleans’ chefs and restaurateurs have garnered their fair share of awards and recognition by the James Beard Foundation. Just this past May at the awards event in Chicago, Justin Devillier of La Petite Grocery snagged the Best Chef South award. The prize for Best New Restaurant was bestowed to Shaya of New Orleans. (Last year Chef Alon Shaya, co-owner and chef at Domenica and Pizza Domenica, came home with the Best Chef South award.)

Two of my idols, Leah Chase (Queen of Creole Cuisine) and Ella Brennan copped the prestigious James Beard Lifetime Achievement Award in 2016 and 2009 respectively. I was thrilled to be in attendance at the 2009 event as I was nominated along with my co-editor Judy Walker, former food editor of The Times-Picayune, for our book *Cooking Up a Storm*. I had my turn to walk the red carpet with none other than Jacques Pepin! My favorite part of Ella’s acceptance speech was when she quipped, “I didn’t know they gave awards for having fun.”



➤ **Beard on Bread**

James Beard produced more than 20 cookbooks during his career.



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Reese

A simple dressing brings together the flavors of capers and nutty lentils.  
This protein-packed salad is great as a side dish or light lunch.

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 cup dry brown lentils
- 3 Roma tomatoes
- ½ cup raw spinach
- ¼ cup green onion (or chives)
- 2 tbsp. Reese Non-Pareil Capers
- Salt and pepper to taste

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Cook lentils per package directions, until firm. Drain and set aside.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together balsamic vinegar, olive oil, Dijon mustard, and garlic.
3. On a cutting board, chop spinach and chives, and dice the tomatoes.
4. In a large bowl, add in drained lentils, spinach, chives, and tomatoes. Allow heat from the lentils to wilt spinach.
5. Drizzle the dressing from the small bowl over the lentils and stir.
6. Garnish with capers and serve.

**Dressing:**

- 2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp. DaVinci Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, minced



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# MEET YOUR *Makers*



## > Sugar Cane

In South Louisiana, as elsewhere throughout the Americas, sugar is white gold, the commodity primarily responsible for much of the region's early economic, social and cultural development. The first century of Louisiana's settlement and history can be seen as a great sugar experiment, an attempt to transform the colony into the next great sugar empire. Louisiana's founding fathers, the Le Moyne brothers, Iberville and Bienville both attempted and failed in planting cane in the area. Jesuit priests later, with minor successes, cultivated the crop where New Orleans's modern-day Central Business District now stands.

Up until the 1790s when the planter Étienne de Boré triumphantly produced the first batch of granulated Louisiana sugar and thus sparked a homegrown industry, the Le Moynes, the Jesuits and the dozens of other farmers who endeavored to grow healthy cane crops all had one goal in mind: rum. The fermented and distilled product of molasses and/or sugarcane juice, rum, the early colonists thought, could make them rich. It would also, at the very least, get them quite inebriated. "The immoderate use of taffia (a kind of rum)," the French administrator Jean Jacques D'Abbadie wrote concerning Louisianians in 1764, "has stupefied the whole population."

—Rien Fertel, *My Rouses Magazine*, 2013

## Donner-Peltier Distillers

Thibodaux, LA

*Rouses Rob Barrilleaux recently sat down with Beth Donner, one of four owners of the distillery. Additional reporting by Anna Gourgues.*

**ROB BARRILLEAUX:** Beth, how did you guys come to the decision to open a distillery? There's nothing in your backgrounds that says distiller. You studied international trade and finance. Your husband Tom is a neurosurgeon. Henry Peltier is a pediatrician, his wife, Jennifer, is a nurse.

**BETH DONNER:** We were on vacation in Puerto Rico with the Peltiers. My husband, Tom, was doing an Iron Man race. Everywhere we'd go on the islands, they made rum because of course they have sugar cane there. Tom said, 'we live in the middle of sugar cane country, why don't we try to make rum?' The rest is history.

**ROB:** From the beginning you all made a true commitment to use South Louisiana ingredients. The sugarcane is grown right outside your distillery. Where do you get the rice for your Oryza vodka and gin? Am I right that you also use the rice in your LA 1 whiskey?

**BETH:** We knew we wanted to use local ingredients. Sometimes people think local means more expensive, but staying local doesn't add to our expenses—it's actually a good thing. We are two miles from the sugar cane mill. We get our rice from Reyne, which is pretty close as well. Nine percent of the rice we buy goes into our whiskey.

**ROB:** I know you sell a lot of that sugarcane vodka ...

**BETH:** Vodka is the most common base for cocktails. It's a neutral spirit so it doesn't have any kind of flavor to it, unless it's a flavored vodka. It mixes well, and it works well for a martini, chilled or straight up on the rocks.

**ROB:** But gin is different. Gin has flavor. In fact, every gin has a unique flavor—Tanqueray doesn't taste like Hendrick's. Hendrick's doesn't taste like Bombay Sapphire. What are the flavors in your Oryza Gin?

**BETH:** Ours isn't a typical London dry type of gin. It has a citrus flavor to it which makes it really unique compared to the other gins out there. We're in line with the local aspect by using fresh satsuma along with the other



traditional botanicals that are in gin. It makes it great for martinis, gin and tonic.

**ROB:** I'm interested in how you went from rum to whiskey. LA 1 was the first legal, Louisiana produced, AGED whiskey since Prohibition. What made you decide to do a whiskey?

**BETH:** That was the brainchild of my husband Tom and Tyson, our master distiller. I was not a whiskey drinker until we made our whiskey, and it was so good and smooth. I do like a good drink made with the whiskey, but I prefer it on the rocks.

**ROB:** Location has a lot to do with whiskey distillation. How does Louisiana's geography and weather affect whiskey distillation?

**BETH:** It helps out quite a bit. It speeds up the aging process. It's so hot we don't turn on the air conditioning in the warehouse. We just use the natural heat to heat up the barrels.

**ROB:** For how long?

**BETH:** We age the whiskey for one year.

**ROB:** I'm not sure our readers outside this area are familiar with legend of the rouxgaroux, the Cajun werewolf, and namesake of your rum. Can you give us some background?

**BETH:** Our partner Jennifer Peltier, is the one who came up with the name Rouxgaroux. She's not even from south Louisiana! She grew up in Arkansas. It's such a fun story, and it describes the culture here so well because it's the Cajun boogiemans. You have the Sasquatch, and different areas of the country have their own version of the boogie man. Well, here in the sugar cane fields and in the swamps we have rouxgaroux, which is the Cajun boogie man. We thought with the story we could follow along the lines of our product. Rouxgaroux has a curse that lasts 101 days, so we thought let's do a clear rum over proof rum that's 101 proof. The rouxgaroux comes out on full moon so let's name our dark rum Rouxgaroux full moon. The 13 pennies we thought, how cool is that? The legend has it that if you place 13 objects outside the door or window, the rouxgaroux can only count to 12. 13 wards the Rouxgaroux away because it gets confused. It can't count past 12. That's a fun story. We even have 13 pennies outside of our distillery.

**ROB:** Share the difference between your Rouxgaroux rums: Full Moon Dark, Sugarshine and 13 Pennies? Would you



recommend one over the other for certain cocktails, say a dark and stormy or a daiquiri or mojito, or is it more a matter of preference?

**BETH:** The Full Moon is more of a whiskey sippers rum because it's very smooth. It makes a great dark and stormy, and it mixes well. It also tastes great on the rocks. Sugarshine is our clear rum. We call it rum moonshine. It's very bold. 13 Pennies is our praline rum. It has a nice pecan flavor to it—we use local pecans, of course. It's got a little bit of sweetness to it from the cane syrup—we get that up the road in Schriever—and the right amount of vanilla. It's great for mixed drinks, and of course it's great to cook with. I use it for Bananas Foster, crème brûlée, when I make a pecan pie. We actually have pralines that we sell from the distillery that they make with the praline rum.

**ROB:** You mentioned your master distiller here in Thibodaux.

**BETH:** Yes, Tyson Frizzell. Let me introduce you.

**ROB:** Hi, Tyson What does the master distiller do?

**TYSON FRIZZELL:** I come up with all the recipes and design the proofs. A proof is the alcohol content.

**ROB:** How do I become a master distiller? It sounds like a great job.

**TYSON:** The best way would be to get a fermentation background or a chemistry background. Of course it's very important to have a good palate.

**ROB:** What is the distilling process for each spirit?

**TYSON:** The basic process of distilling is you brew the wash or mash, which is where you convert the starch into sugar, then you add the yeast, which converts it to alcohol. You're taking that percentage of alcohol and evaporating it. For the whiskey we blow 160 proof. For the vodka you have to be over 190 proof.

**ROB:** Can anyone see how all of this is made?

**BETH:** Absolutely. We'll give you a tour of the actual process of distilling any of the spirits we make. We have tours Monday through Saturday, and our tasting room is open, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 10am to 6pm, Thursday and Friday, 10am to 8pm, and Saturdays noon to 8pm.

**ROB:** Thank you for your time.

**BETH:** Cheers.

**“We live in the middle of sugar cane country. The raw ingredient for our rum is right outside our doors. The rice for our vodka, gin and whiskey is grown just two hours away in Rayne.”**

**Atelier Vie** *New Orleans, LA — by Nora D. McGunnigle*

Jedd Hass opened Atelier Vie in 2012, in the Art Egg building under the South Broad St. overpass in Broadmoor.

This small distillery has released unique variations on familiar spirits, like absinthe and gin. Atelier Vie's Euphrosine Gin #9 is an award-winning, delicate spirit with its signature herbal ingredient, bay leaf.

Tasty on its own, Hass decided to take it a step further by aging his gin in second-use, American whiskey oak barrels for several months to create a more smooth, amber-colored product that has the faintest notes of whiskey and oak, creating a complexity not seen before in Louisiana-made gins.

Hass says that the first batch sold out quickly but reassures consumers that due to subsequent larger batches, the Barrel-Finished Reserve is currently available on an ongoing basis.

Atelier Vie's Toulouse Green absinthe, released in 2013, is a labor of love that enforces its mission to utilize Louisiana products in their spirits. The main ingredient in absinthe, wormwood, is such a product—Atelier Vie distributed wormwood seeds to local farms to grow and harvest before returning it to the distillery to become absinthe.

Hass notes, "This proved to be somewhat of an innovation; one of our farmers contacted university agricultural experts for cultivation assistance; the experts found the idea of Louisiana wormwood production to be novel."

Hass points to the long historical connection between absinthe and New Orleans, as the inspiration to create Toulouse Green and Toulouse Red, including absinthe's place in the city's signature cocktail, the Sazerac.

"With this long cultural association between the spirit and the city, distilling absinthe in New Orleans seemed like an obvious fit. After absinthe production was permitted again in 2007, some of the new brands, not produced in New Orleans, sought to capitalize on this association with the use of New Orleans-themed brand names. It seemed the time was right to make an authentic absinthe in New Orleans; a perfect combination of product and location."

Toulouse Green has garnered a gold medal from the American Distilling Institute as well as a place in the Galerie D'Absinthe in the Southern Food and Beverage Museum.



**Bayou Rum** *Lacassine, LA — by Nora D. McGunnigle*

Bayou Rum, made by the Louisiana Spirits distillery in Lacassine, Louisiana, is distilled in a traditional copper "pot still" using 100% natural, unrefined Louisiana cane sugar and molasses, originating from the M.A. Patout & Sons Enterprise Factory in Patoutville.

Louisiana Spirits has been creating rum using its traditional "sugar house recipe" since 2013 when the distillery's Silver Rum was released.

According to Trey Litel, Co-Founder and President of Bayou Rum, "We were inspired by the dedication of Louisiana sugar farmers and sugar mill workers who have competed successfully for that last 230 years on the world market. When we started talking to them about our idea, they told us it was a 50-year dream of Louisiana sugar workers to have rum they could call their own. This changed our perspective on the project and made it much bigger for us."

Louisiana Spirits also distributes Bayou Spiced Rum, made with local Louisiana spices, as well as its signature Bayou Select, dark rum fermented with proprietary cane yeast and aged in American oak bourbon barrels. Each 750ml bottle of Bayou Select is signed and numbered by the distillers.

For something that's a little different, try Bayou Satsuma Rum, a liqueur made with Bayou Select rum and local satsuma juice.

Regarding growth and expansion, Litel notes, "We have increased our batch sizes and increased our bottling days to meet demand for 20 states and two provinces in Canada so far this year."

He adds, "Bayou Rum is growing largely because of the success in our home state of Louisiana and the support of local retailers like Rouses, our third largest retail customer in the USA right now. We are blessed with local support, and we don't take that for granted."



## Celebration Distillery *New Orleans, LA — by Mikko Macchione*

In 1995, there were no rum makers in the continental United States. So it was time for NO rum. James Michalopoulos, he of the Jazz Fest posters and paintings of melting houses fame, had just come back from France with an antique perfume making still. He didn't want to make perfume.

Michalopoulos got together some artists, engineers, and other, shall we say, alternative thinkers and created Celebration Distillation. After myriad stops and starts, dozens of formulations and an historic hurricane, Old New Orleans Rum has established itself as a world class distiller with uniquely local products—Crystal, a clear rum; Amber, the three-year classic rum; Cajun Spiced Rum; and the already legendary Gingeroo—the bubbly, peppery dream of a drink.

Now, just 20 years after that French still filled their first barrel, Old New Orleans has a platinum medal in their growing trophy case. King Creole, their 20-year blend, has gotten an astronomical 96 rating from the Beverage Testing Institute and a certification of “Superlative.”

Here's what they had to say: “Brilliant gold color. Creamy aromas and flavors of chocolate maple nut fudge, spicy fruit chutney, honey vanilla bean gelato, and copper with a silky, vibrant, fruity light-to-medium body and a tingling, long vanilla buttercream and cola, tiramisu, pink pepper, and minerals finish. A superbly spicy and intricate sipping rum that will cover all bases.”

All Old New Orleans Rum is crafted from locally sourced molasses—from Lafourche Sugar Mill out of Thibodaux to be precise. In the last decade, Louisiana has lost two thirds of its sugar mills. Celebration Distillation, as part of its mission to support local business, invested in the Thibodaux mill, building processing equipment.

“Our quality starts at home,” says owner and founder of Celebration Distillation, James Michalopoulos. “From the beginning, it's been paramount for us to use locally sourced Louisiana sugar cane.”

King Creole 20th Anniversary Blend is a signed and numbered limited batch—only 5,000 bottles were made. Built upon Old New Orleans Rum's classic and popular 10-year rum, King Creole represents the last of Celebration Distillation's pre-Katrina stock.

Master Distiller Mike Kelly selected seven different vintages, leaning heavily on the pre-Katrina vintages to make a spirit that celebrates 20 years of distilling a handcrafted rum in New Orleans.

“Everything at Celebration Distillation is done in house,” said Kelly. “We cross the country to visit fellow distilleries on the hunt for American White Oak barrels that held fine bourbons, whiskeys and sherries. Then we char the barrels ourselves, which means each one has a special character.”

The French perfume making still still quietly sits in the distillery out on Frenchmen Street surrounded by more modern rum making equipment. The daily tours of the factory stop to admire the quaint relic, but what really draws the growing fans of Old New Orleans is the rum itself.



## > Cathead Vodka

Cathead in Jackson, Mississippi, is the state's first and oldest legal distillery. The brand's Mississippi roots run deep, from its start in Madison and move to Jackson, to its distiller, Phillip Ladner, who grew up in Long Beach on the Gulf Coast. Ladner use sweet grain corn for a crisp finish, and each run is made in small, five-hundred-gallon batches or less. Tours and tastings are available on Thursdays and Fridays starting at 3pm and at 11am on Saturdays.



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## Lakeside Tomatoes-on-the-Vine Greek Salad

Toss together a bag of Spring Mix salad greens, 3 chopped Tomatoes-on-the-Vine, chopped seedless cucumber, sliced red onion, chopped sweet red pepper, pitted black olives and ¾ cup cubed feta cheese. Top with dressing and fresh basil.

**Dressing:** 6 tbsp. olive oil, 1.5 tbsp. fresh lemon juice, 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar, 2 minced garlic cloves, 1 tsp. dried oregano, salt and pepper to taste. (Makes 6 servings)



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# At Season's Peak



## IN THE SPIRIT OF SUMMER

My wife Cindy and I tasted various tequilas and mezcals with various chasers over the course of our three-and-a-half-hour interview with Miles Landren, chef de cuisine at Johnny Sánchez. His spicy tequila with sangrita chaser was our favorite combination. Sangrita is traditionally made with orange juice, pomegranate juice, lime juice and chili powder or hot sauce, but Chef Miles explained that really any kind of juice will do. The Johnny Sánchez version is made with roasted tomato, onion, garlic, pepper, cilantro, fresh lemon, lime and orange juice.

—Tim Acosta, Marketing Director

**JULY** Apricots • Beets • Bell Peppers • Blueberries • Carrots • Cherries • Corn • Cucumber • Eggplant • Melons • Nectarines • Okra • Peaches • Plums • Raspberries • Rhubarb • Strawberries • Tomatoes • Watermelon • Zucchini

**AUGUST** Apricots • Artichoke • Beets • Bell Peppers • Blackberries • Blueberries • Carrots • Cauliflower • Corn • Eggplant • Figs • Hatch Green Chiles • Melons • Nectarines • Peaches • Plums • Radishes • Rhubarb • Tomatoes • Zucchini

## Johnny Sánchez's Street Corn

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 5 cups grilled corn, cut off of the cob
- 1 cup chipotle mayo
- 4 parts mayo
- 1 part pureed chipotle peppers with adobo sauce
- 1 cup Cacique cotija cheese
- Juice of ½ lime
- Pinch of salt

### Garnish:

- ½ cup Cacique cotija cheese
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- 2 tablespoons chopped chives or green onion

### HOW TO PREP

Grill or roast the corn on the cob until slightly charred. Let the corn cool down to the touch and then cut off of the cob. In a large sauté pan heat up the corn and then take off of the heat, stir in the chipotle mayo, cotija cheese, lime and salt. Taste for seasoning and then garnish with the remaining cheese, chili powder, cilantro and chives or green onion.



## Johnny Sánchez's Mexico City Sangrita

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 2 cups tomato juice or Clamato
- 2 cups Johnny Sanchez red salsa or store bought
- 1 cup fresh orange juice plus zest from 1 orange
- ½ cup fresh lime juice plus zest from 1 lime
- 1 tablespoon Agave syrup
- ½ tablespoon Jugo Maggi or Worcestershire sauce
- ½ tablespoon hot sauce
- Salt to taste

### HOW TO PREP

Add all ingredients into the blender and puree until smooth. Store in a cooler for up to 3 days.

## Aarón Sánchez's Sangrita

Chef Aarón Sánchez stopped by our table during our interview to share a drink and his recipe for sangrita.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 2 ancho chiles, seeded
- 1 tablespoon chopped onion
- 2 cups freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 shot tequila

### HOW TO PREP

Place the chiles in hot water sit for 20 minutes. Allow the chiles to cool, remove from water and puree in a blender with the orange juice, onion and lime juice. Can be prepared up to 2 days in advance and refrigerated.

# DRINK RIGHT *with* ROUSES

by Esther, Rouses Dietitian

Since moving to the French Quarter, I've seen—and heard—my fair share of drinkers. Most nights I fall asleep to a chorus of “woohos” and “yeeaaaahs” outside my window. It's become my own special New Orleans lullaby.

Research has shown that drinking alcohol may have health benefits. Before you start pouring shots, or order another Hand Grenade or Hurricane, know that alcohol consumption *in moderation* can be beneficial, but too much can be harmful. Sorry to be a buzz kill.

Alcohol in moderation means one serving of alcohol a day for women and two servings a day for men. According to the National Institutes of Health, one standard drink, or one serving in the U.S., contains 14 grams of alcohol, which you'll find in the following serving sizes: 12 fluid ounces of regular beer; 8-9 fluid ounces of malt liquor; 5 fluid ounces of wine; 1.5 fluid ounces of 80 proof distilled spirits (gin, rum, tequila, whiskey, vodka, etc.)

Moderate consumption is thought to help raise “good” cholesterol, or HDL cholesterol. Higher levels of HDL cholesterol are associated with lower risks of heart attack. Moderate consumption has also been linked to better blood clotting functions, which could help decrease incidence of heart attack or stroke. Studies have shown that moderate drinkers are less likely to develop type 2 diabetes or gallstones than non-drinkers. Increased insulin sensitivity is a benefit linked to moderate alcohol consumption, which could explain why moderate drinkers are less likely to develop diabetes.

If you think you can skip the drinks during the week and save all seven to 14 for one day, bad idea, as the frequency also plays a role. Moderate consumption of alcohol over the course of the week has shown benefits, whereas binge drinking has more health risks.

Don't worry if you aren't a drinker. If you don't drink alcohol, the NIH doesn't recommend you start.

So what are the healthiest drinks? Wine has long hogged the spotlight for its reported benefits, though moderate consumption of any alcohol—wine, beer or spirits—has shown benefits. (Don't believe the wine-resveratrol hype, though—you'd have to drink truckloads to get the benefits described in those studies of rats.)

When calories are the consideration, you may be surprised to know that liquor may be your best choice, straight up, neat or on the rocks. Alcohol has 7 calories per gram and a single serving (1.5 ounces) of any 80 proof liquor will equal roughly 100 calories. As the proof increases, so do the calories. Drinking straight up means you'll (probably) drink a bit slower due to the strong taste. This will also save you from the hundreds of extra calories you could consume by mixing in cranberry cocktail, pineapple juice, Coke, ginger ale, Sprite or any other mixer of choice.

If you're going to mix it, I'd have to request you at least get a serving of fruit from the ordeal and mix it with 100% fruit juice of some kind—not cranberry cocktail or any of the fake stuff. And no, vodka does not count as a vegetable since it comes from potatoes (and yes, someone has actually asked me that before). The 100% juice mixers will also help slow the rate of alcohol absorption compared to carbonated mixers, which are proven to absorb quicker. If you still want to mix with soda and think you're doing yourself a favor by mixing with diet soda, you could be wrong. One negative effect of mixing with diet soda is that it will get you drunk even quicker. Studies have found that the sugar in alcohol mixers may slow down the absorption of alcohol in your bloodstream. In one instance, it was a matter of being over or under the legal limit—those who drank one drink with diet soda were over the legal limit when given a breathalyzer test when compared to those who mixed with a regular soda. Want another tip to prevent fast alcohol absorption? *Never, ever* drink on an empty stomach, and try to drink one glass of water between every alcoholic drink—this will also help prevent hangovers.

Wine lovers, you're looking at a few more calories per serving than spirit drinkers. According to the USDA, a serving of red wine (5 ounces) will cost you an average of 125 calories and white wine will be slightly less at 121 calories per serving.

I'm a beer girl myself. Unfortunately, beer can be full of calories. Beer is usually made from water, grain, hops, and yeast, so already we've got more in our glass than the straight up drinker. An average beer can run around 150 calories, but the good news is that some light beers, such as Budweiser Select are as low as 55 calories. The bad news is that the lighter beers usually have lower alcohol content and less flavor, which can lead to drinking even more. Beer also gets a lot of credit for big bellies, but it isn't necessarily to blame for the dad bod—an excess of calories of any kind can create this physique. Keep that in mind as you do your keg stands. And before you ask, no, that's not considered exercise.





# TOURS & TASTINGS

by Nora D. McGunnigle

## Rouses stocks the largest selection of local beers, craft beers, hard sodas and shandies on the Gulf Coast.

As the number of the region's breweries increases, there are more and more opportunities to connect with the people and places that brew the beer you love.

NOLA Brewing's new taproom is open every day from 11am-11pm, serving the brewery's flagship and experimental brews as well as McClure's BBQ. Free tours of the brewery happen on Fridays at 2pm (with free beer from 2-3pm) and on Saturdays between 2-4pm.

Urban South is New Orleans' newest brewery, open on Thursday and Fridays from 4-9pm, Saturdays, noon-9pm, and Sundays between 2-8pm. Tours take place at 5pm and 7pm on Thursdays and Fridays, and at 3pm, 5pm, and 7pm over the weekend.

Right across the Orleans-St. Bernard Parish line in Arabi is 40 Arpent Brewing, which offers free tours on Friday evenings from 5-7pm. Stop by to try some beers, take the tour and eat from local food truck vendors.

Across Lake Pontchartrain on the Northshore, Chafunkta Brewing also does a "Free Tour Friday" from 6-8pm at their tiny Mandeville brewery. From there, head to Covington Brewhouse's taproom, open

Wednesday-Friday, 5-9pm, Saturday 11am-9pm, and Sunday noon-6pm. They also offer free tours on Saturdays at 11:30am, 1pm, and 2:30pm.

Louisiana's oldest brewery, Abita, is just down the street from Covington Brewhouse, and their newly redesigned taproom and visitors center is where to catch the guided tour, which happens every half hour on Wednesday and Thursday from 2-3pm, Friday from 1-3pm, Saturday from 10:30am-3pm, and Sunday from 2-3pm. It costs \$5 and includes a flight of four 4-oz pours of beer. There's also a self-guided tour option, available on: Sundays, 11am-1pm; Monday and Tuesday, 10am-2pm; and Wednesday and Thursday, 10am-1pm.

On Saturdays, check out Gnarly Barley in Hammond, which is open to the public from noon-3pm, with a free tour at 1pm, and pints for purchase.

In Baton Rouge, Tin Roof's tap room is open Wednesday-Friday 4-10pm, Saturday noon-10pm, and Sunday noon-8pm. Tours begin at 6pm on Friday and 3pm on Saturday.

Check out Baton Rouge's newest brewery, Southern Craft Brewing Company, on

Fridays when their tap room is open 5-8pm, with free tours at 6pm and 7pm.

Out in the Lafayette area, the rural background of Bayou Teche Brewing's Arnaudville taproom is the perfect place to enjoy a beer Monday-Thursday, 11am-6pm, Friday and Saturday, 11am-8pm, and Sunday from 11am-6pm. On Saturdays, enjoy live Cajun music as well as tours running from 11:30am-6:15pm.

In Broussard, Parish Brewing's tap room is open Monday-Wednesday, 2-8pm, Thursday and Friday, noon-9pm, and Saturday, 11am-7pm. They also provide beer to go in "crawlers," a canned 32-oz beer container. Free tours take place on Saturdays at noon, 1pm, and 2pm.

Heading to the south a bit in Thibodaux, Mudbug Brewing's taproom is usually open starting at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, closing at 10pm on Thursday and midnight on Friday and Saturday. No formal tour times, but they are available upon request.

Way up in Northwest Louisiana, visit Great Raft Brewing on Wednesday-Friday from 4-9pm and Saturday from noon-9pm. Free tours are available on Saturdays at 1pm, 2pm, and 3pm and last approximately 20-30 minutes. Although free, they do suggest making a donation to help support various animal rescue organizations in the area.

Cross state lines to Lazy Magnolia Brewing in Kiln, Mississippi. Although state law prohibits breweries selling beer to consumers directly in taprooms, Lazy Magnolia does offer tours with tastings on Thursday and







## PUCKER UP!

by Nora D. McGunnigle

Shandys have made a comeback in recent years and are the perfect beverage for the Gulf Coast's summer heat and humidity. These beer and lemonade concoctions are light, refreshing, and low in alcohol. Not only can you make them at home with your favorite beer and lemonade, more and more breweries are offering them in their taprooms and on grocery shelves.

One of New Orleans' newest breweries, Urban South, recognized this need and began mixing up their own lemonade with organic lemon juice, sugar, and water right in the brewery. The Urban South shandy is  $\frac{1}{3}$  lemonade and  $\frac{2}{3}$  Charming Wit, the brewery's signature wheat beer.

Urban South president Jacob Landry says, "I find the Wit to be the perfect base beer for a shandy because of its fruity/herbal qualities and its relative lack of hops. Lemonade compliments our wit really nicely as it melds with the orange peel, coriander and grapefruit peel we use."

At NOLA Brewing's taproom, the beer-tenders will make "beermosas" during satsuma season, combining Seventh Street Wheat (or any other beer the customer requests) with satsuma juice.

On Rouses shelves, the range of options has been expanding steadily. Leinenkugel (known affectionately as "Leinie") has made the traditional lemonade and wheat beer shandy flavor since 2007, and has added a few variations over the years. Leinie's Grapefruit Shandy substitutes grapefruit for lemon, and the Harvest Patch Shandy comes out during pumpkin season, adding all the spices associated with pumpkin pie. All of Leinenkugel's shandys are 4.2% alcohol by volume.

What's the difference between a shandy and a radler? Not much. In fact, the two are synonymous, with "radler" being the German word for the drink, and "shandy" being the British term.

Both of these European drinks began in the seventeenth century, shandys and radlers have centuries of history.

The largest brewery in Austria, Steigl (in Salzburg) has released a very popular grapefruit radler, composed of 40% of its flagship Goldbräu lager and 60% fruit soda. At 2% ABV, this beverage is quite easy to drink and enjoy without impairing any functions.

The Traveler Beer Company, based in Burlington Vermont, has been focused solely on shandys since opening in 2012. The year round Grapefruit Shandy, known in some markets as Illusive Traveler, is a wheat beer made with real grapefruit.

The brewery also releases a rotating selection of seasonal shandys, such as Curious Traveler, a classic lemon shandy, with a touch of lime juice to round out the flavor. Other seasonal varieties include the autumnal Jack O' Traveler made with real pumpkins, and Jolly Traveler, made with holiday spices, orange peel, and pomegranate.

Of course, you can make your own shandy at home with the beer and flavors you prefer best.

There are a wide variety of beers and juices/sodas to combine, and there are no shortage of opinions as to what works best. Some folks like a classic freshly made lemonade (homemade or something like Newman's Own or Simply Lemonade) or the equally classic sparkling lemonade like Fever Tree Bitter Lemon Soda or even 7up/Sprite.

Variations also exist, like the German "diesel" made with beer and cola, or "lager tops," popular in the UK, made with a much larger percentage of lager beer, with the sparkling lemonade just topping it off.

The style of beer used is usually a lager, like a pilsner or helles lager. The American lagers like Budweiser, Miller, and PBR are popular with shandy loving folks that don't have access to cheap German lagers. If you want to get fancy, as several of the commercial examples listed above, a wheat beer (also known as a weisse or wit) adds a nice spice that complements the lemonade or other soda mixed in, but is still very light.

Friday at 4pm, 5pm, & 6pm, and Saturday at 11am, Noon, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm, and 4pm. A "Front Porch" tour includes six 6-oz pours of beer and a pint glass for \$10, while the "Back Porch" tour is \$15, includes the same tour and amount of beer, but with added tulip glass, sticker, and koozie.

In Alabama, Back Forty Beer Company's Gadsen taproom is open Tuesday and Wednesday from 5-7pm, Thursday from 5-9pm, and Friday and Saturday from 3-9pm. The kitchen is open Thursday-Saturday, and the weekly tour is at 4pm on Saturday.

Birmingham's Good People Brewing is, along with Back Forty, one of Alabama's oldest breweries. Its taproom is open 7 days a week: Monday-Wednesday, 1-10pm; Thursday-Saturday, 1pm-midnight; and Sunday, 1-8pm. Tours are offered Saturdays and Sundays at 1pm, 2pm, 3pm, and 4pm. It costs \$10 but includes a pint glass and a pint of beer to drink.



### ➤ Look for at Rouses

*A lemony shandy is a refreshing summer twist on beer.*



# BUSH Wacker

by Marcy, Rouses Creative Director

**T**he Flora-Bama, a three-story honky-tonk beach bar on Perdido Key, is home of the legendary Bushwacker, a combination of milk, rum, Kahlúa, Amaretto, crème de cacao and who knows what else. The Flora-Bama's exact recipe for this grown up milkshake is top-secret, though we know it contains at least five types of liquor.

Now you can order a Bushwacker at almost any bar on the Gulf Coast, but you **HAVE TO** order a Bushwacker at the Flora-Bama. Imagine going to Brennan's and **NOT** getting the Bananas Foster ... it's like that.

The Flora-Bama sits right on the line where Florida meets Alabama. Today's Flora-Bama is a new incarnation of the original built in 1964. The original structure survived fire (allegedly set by associates of a nearby gambling boat and brothel), and floods, only to be partially destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

When rebuilt, the owners expanded the place, and used memorabilia rescued from that original roadhouse for decoration. There's now a waterfront bar; a grill serving the usual beach food, an oyster bar with raw and cooked oysters, and a yacht club just across the way. Bushwackers and the beach are the big draws, along with live music 365-days-a-year. There's even church service on Sundays—you can Worship on the Water at 9am and 11am.

In 2014 more than 40,000 people came out for a Flora-Bama beach concert by Kenny Chesney, the president of the No Shoes Nation. Chesney's video for his hit song , The Flora-Bama, was filmed on location. Believe it or not, Chesney's not the only one who has immortalized the bar in song. It's mentioned in songs sung by Jimmy Buffett, Chris Young, JJ Grey & Mofro and others.

Mullets are one of those Lower Alabama things. They're usually served fried, tossed over grits. But for the past 30 years, they've also been tossed on the beach in front of the Flora-Bama. More than 30,000 people show up for the Flora-Bama Interstate Mullet Toss each April.

To be fair, the Flora-Bama's not the only bar famous for its Bushwacker. The Sandshaker in Destin, Florida, bills itself as the "home of the original Bushwacker." It may be the panhandle's original, but the original original was concocted in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. That's where the Sandshaker's then-owner owner first tried it. The Bushwacker has since become so popular in Pensacola that there's an annual festival devoted to it. This year's Bushwacker Festival takes place on August 7th on the Boardwalk.

## Flora-Bama Rum Punch

Serves 1

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- ½ ounce Bacardi light rum
- ½ ounce Captain Morgan Original Spiced Rum
- ¼ ounce Malibu rum
- Splash of orange juice
- Splash of pineapple juice
- Splash of grenadine
- Maraschino cherry
- Orange slice

### HOW TO PREP

Mix all rums, the juices, and grenadine in a tall glass. Add ice and stir. Serve garnished with a maraschino cherry and orange slice.

## Pensacola Bushwacker

Serves 2

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 4 ounces cream of coconut
  - 2 ounces Kahlúa® coffee liqueur
  - 1 ounce Bacardi® black rum
  - 1 ounce creme de cacao
  - 4 ounce half-and-half
- Rouses vanilla ice cream

### HOW TO PREP

Pour all ingredients into a blender (ice cream optional) with two cups of ice, and blend until mixed. Serve in a hurricane glass.

## Mississippi Mudslide

Serves 1

*Don't confuse the Bushwacker with the Mississippi Mudslide, a White Russian-like milkshake concoction that's more dessert than drink.*

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- 1 ounce vodka
- 1 ounce Kahlúa® coffee liqueur
- 1 ounce Bailey's® Irish cream
- 1 ounce cream

### HOW TO PREP

Shake all ingredients with ice and pour over ice in an old-fashioned glass.

**“There's ball caps, photographs, dollar bills, and bras / License plates from every state nailed up to the wall ...”**

—Kenny Chesney, Flora-Bama

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