



THE BEVERAGE PEOPLE
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A Martini by Any Other Name
by Byron Burch and Bob Peak

Don't look now, but liqueurs (and the drinks made with them) have been discovered by a new generation of young adults. If you think liqueurs and cordials are primarily served by old ladies from crystal decanters perched atop lace-lined silver trays, think again! Not only that, as you might expect, this generation is using them in creative ways.

This shift should probably have been expected. It fits right in with changes we've seen in other areas. The past forty years, for instance, have seen a change in many people's taste in beer. We all know that. The "Good Beer Revolution" has been well publicized. There has also a shift in wine tastes. A few years ago, it seemed like everybody wanted only to make super-tannic monster wines that would be undrinkable for decades. These days, there's lots more interest in finesse and elegance.

It should hardly be surprising then, that liqueurs and cordials are making a comeback amid a flurry of experimentation. It may surprise some folks, but it really is the younger people who are leading the way. Maybe you thought liqueurs were only for sewing circles, but it just isn't so. If it ever really was like that, that time is past. The new generation, having grown up with drinks based on wine coolers, and such things, is happy to try things in creative combinations.

If there are any "liqueur purists" out there, the new developments may have them shuddering. That's not a problem for those of us who've tried to show some creativity over the years when making beers and meads. However, we admit being taken aback the first time we heard someone ask for a "Chocolate Martini" at a party. Some things just sound wrong to us old-timers, whether the idea is a good one or not. I'm sure we'll be able to adjust, but it may take rigorous research.

In any case, you can now try your hand at some of the more imaginative new drinks, and by making the liqueurs at home, you can keep the cost of your study down to a reasonable level.

The secret is Top Shelf®, a New Zealand company that is now marketing its line of liqueur flavorings in the USA. Here is a list of the Top Shelf flavors available at The Beverage People, along with the appropriate recipes (BP1 through BP4) for turning them into first class liqueurs.

Note that each liqueur recipe is presented both in one cup and 40 oz. versions. Note also that most of the recipes use both Cane Sugar (sucrose) and Corn Sugar (dextrose). Dextrose is somewhat less sweet than Sucrose, and this blending of sugars insures the proper combination of both sweetness and viscosity for the liqueur in question.

After the liqueur recipes, we provide a look at some of the cocktails you can make with them:

Cat. #	Flavor	Base Recipe	Compare with...
NT04	Absinthe	None	Anisette
NT01	Amaretto	BP3	Amaretto di Serrano®
NT29	Apple Schnapps	BP1	Apple liqueur
NT41	Blackberry Schnapps	BP1	Blackberry liqueur
NT23	Cafelua	BP3	Kahlua® Coffee liqueur
NT07	Cherry Brandy	BP1	Cherry Heering®
NT08	Chocolate Mint	BP2	Vandermint® liqueur
NT06	Coffee Maria	BP1	Tia Maria®
NT16	Crème de Cacao	BP3	Chocolate liqueur
NT40	Crème de Menthe	BP1	Green Crème de Menthe
NT31	Dictine	BP1	Benedictine®
NT17	Hazelnut	BP1	Frangelico®
NT18	Irish Cream	BP4	Bailey's® Irish Cream
New!	Irish Peppermint Cream	BP4	A BP Original!
NT33	Italiano	BP3	Galliano®
NT24	Orange Brandy	BP1	Gran Marnier®
NT27	Peach Schnapps	BP1	Peche Liqueur
NT21	Skyebuie	BP2	Drambuie®
NT42	Swiss Chocolate Almond	BP3	Chocolate Almond liqueur
NT26	Triple Sec	BP2	Triple Sec

We may love the metric system...but not everybody does! Being from New Zealand, the labels on our delicious new Top Shelf liqueur extracts include mixing instructions in milliliters (or advise using Top Shelf's proprietary pre-mixed syrup bases). We've decided instead to formulate comparable recipes using regular ingredients on hand here at The Beverage People, or at the grocery store.

For the most appropriate recipe to use for each liqueur, see the "Base Recipe" column above. Follow either the recipe for a one-cup small batch or the full 40-ounce whole-bottle version. The four Base Recipes are BP1 (Medium), BP2 (Sweet), BP3 (Very Sweet), and BP4 (Cream). Note that some of the recipes use a blend of sugars to arrive at an appropriate balance of sweetness and viscosity for a particular liqueur.

Medium Liqueur Base Recipe: BP1

Ingredient	For 1 cup (8 oz.)	Full 40-oz. Batch
Top Shelf Extract	2 tsp.	50 ml. Bottle
Vodka (80° proof)	1/2 cup + 1 Tbsp.	2 3/4 cups
Table Sugar (sucrose)	2 Tbsp.	1/2 cup + 2 Tbsp.
Corn Sugar (dextrose)	1 1/2 Tbsp.	1/2 cup
Water	6 Tbsp.	1 3/4 cups

In a saucepan, mix sugars with water. Place over medium heat and stir to dissolve. Simmer one minute, remove from heat. When cool, mix the syrup with vodka and extract. Stir or shake to blend, bottle, enjoy!

Sweet Liqueur Base Recipe: BP2

Ingredient	For 1 cup (8 oz.)	Full 40-oz. Batch
Top Shelf Extract	2 tsp.	50 ml. Bottle
Vodka (80° proof)	1/2 cup + 1 Tbsp.	2 3/4 cups
Table Sugar (sucrose)	3 Tbsp.	1 cup + 1 Tbsp.
Corn Sugar (dextrose)	2 Tbsp.	1/2 cup + 2 Tbsp.
Water	5 Tbsp.	1 1/2 cups

In a saucepan, mix sugars with water. Place over medium heat and stir to dissolve. Simmer one minute, remove from heat. When cool, mix the syrup with vodka and extract. Stir or shake to blend, bottle, enjoy!

Very Sweet Liqueur Base Recipe: BP3

Ingredient	For 1 cup (8 oz.)	Full 40-oz. Batch
Top Shelf Extract	2 tsp.	50 ml. Bottle
Vodka (80° proof)	1/2 cup + 1 Tbsp.	2 3/4 cups
Table Sugar (sucrose)	1/4 cup	1 1/4 cups
Corn Sugar (dextrose)	1 1/2 Tbsp.	1/2 cup
Water	3 Tbsp.	1 cups

In a saucepan, mix sugars with water. Place over medium heat and stir to dissolve. Mixture will be very thick, but the sugar will dissolve. Simmer one minute, remove from heat. When cool, mix the syrup with vodka and extract. Stir or shake to blend, bottle, enjoy!

Cream Liqueur Base Recipe: BP4

Ingredient	For 1 cup (8 oz.)	Full 40-oz. Batch
Top Shelf Extract	2 tsp.	50 ml. Bottle
Vodka (80° proof)	1/2 cup	2 1/2 cups
Coffee Mate® Non-dairy creamer, original flavor	1/3 cup	1 2/3 cups
Table Sugar (sucrose)	2 Tbsp.	10 Tbsp.
Water	1/4 cup + 1 Tbsp.	1 1/2 cups

In a saucepan, bring water and sugar to a boil. Simmer one minute. Remove from heat and whisk in Coffee Mate to blend. Cool, stirring occasionally. Add to vodka in a mixing container, add extract, and stir or shake to blend. Bottle and enjoy!

Making Various Martini Drinks

Perhaps the novelty Martini is the place to start. These can be made a lot of different ways. The simplest way is to pour equal parts of any liqueur and vodka over the rocks. Once you've done this, you can try varying the percentages to suit your own taste, and maybe even combining two or more liqueurs, or crushing the ice and shaking the drink if you have a shaker. With something this basic, your interpretation rules. After exhaustive practice has helped you master the basics, it's time to branch out. Here are some recipes you may want to try:

Liqueur Cocktail Recipes

Perhaps the novelty Martini is the place to start. These can be made a lot of different ways. The simplest way is to pour equal parts of any liqueur and vodka over the rocks. Once you've done this, you can try varying the percentages to suit your own taste, and maybe even combining two or more liqueurs, or crushing the ice and shaking the drink if you have a shaker. With something this basic, your interpretation rules. Here are some recipes you may want to try:

Death by Chocolate

1 oz. Irish Crème
1/2 oz. Crème de Cacao
1/2 oz Vodka
Scoop Chocolate Ice Cream
1 cup crushed Ice

1. In a blender, add the ingredients.
2. Blend until smooth
3. Pour into a parfait glass.
4. Top with whipped cream and chocolate curls.

Washington Apple

1 oz. Vodka
1 oz. Apple Schnapps
1 oz. Cranberry Juice

1. Fill mixing glass with ice
2. Add ingredients.
3. Shake
4. Strain into a chilled shot glass

Blackberry Demitasse

1 oz. Blackberry Schnapps
1/2 oz. Brandy
1 Tablespoon Blackberry Jelly
1 teaspoon Water
1/2 teaspoon Lemon Juice

1. Heat the ingredients enough to dissolve the jelly, stirring well.
2. Pour into a demitasse cup
3. Serve with a sliver of lemon

Oil Slick

1 oz. Vodka
1 oz. Crème de Cacao
1 oz. Cream
Float of Dark Rum

1. Fill a small glass with ice
2. Layer vodka, crème de cacao and cream
3. Float dark rum on top