

No Pretense BEST SERVED CHILLED

HAVING LIVED and worked in the New York dining scene for over a decade I've become hyper-aware of the inherent thirst for "The Next New Thing." The City is fueled by a race toward the future, and sometimes, even the past in terms of throwback trends. Rarely do New Yorkers rest in the present, luxuriating in the simplicity of a nameless wine enjoyed with friends. We post photos of our trophy bottles on Instagram, we clamber after the newest speakeasy with the most antiquated cocktail bitters, and we proclaim our support for the most obscure (a.k.a. "hipster") wine regions.

But I've also spent some substantial work and living time in Hawai'i—and I recognize that sometimes a break is called for. We need sunlight, we need to lose our sense of time, to laugh with abandon and cheers so hard we crack our over-priced wine glasses. We need to remember how to simply enjoy—a principal that dovetails with the aloha lifestyle—and the following beverages invite us to surrender to such hedonistic pleasure.

The funny thing is... they aren't that cool. Sure, you'll find a few similar ideas on certain wine lists and random Mexican joint menus; but for the most part, I've enjoyed them in my Chinatown apartment with friends.

Here's my challenge: join me in shedding any New York-style glitter and adopt an attitude appropriate for a barbecue with friends, a bonfire or a polo match with a buzz on. When all pretense disappears and you find your sticky-barbecue-sauce fingers clutching your wine glass like a chalice instead of a piece of

fine crystal, you'll know you've arrived. Get after it—it's worth it.

From the simplest option (Mexican beer) to an antiquated beauty (dry Sherry), the theme remains unchanged: chill it down. Make it work for a humid, thick afternoon while the drink leans on you a bit, inhibitions start to wane and the warm wind invites you to linger a minute longer than you would otherwise.

THE MICHELADA

In general I'd argue that beer cocktails aren't as refreshing as a straight-up cold one. But a Michelada strikes a balance between its spicy-tangy notes and the ultimate refreshing beer: a Tecate. The drink typically includes a blend of lime juice, salt, hot sauce, tomato juice or Clamato, beer (preferably Mexican) and a selection of any of the following: Worcestershire, Maggi seasoning (a mixture of spices similar to a chicken bouillon cube) or Shoyu. There are hundreds of recipes available online, but I strongly suggest starting with a loose idea and honing your own personal recipe from there. I'm not in love with the tomato or Clamato aspect so I tend to amp up the hot sauce and double down on the lime and salt. It looks a little like this, at right:

WHITES AND ROSÉS ON ICE

I admit that I have been guilty of judging those who opt for a glass of ice with their wine. Unfortunately I spoke before I had the

opportunity to enjoy the revitalizing quality of a white or rosé clinking around in my tumbler, offering me a super-chilled version of an already refreshing warm weather drink. Regarding which wine to choose, keep in mind that we are going for the pleasure factor here. Instead of asking for serious white Burgundy to retain its dignity amidst ninety-degree heat, opt for an easy-going white or rosé without pretense. Let go of the idea that wine is worthwhile

THE MICHELADA

Fill a highball with ice
Add the juice of half a large lime
5 dashes Tapatio hot sauce
1 Tsp. Worcestershire
Healthy pinch of salt
7-8 oz Tecate (with remainder on side in the can; for island purists, Hinano could work well here)
Stir & drink with haste





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LIFE

only if served in a proper wine glass, gracefully swirling and thoughtfully sipping. Serve these lovelies over plenty of ice in a tumbler for easy handling.

For whites, lean toward lighter bodied wines such as crisp Chablis, a savory Grüner Veltliner, or even fruity Riesling. For Rosé, the lighter the pink, the better (think pale, herbal Provençal or salty Corsican pinks), and drink quickly enough so the wine does not have a chance to succumb to dilution. You're welcome.

SHERRY IS COOL (AND DELICIOUS IN A REBUJITO)

In case you weren't challenged enough by the idea of savory beer or wine on ice, I now offer you the ultimate outsider: Sherry. To confirm, yes: it can range from a dry, white, salty Fino or Manzanilla to a nutty Amontillado or Oloroso and all the way to motor-oil black, syrupy Pedro Ximenez.

Sherry is a style of wine heralding from the region of Jerez in southern Spain. It is always fortified, and it is aged in oak barrels anywhere from two to over a hundred years old, depending on the style being made. I would love to sit down at the next polo match with each of you and delve into the mind-blowing wine being made in Jerez, but in the mean time let's focus on the dry, un-oxidized Fino or Manzanilla (they are the same style of wine simply from different regions within Jerez).

The Spanish equivalent to our iced-down beverages is the Rebujiito. It is a Sherry cocktail that doesn't rely on any other spirit but instead stands alone with a simple mixer and citrus. Serve in a highball over ice, garnished with a lemon or sprig of mint. You can thank me later for introducing you to the umami flavor-explosion that is Sherry.

Cheers.

Carla Rzeszewski began her service industry career at Roy's Kahana in Lahaina fifteen years ago as a silverware polisher. She most recently served as Wine Director for April Bloomfield's restaurants The Spotted Pig, The Breslin and The John Dory Oyster Bar in New York City. She's been featured in The Wall Street Journal and Wine Enthusiast, she's crashed quite a few New York Times tasting panels, and has most recently been dubbed The Queen of Sherry by the Village Voice. She is currently three months into a road trip across the U.S., searching for the perfect BLT.

REBUJITO

2.5 oz. Fino or Manzanilla Sherry
1.5 oz fresh squeezed lemon juice
1 Tablespoon simple syrup
1.5-2 oz. soda water



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