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VineGal



There should be no leftovers

Leftover wine — “that’s inconceivable” to quote one of my favorite movie lines* — is not an intuitively obvious option to me. But given the fact that the looming Thanksgiving holiday is rife with leftovers and the ensuing marathon weekend of inventive creations, I advocate the following “Leftover Wine Code” that has been culled over the years from friends with far more wine adventures than me.

Wine and oxygen mix, but only up to a point. Some oxygen is beneficial and allows a wine to “breathe” or “open up.” But too much exposure to oxygen can eventually oxidize it. The central theme of wine preservation is to slow down or eliminate the oxidation reaction.

■ Code 1: There should be NO leftover wine. Consume the bottle upon opening. Invite more friends over if you must.

■ Code 2: There should be NO leftover wine. The least expensive way to save leftover wine (assuming you know you’re only going to drink half of it ahead of time) is to utilize half bottles (375 ml) as a wine storage apparatus. When you open your chosen bottle, immediately decant it into the half bottle. Fill the half bottle up into the neck and then quickly recork. There should be no air left in the half bottle. The imprint on the original cork will remind you what’s in the bottle.

■ Code 3: There should be NO leftover wine. Another option to save wine is to use an air extraction device. A reasonably priced (\$15) vacuum pump system can be found in most wine catalogs and kitchen stores. Both the Vacu-Vin® and Vino Vac™ wine saver systems consist of a pliable rubber “cork” and a handheld tool that sucks the air out of the bottle. Place the special stopper in the bottleneck and, using the hand pump, vacuum out the air. The stopper will keep your wine fresh for an additional day, maybe two.

For the ultimate splurge, try the high-tech PEK Wine Steward. It not only keeps your wine at the proper storage temperature, but also prevents oxidation by injecting a layer of high-grade argon gas on top of the wine (Supremo™ model). The system, with both wine preservation and temperature management capabilities, runs about \$200 (Preservo™, which does not include the temperature control feature, costs about \$100).

■ Code 4: There should be NO leftover wine. The most radical approach to really slow down the oxidation process was passed on to me by CBS White House correspondent Bill Plante. Bill pours what he plans to drink into his wine glass, recorks the bottle and then unceremoniously places the leftover wine in the freezer. The freezer? Yes, the freezer. As long as you leave enough room for the wine to expand in the bottle (this is important — trust me!) and place it upright, your wine should be fine for several weeks.

When you’re ready to enjoy the leftovers, simply take the bottle out of the freezer and place it — gulp — in the microwave. Try defrosting it a little at a time (45-second intervals worked for me) until just a little frozen wine remains. Take it out and let it stand at room temperature for a few minutes to finish the defrosting process on its own. If I hadn’t tried it, I would not have believed it actually works. A word of caution: Since the process seems to add a year or two of bottle age, try it only with younger wines.

So stick to the “Code” (well, they’re actually more like guidelines**) to ensure success for your Thanksgiving weekend leftover wine extravaganza.

*Princess Bride

**Pirates of the Caribbean

Got a wine tip to share? E-mail me at cindy@vineguy.com.



Vino Vac



Vacu-Vin

There’s a nip in the glass

BY GAIL CIAMPA

Scripps Howard

With November here and that nip in the air, menus boast dishes full of ingredients of the fall harvest. Gone are the fresh tomatoes and sweet corn. Squash season is here. Apples are for dessert as cravings fade for Key lime pie.

So it is with the cocktail menu. That favorite mango drink just doesn’t go with the hearty foods of fall. Margaritas are fine, but citrusy drinks aren’t what we crave now. Cranberries and rich reds are on the mind as we start the countdown to Thanksgiving.

So let’s put aside the usual favorites and try some new cocktails that celebrate the season.

Here are some tips to help with your mixology.

You’ll need a jigger to measure the 1 1/2 ounces so often called for in cocktail recipes. A splash calls for a long squirt, usually half an ounce. A dash equals a few drops, or one-sixth of a teaspoon. To be truthful, measuring ounces isn’t as important as keeping the proportions the same. That’s an easy way to make more than one drink at a time.

A cocktail shaker is also a must. A strainer will make it easy to pour the shaken drinks into martini glasses.

A lot of the recipes call for bitters. This is a mixer that is, yes, bitter, and made with a range of herbs, roots and a balance of rum. That makes it alcoholic, so it shouldn’t be used in a non-alcoholic drink. Angostura, a Trinidadian company, produces the one most widely suggested.

If the recipe calls for simple syrup, it’s easy to make and store in the fridge. Make it by heating equal parts sugar and water until the sugar is dissolved. One cup sugar to 1 cup water is a good start.

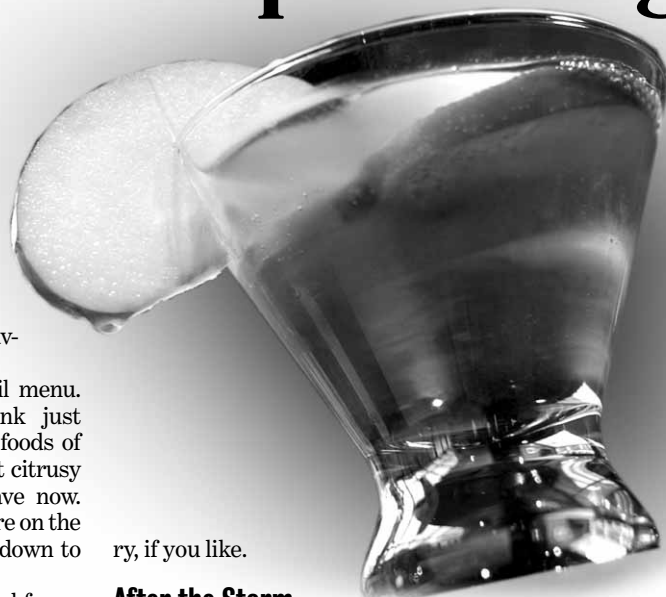
There are a lot of flavored spirits here in the recipes, which come from Providence, R.I.-area restaurants and lounges that responded to my calls for sharing their best seasonal drinks. And don’t forget that nuts, mixed or otherwise, go great with cocktails. Especially nice are spanish Marcona almonds with their meaty taste.

So here are the shared recipes, some shaken and some stirred.

Red Delicious Apple Martini

1 1/2 oz. cherry whiskey
2 1/2 oz. DeKuyper Sour Apple Pucker Schnapps
3 oz. cranberry juice

Blend ingredients in a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake well, strain and pour in a martini glass. Garnish with apple slice and cher-



Red delicious apple martini, left, and Apple Pie, below - SHNS photos

ry, if you like.

After the Storm

1/2 ounce Stolichnaya Orange Vodka
1/2 oz. Myers Rum
1 1/2 oz. Captain Morgan Tattoo Rum
1 1/2 oz. pineapple juice

Mix ingredients together and serve in a tall hurricane glass. Garnish with orange slice and lime twist.

Apple Pie

3 oz. apple Schnapps
Splash of cinnamon Schnapps
3 oz. hot apple cider

Mix ingredients together and garnish with an apple slice and cinnamon stick.

The Hi-Hat Spiced Cider

2 oz. Captain Morgan Spiced Rum
Apple cider

Fill a tall glass with ice for a cold drink, add rum and fill up glass with cider. Garnish with apple. For a warm drink, warm apple cider. Put rum in a mug and fill up with warmed cider. Garnish with slices of apple coated in cinnamon.

This drink is an updated version of a clas-



sic Old Fashioned developed for a promotion of the James Beard Foundation and Gentleman Jack, Jack Daniel’s sweeter premium whiskey.

Old-Fashioned Gentiluomo Gianni

1 cherry preserved in cherry liqueur or brandy, pitted
1/2 orange slice
2 sugar cubes
2 dashes Angostura bitters
1 1/2 oz. prosecco
1 1/2 ounces Jack Daniel’s Gentleman Jack

In a double old-fashioned glass or large squat tumbler, mash the cherry, orange slice and sugar cube together with a muddler to create a pulpy syrup. Add bitters and prosecco. Fill the glass with ice and top off with the Gentleman Jack.

Paris sunset

3/4 oz. Dubonnet Rouge
3 drops Angostura bitters
1 1/2 teaspoon sugar
3 oz. chilled champagne

Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add the Dubonnet, bitters and sugar. Shake well. Strain into a chilled flute champagne glass, and top with the champagne.

24 Karrot

2 oz. Absolut ApeachVodka
1 oz. Triple Sec
1/2 oz. sour mix
1/2 oz. carrot juice

Fill a shaker with ice. Mix all ingredients and shake, strain into a glass. Garnish with a pinch of chopped parsley.

Transfusion Martini

2 oz. Charbay Blood Orange Vodka
1/2 oz. Chambord
1 oz. pineapple juice

Fill shaker with ice. Mix all ingredients and shake. Strain into a glass. Garnish with a slice of blood orange.