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last call

Pumpkin-Free Zone

Classic Seasonal Flavors can be Stars on your Cocktail List

BY W. R. TISH

Not long ago, fall ambience had as its centerpiece actual fall foliage. Then came Pumpkin Spice, a feel-good aromatic/flavor concept that has proliferated practically unchecked (Pumpkin Spice Cheerios, anyone?).

Fortunately, a fall cocktail menu is the perfect place to restore autumnal sanity. While lemmings chase their Pumpkin Spice, mixologists can return to some of the season's other favorite edible and potable markers. "Fall immediately brings to mind some of my favorite cocktail ingredients," notes The Cocktail Guru, Jonathan Pogash, who recently developed a set of drink recipes for Van Gogh Vodka and Tap 357 Maple Rye Whisky. "Apple, ginger, and maple are a perfect fit together—a touch spicy, savory and sweet all at the very same time. Caramel and apple evoke flavors we all grew up with. To be able to have them in adult cocktail form is a real treat."

His Dutch Apple Martini is surprisingly simple—three liquids plus a pinch of cinnamon. A more complex tippie is his Fall Harvest Punch, which unites classic fall flavors of maple and apple with bracing grapefruit and pomegranate juice and a dollop of agave nectar.

Fall Harvest Punch

(serves 25)

Ingredients:

1 750ml btl Tap 357 Maple Rye Whisky
 ½ 750ml btl Van Gogh Pomegranate Vodka
 ½ gallon Apple Cider
 8 oz POM Pomegranate Juice
 8 oz fresh Grapefruit Juice
 Agave Nectar to taste
 1 Sliced Apple, for punch bowl
 1 Segmented Grapefruit, for punch bowl
 Cinnamon Sticks, for garnish

Method:

Add all ingredients directly into a punch bowl with ice (optional: use ice cubes frozen with apple slices). Stir ingredients well to chill and dilute. Add grapefruit and apple slices into the bowl. Serve out into punch glasses; garnish with a cinnamon stick.

Dutch Apple Martini

Ingredients:

1½ oz Van Gogh Dutch Caramel Vodka
 ¾ oz Apple Cider
 ½ oz POM Pomegranate Juice
 Pinch of ground Cinnamon

Method:

Shake ingredients very well with ice and strain into a chilled coupe martini glass. Garnish with a red apple slice.

