

Entertaining Ideas

The Cocktail Hour Through Rose-Colored Glasses

by Dale DeGroff

(NAPSA)—Like so many other overworked working stiffs, I often find myself searching for a good drink at the end of my day—something to gently close the day's business and ignite that little glow of anticipation for the evening's adventures. And it should be just that simple.

Photo by: Ted Soqui



Dale DeGroff

One drink that is often at the top of my list is the

Dubonnet Cocktail. The simplicity of combining this subtle and flavorful aperitif with an aromatic gin or citrus vodka is a no-brainer—and yet, with all the fanciful mixing going on these days at trendy bars, this simple classic is surprisingly often overlooked.

Many think Dubonnet is appropriate in all seasons, whether served tall with soda and lemon or chilled with gin or vodka as a cocktail hour martini. As an aperitif, it can be as light as a glass of wine or as fashionable as a Cosmopolitan.

With its rich ruby color, spicy aroma, and refreshing flavors, Dubonnet embodies the best of the aperitif category. It belongs to that group of aperitif with the seductive name, aromatic wines.

Made from the fruity wines of Roussillon in France and the comparable wines from Napa Valley in California, Dubonnet is flavored with herbs and spices from countries around the world. It is then fortified with *mistelle*, a mixture of eau de vie of grape and sweet grape juice.

Today the cocktail category is exploding with innovative new age martini recipes. Bartenders are returning to the fresh juices and

original ingredients that were the hallmark of the classic cocktail age and marrying them with hot new products.

Here is a new take on the super-classic Dubonnet Cocktail. I have also created my own apple cocktail called the Dubonnet Kiss. Fruit flavored schnapps are a rich source of inspiration for today's talented bartenders and apple is a favorite flavor to feature.

DUBONNET MARTINI

¾ ounce Dubonnet Rouge
¾ ounce citrus vodka
2 lemon wedges

Add the Dubonnet and the vodka to your cocktail shaker with ice and squeeze in the two lemon wedges. Shake well and strain into a chilled martini glass. Garnish with a twist of lemon peel.

DUBONNET KISS

1 ounce Dubonnet Rouge
½ ounce sour apple schnapps
1 ounce apple cider
½ ounce fresh sour mix

Shake all the ingredients with ice in a cocktail shaker and strain into a chilled martini glass. Garnish with a thin slice of red delicious apple.

For more great recipes write to Dubonnet Recipe Brochure, P.O. Box 1130, Bardstown, KY 40004.

Dale DeGroff, the author of The Craft of the Cocktail, is the former head bartender of New York City's famous Rainbow Room. His Web site, www.kingcocktail.com, offers tips and information about the world of cocktails.