



Cocktails with a *twist*

Gin and tonics are great and margaritas marvellous, but, as those long, hot nights draw to a close, why not mix up your drinks repertoire with a celebratory seasonal cocktail? **Chris Johns** taps bartenders from across the country for their top tips – and this year's best new recipes

Photography by **Maya Visnyei**

In the same way that we yearn for hearty potato dishes in December and fresh, raw tomatoes in August, our cocktail cravings change with the seasons as well. I recently spoke with some of my favourite Canadian bartenders to find out what they're making – and drinking – this summer and what they think makes a quintessential hot-weather drink.

"We've had an atypically dismal summer here out on the West Coast," says Brad Stanton, bar and lounge manager at Vancouver's recently opened Hawksworth Restaurant, "but I think in general what people are looking for in the summertime is nothing too fussy, something nice and refreshing. [In the summer] I'll maybe take something that people know and like and give it a bit of a different spin. Right now we're doing a kind of margarita with shiso-infused triple sec, agave nectar and single-malt scotch and ingredients like rooibos tea and flower-infused gin. It should definitely be thirst-quenching. I think that's priority No. 1 for people [in the summer] and that's certainly where I start when I put together a summer-cocktail menu."

Filippo Iachino, head bartender at Montreal's Baldwin Barbecue, agrees, despite coming from a different perspective. "Seeing as we have winter nine months out of the year here in Montreal, people are drawn to summer cocktails because it reminds them of vacation," he says. "At this time of year we get a lot of people asking for the South American drinks: mojitos, caipirinhas, pisco sours. The most important things about a good summer cocktail are that: 1) It's refreshing and 2) it's summery."

Shaun Layton of L'Abattoir restaurant in Vancouver has more specific ideas for what makes a hot-weather drink. "Summer cocktails," he says, "tend to lean toward unaged spirits like rum, tequila, cachaca and pisco. I like to use a lot of citrus, especially lime or grapefruit, and other fresh fruit like cherries and passion fruit. Right now, I'm going by the market a couple of times a week to see what's fresh and looking for ways to incorporate those ingredients into my drinks."

Now, you can incorporate new ideas into your drinks as well, thanks to our panel of midsummer misologists. So put away that boring beer, save the G&T for another day and this weekend try one of these inventive, delicious options. Bottoms up!

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One-Hit Wonder

Shaun Layton, head barman, L'Abattoir, Vancouver

Although this drink packs a punch by using three kinds of liquor, its name has nothing to do with its potency. Rather, it is a variation on a cocktail served at New York's legendary Milk and Honey Bar called the Paper Plane, which was inspired by Paper Plane, a song by hipster chanteuse M.I.A.



Chambord Daisy

Nathan Head, general manager, Milk Tiger Lounge, Calgary

Like a Sour or a Toddy, a Daisy is a classification of cocktail from which to build variations. It traditionally contains a base spirit, lemon juice, sugar and grenadine. Head puts a boozey spin on the classic by using Chambord and Chartreuse in place of sugar and orange bitters in place of grenadine.



Bourbon Punch

Filippo Iachino, head bartender and chef, Baldwin Barbecue, Montreal

Bourbon might be the ultimate summer spirit. It's made from corn picked at the height of ripeness and you might pick out flavours of caramelized banana and butter-pecan ice cream beneath its oaky aroma.

