

Restaurant Cocktail Menu - World's Best Food and Wine Combo

Don't bother mentally processing the infinite pairings possible with food and wine, in any consideration of the world's best. I must also leave out my personal childhood favorite of Tom's Peanut Butter Crackers and Coca Cola (a treat I still indulge on road trips). There is no doubt that a well made Sazerac cocktail with freshly opened oysters stands astride the epicurean world like The Colossus of Rhodes as the best possible combination of food and drink. A complete history of the Sazerac Cocktail written by Chuck Taggart is worth the read. I have confirmed the history from several other sources: the sum of which research leads me to the conclusion that the Sazerac is the oldest cocktail in America. In the early 1800's Antoine Amadie Peychaud, a New Orleans apothecary, made a drink using his medicinal Peychaud Bitters in a cognac and Absinthe drink called a "coquertier." This French word was Americanized to "Cocktail." Mr. Taylor, owner of the Sazerac Coffeehouse, bestowed the name "Sazerac" in 1853 by announcing the drink to hence forth be made solely from the Cognac brand, Sazerac-du-Forge et Fills. The Sazerac Coffeehouse changed owners in 1870 and with it, the basic Sazerac ingredient, Cognac, to American Rye Whiskey – for reasons of availability and cost. My personal introduction to the Sazerac was not as a libation, but in a story told to me by Marcelle Bienvenue, author of the cookbook *Who's Your Mama, Are You Catholic & Can You Make a Roux,* wherein she once reluctantly shared her Sazerac and oysters with Tennessee Williams in New Orleans' Acme Oyster Bar. The story so filled me with wonder, that I launched solo into the New Orleans night determined to find the best Sazerac in the Crescent City. This "hands on" research project lasted well into the following morning. About all I can meaningfully report is that I survived – with an unrequited appetite for Sazeracs and fresh oysters. I need some disclaimers here as regards "well made" Sazeracs. If you're trying for the "World's Best," wait until you have the right ingredients. Everyone knows the original Absinth made with wormwood, a substance then determined to be deleterious to your health, was banned in the USA. That concept now is being challenged, and you can scout the Internet and again find Absinth available. I have not tried this as a substitute for Pernod. The New Orleans liqueur, Herbsaint, is used almost exclusively in its hometown, but I still prefer Pernod. You could substitute Canadian Rye, Bourbon or Cognac for American Rye, but I wouldn't. Last but not least, there is always Angostura Bitters for the Peychaud Bitters, but why? The World's Best Pairing of Food and Drink

Ingredients:

2 – 3 ½ ounce Old Fashion Cocktail Glasses

5 – drops Pernod

1 – Sugar cube (Ok, Ok – you could substitute a teaspoon of sugar or bar syrup)

2 – Drops Peychaud Bitters

1 ½ to 2 – Ounces of Old Overholt American Rye Whiskey (Come on! Go out and buy a bottle)

Finely crushed ice

1 – Large lemon twist (Make sure it's big enough to drip a little lemon oil)

12 – Each ultra fresh Blue Point oysters

Preparation:

Sazerac:

Fill glass No. 1 with ice to cool

Place two drops of Peychaud Bitters on the sugar cube and drop into glass No.2

Add Old Overholt whiskey and mull the sugar cube until it is completely crushed

Add ice and stir or shake until the sugar is totally dissolved.

Remove the ice from glass No.1 and dry.

Add 5 drops of Pernod to Glass No 1, rolling it around until all surfaces are covered.

Fling the excess Pernod out with a snap of the wrist (It's all in the wrist action)

Strain glass No. 2 into glass No.1

Twist lemon peel until oil drops, then ad as garnish.

Oysters

Open, cut loose from shell, and display on bed of ice. Go to Heaven! The warmth of the Sazerac has layers of complexity including spice honey and anise with the aroma of lemon oil. A balance of sweetness and pungency that combines with the oysters in a manner that makes you yearn for solitude where you can moan with pleasure without someone saying, "I want what she's having."

About the Author

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