

GOTHAM

TASTE Cocktails



FORTIFICATIONS:

THE EDDY'S MONT BLANC REFRESHER

1 oz. shochu	1½ tsp. La Clandestine absinthe
4½ tsp. amber Vermouth del Professore	3 drops orange blossom water
4½ tsp. crisp white wine	
1 oz. jasmine coconut crème	Build ingredients in a small wine glass and swizzle to homogenize contents. Fill glass with ice.
3 tsp. grapefruit juice	
3 tsp. lemon juice	

Kelvin Uffre devised the Mont Blanc Refresher, a fortified wine-based piña colada, for The Eddy.

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Keeping the Night Young

THE LOWER EAST SIDE IS DIGGING ON LOWER-ALCOHOL COCKTAILS.
BY AMY ZAVATTO

More than the new frontier in underexplored cocktail ingredients, fortified wines are becoming the darlings of downtown barkeeps for a good, practical reason: They keep the night young.

Fortified wines—sherry, port, Madeira, Marsala, vermouth—begin as table wine, but get a kick of spirit infusion, often brandy, to boost their alcohol content and, thus, their shelf life. But

even with that fortification, they're still in the low-fi range (between 17 and 20 percent alcohol, give or take). For **The Musket Room's** (265 Elizabeth St., 212-219-0764; themusketroom.com) head sommelier and cocktail tinkerer Dane Campbell—schooled in fortified-wine cocktail versatility at Saxon + Parole—this allows him to offer alluring aperitifs like the Henry O. Peabody martini (a

50/50 stirring of Atsby Amberthorn vermouth and Broken Shed vodka with a dash of Regan's No. 6 orange bitters) without killing his customers' thirst for their antipodean wine list. He's also toying with a Madeira-pisco concoction for the winter.

But more than just being a night-extender, fortified wines offer a dimension to drinks that's hard to shake up with the usual available

accoutrements. "For bartenders, fortified wines are a great way to balance drinks without using syrups and sugars because they add depth and flavor—the nuttiness a sherry or Madeira offers is better than Demerara sugar, which gives depth but not nuttiness," says Campbell.

Vermouth and sherry, in particular, have become the party-date of choice for downtown, as each offers an entire range of flavors for bartenders to experiment with. An interesting recent entry from **The Eddy's** (342 E. Sixth St., 646-895-9884; theeddynyc.com) head bartender, Kelvin Uffre, is essentially a fortified wine-based piña colada mixing blanco vermouth, Pinot Grigio, Japanese shochu, grapefruit juice, Swiss absinthe, and coconut crème. Vermouth and sherry are also finding entire leagues of new fans who enjoy sipping them on their own at spots like **Huertas** (107 First Ave., 212-288-4490; [\[nyc.com\]\(http://nyc.com\)\), where vermouth flows from the tap, and **The Bourgeois Pig** \(111 E. Seventh St., 212-475-2246; \[bourgeoispigny.com\]\(http://bourgeoispigny.com\)\), where aromatized and fortified wines make up an entire section of the cocktail menu.](http://huertas</p>
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At **Donostia** (155 Avenue B, 646-256-9773; donostia.nyc.com), head barman Will Peet pours out a whopping 35 sherries and eight vermouths by the glass, and crafts a bevy of bevs that make good use of sherry's versatility, from the dryer Fino and Amontillado styles to the richer Olorosos and Pedro Ximénez. Peet is currently working on a Sazerac iteration, replacing the traditional rye with sherry. "I love the Gran Mantilla in cocktails because it's 100 percent Pedro Jimenez, so it's a fuller style; it's got legs, and it's a great sub for certain whiskies," he says. "[Fortified wines] are an easy fit—they add a little bit of that alcohol content, but they're not a hammer drop. You can beef up a cocktail's depth but still keep it afloat." **G**

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