

Grey Goose Dream Bar Design, 2009, Submission by: Joe McCanta

The Freshest Cocktail. Ever.

The theme for my Grey Goose bar is simple: botanical freshness. All master chefs know that it is not their hands that make a perfect dish, but the skilled combination of the freshest ingredients they can get their hands on. Just as the most stunning meal of my life was produced in Tuscany by a woman who grew all her own ingredients and blended them to a point of absolute perfection, so I too have always wanted to bring that garden-fresh mentality to mixology. It couldn't come at a better time either as even well established bars still sling out cocktails made from 2 day old lemon juice, sweet and sour mixes and withered garnishes. It's time to bring the drinker to the essence of ingredients and allow a taste of the earth itself. It's time for the bartender to create the freshest cocktail on the planet.

I would achieve this by creating a fully sustainable mobile Green House Bar. Design wise, the bar would be based off the botanical Victorian Greenhouses of yesteryear which were able to consistently produce any number of herbs, spices, fruits, berries and flowers year round by enclosing these living items into a well looked after arboretum. Step into the Green House bar and you've stepped into your mis en place--with fresh herbs and flowers sprouting throughout a series of boxes that could be rotationally shifted in the front of the bar daily to keep par levels stocked with the absolute freshest batch. On either side and in the back of the bar would be citrus and/or other fruit trees which would likewise be shifted as needed to prevent over-picking. The bartop would extend outwards with sunken-in hydroponic trays staggered directly into it--holding plantings of berries and specialty fruits. These trays are engineered to use no soil, assuring that the bar top remains sanitary.

Every inch would be alive and vibrant with freshness and aromas of soft botanicals, including the overhead area of the bar which would be planted with either vine fruits (grapes, tomatoes) or micro-herbs in seed trays. The bar would be a constant workshop for the caretaker/mixologist who would finally be able to truly experiment, growing plantings of impossible-to-find ingredients and subsequently constantly creating innovative new flavours—again, just as a master chef does at home. I would start with the plantings needed for my signature cocktail, but by all means those would be just the beginning. Event after event, month after month, year after year the bar could be changing, shifting to match the ever-changing tastes of customers. Enclosed all within the space of a standard greenhouse, a unique shutter and vent system would allow the bar to be opened up for service as needed and then returned to stationary greenhouse status when it is not in use.

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As it would be irresponsible to take from the earth without respecting it, the bar would be 100% sustainable. Made from recycled glass/perplex, metals and sustainable woods, the Green House bar would appear to fit right at home in it's live-coverings and hence be an organic part of nature rather than a threat to it. Likewise I would use a similar process that we employ at my Saf Restaurant in Shoreditch for waste management, most importantly by composting all food waste with biodynamic preparations which could provide the fertilizer for the actual bar itself. One of the key features of this sustainable approach would be a drainage system linked to all sinks and ice wells within the bar which would spread throughout the planter boxes with small black drip lines to water all the items within the Green House, thus drastically saving water and helping to keep the plants that much fresher. Solar panels could be placed on top of the bar to power any sockets or the low energy LED lighting that could be used. Guests would be encouraged to step up and sit at the front of the bar where they could physically see the ingredients picked fresh for their cocktail, or, if they choose, pick the ingredient themselves. The Green House Bar would be a dialogue with the guest and a statement to the entire cocktail community.

My signature cocktail plays off the theme of botanical freshness by using a combination of fresh picked herbs, edible flowers, fresh berries, citrus and fruit. Everything that goes into the cocktail would be able to be grown right in the Green House bar (with the exception of a hint of sugar) and picked fresh moments before the cocktail was consumed to provide a pure, slightly floral and overall botanically-driven experience.

Martini Botanique

50 mls Grey Goose Poire
3 fresh picked raspberries
1 fresh picked Violet leaf de-stemmed
6 fresh picked Tarragon leaves
Juice of ¼ fresh picked lime
20 mls Simple Syrup
½ fresh picked shiso Leaf
25 mls fresh bosc pear juice

Without muddeling, combine all ingredients in the glass half of a shaker. Shake very hard to break all ingredients up and double strain into an ice cold martini coupe. Garnish with fresh picked micro-shiso in the center of the drink or alternatively a shiso leaf tied and threaded through a raspberry.

A workshop for a passionate mixologist, botanical “barboretum” for cocktail novices and connoisseurs the like, and a key to creating that which has never been done before: this is the Green House Bar. And why shouldn't ‘the world's best tasting vodka’ not present ‘the world's freshest cocktail’?

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