

Light and bubbly for the holidays

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*Melissa Baumunk presents
“A Perfect Pearing”*

The holiday season calls for a little sparkle and that inspired me to create A Perfect Pearing.

This is my take – a fall and winter version – on the French 75, a cocktail that features gin, lemon, simple syrup and sparkling wine. The French 75 is a bit tart, not too sweet and has a sparkling element. It's easy to make and a crowd-pleaser.

What I like about this version is the addition of comforting holiday flavours, such as vanilla, cinnamon, clove and ginger, which complement pears perfectly. I used Bosc pears as they are a great fall-winter fruit to cook with and are a great addition to the spiced syrup.

I wanted to use a gin with equally spicy notes to accentuate warmth in the cocktail. Willibald Gin was a perfect choice as it is aged in American oak casks, like a whisky, giving it caramel and vanilla notes, as well as spicy aromas from traditional botanicals and spices, such as juniper and cardamom.

The addition of lemon juice adds a bit of tartness to cut the sweetness of the syrup. It also brightens and heightens the flavours in the cocktail. Finally, it wouldn't be a party without Prosecco, an Italian sparkling wine. I chose to use Bottega Vino Dei Poeti Prosecco, as it is light-bodied and dry with delicate notes of apple and pear. This makes the cocktail light, refreshing and sparkling without added sweetness.

A Perfect Pearing is fun to make. To save time, juice lemons six to eight hours before serving and keep juice and syrup in squeeze bottles for an easier pour. Double up the recipe in one shaker to pour two cocktails at a time and then top with Prosecco.

Make it a mocktail: Remove the gin and top with club soda or ginger ale, instead of Prosecco.



Melissa Baumunk is a bartender at The Jane Bond on Princess Street West in Waterloo.

A Perfect Pearing

1 ounce Willibald Gin

1 ounce Spiced pear syrup*

¾ ounces lemon juice

2 ounces Bottega Vino Dei Poeti Prosecco

1 vanilla bean split

1 tbsp grated ginger

1 large cinnamon stick (broken in half)

1 tsp whole clove

1. In a saucepan, bring sugar, water, vanilla bean, ginger and pears to a simmer. Stir to dissolve sugar and let simmer for 30 minutes.

2. Place cinnamon and clove in a cheese-cloth bag or a loose-leaf tea bag. Strain syrup after 30 minutes and add bag to hot syrup to steep for 20 minutes. Remove bag and let cool.

Makes 16 servings.

Will keep up to two weeks in refrigerator.