

ADVANTAGE

Live Unconventionally



EMBRAER MAGAZINE
VOL 23 ➔ 2024

Action Shot

A tribute to sports by
Photographer Anna Szilágyi

Jet In Style

Embraer's newly expanded
global customer design center

Land Of A Thousand Hills

A wild escape to uncover
Rwanda's mountain gorillas

CRAFTING ZERO

With the uptake of sobriety and a growing penchant for alcohol-free alternatives, mixologists and beverage designers are getting creative, proving that zero-proof can be artistic, enticing and even more sustainable

Zero-proof pairings are on the rise, and surging global sales for new non-alcoholic spirits and wines mean that beverage teams at fine dining restaurants have more options than ever to accommodate sober or occasionally abstinent diners. As more people look for alcohol-free alternatives to wine pairings, restaurants are becoming more conscientious and inclusive of these lifestyle choices and investing more time and effort into great non-alcoholic beverage options. Oftentimes, this means coming up with creative mocktails using juice, tea and broth, along with the plethora of non-alcoholic wines and botanical spirits on the market, like Wilderton and Lyre.

At Disfrutar in Barcelona, the team uses a Girovap distillation machine to dealcoholize the wine pairing in-house. The labor-intensive process using all the same bottles as the regular wine pairing means that the non-alcoholic pairing is even more expensive. DelecTable in Madison, Wisconsin takes a different approach, crafting mini craft mocktails for each dish in the eight-course tasting menu. Many of these drinks incorporate shrubs and syrups that they sell in an adjacent storefront.

MINI MOCKTAILS

“We approach zero-proof pairings almost exactly how we approach the wine pairings,” said DelecTable’s Beverage Director, Tyler Archambo. “We will most commonly try to highlight and tie in a flavor found within the ingredients of the dish, such as the blueberry sour paired with blistered blueberries on the caviar ice cream waffle course or the cherry faux-hattan paired with the cherry gastrique on the duck breast.”

Once he selects a base flavor, Archambo considers how much acidity or sweetness is appropriate, followed by the density of the drink. “Do we want something that matches the weight of the dish or something that contrasts it?” Archambo asked. The product cost for DelecTable’s zero-proof pairings are similar to wine, but they require significantly more preparation time. At this point, Owner Justin Gibson says that the zero-proof pairings are a labor of love and purpose.

“We regularly have people who are pregnant, people engaging in sober lifestyles or even children



At Lazy Bear in San Francisco, the non-alcoholic beverage pairing is an opportunity to reduce waste and highlight the produce of Northern California

that dine with us,” Gibson said. “If we are going to be true to our mission, then it is important that we do what we reasonably can to provide that exceptional experience to everybody that walks in our doors. It has been very meaningful to many of our patrons.”

TEA TIME

Many restaurants have found success incorporating teas into non-alcoholic pairings, as an ingredient to add flavor and tannins without sugar. “Teas’ exceptional range of flavors and structure mean they are a perfect replacement for alcohol in cocktails,” said Beverage Director, Stevan Matthew Miller of Esmé in Chicago. “There is a different tea for any occasion.” Miller pairs the roasted, earthy sweetness of wuyi rock oolong tea with butternut squash, for example, and several herbal teas appear in his drink pairings as well. “Non-alcoholic pairings have the unique advantage of being bespoke for each dish,” he said. “A wine pairing is carefully selected, while a non-alcoholic pairing is carefully crafted.”



At Kaji in Kyoto, tea is used a few different ways to create complex and balanced non-alcoholic pairings. For example, *iribancha*, a smoky roasted tea, is sweetened with red wine syrup for a red wine dupe to complement *wagyu* beef with *kombu*-wrapped baked sweet potato. *Hojicha* is mixed with pineapple and mint for a twist on the classic Arnold Palmer, making a bright and refreshing match for toothsome dry-aged beets.

The team at Cycle in Tokyo makes their own kombuchas (effervescent fermented tea) as a key ingredient in their sophisticated drinks. Jasmine kombucha drizzled with burnt onion oil and decorated with fennel stalks pairs with a fava bean, pistachio and firefly squid dish. “Our jasmine kombucha gives a floral aroma and tropical fruit-like sweetness, which are not present in the dish,” explained Beverage Director, Kazuki Karita.



“Non-alcoholic pairings have the unique advantage of being bespoke for each dish. A wine pairing is carefully selected, while a non-alcoholic pairing is carefully crafted.”



Karita also makes an *assam* black tea and hibiscus kombucha as the base for a non-alcoholic drink with green pepper juice and tomato water to complement a cold seafood starter with radish and citrus. “This pairing is inspired by the *Gilda pintxo* (a small bar snack made with anchovy and olive) from the Basque region,” Karita said. “The *umami* flavor from fermentation reminds people of a flavor similar to briny *Gilda* when they drink it in their mouth with the dish.”

Bōm in New York also includes several teas, like *omija* tea from South Korea, cold-steeped *pu-erh* tea from Yunnan, China and South Korean plum flower tea in their non-alcoholic pairing.

ZERO WASTE

At Lazy Bear in San Francisco, the non-alcoholic beverage pairing is an opportunity to get creative and cross-utilize ingredients from the kitchen to reduce waste and highlight the produce of Northern California. For example, apple skins leftover from an apple pie dessert are used to create a Korean-style syrup called *cheong*. The skins are extracted to bring out their natural and earthy flavors. Leftover mushrooms are also repurposed by dehydrating them and using them to create a cold-brewed tea that adds body and complexity

to the drink. This apple cordial with dried chanterelles and *porcini* mushrooms is paired with dry-aged Liberty duck and duck liver mousse with cherry *mostarda* (an Italian candied fruit condiment) and fennel.

“We didn’t want it to just be faux alcoholic drinks, or six different juices,” said Lazy Bear Beverage Director, Jacob Brown. “We work hand-in-hand with the culinary team to develop techniques to express these ingredients in a way that truly enhances the dining experience.”

For another drink, leftover carrots are juiced and clarified, then mixed with a foraged eucalyptus syrup and Lyre’s Agave to bring out the earthy flavor of the carrots for a uniquely refreshing drink that is even garnished with a baby carrot to pair with coal-roasted Miyazaki *wagyu* ribeye served with barbecued carrots.

The world of non-alcoholic beverages is certainly booming, and in many ways more exciting for diners than traditional wine pairings. Savvy diners often order one alcoholic and non-alcoholic pairing per couple to compare and contrast with each dish. The possibilities are infinite and ambitious bar teams are determined that diners forgoing alcohol are not missing out on all the flourishes of a fine dining experience. ◀

Opposite (top): At Cycle in Tokyo, non-alcoholic pairings consist of a house-made kombucha infusion and tea to match the courses

Opposite (bottom): With the earth at the center of its culinary creation, Cycle begins its menu with special tapas representing the plant’s life cycles

Above: Fine dining restaurant Esmé in Chicago creates unique non-alcoholic beverages intentionally curated to highlight the food

IMAGES left page © Matteo Carassale, right page © Garrett Baumer