

Beyond bubbles

Get away from the typical champagne toast this year

BY **EMMA SCHKLOVEN**
 The Baltimore Sun

Nothing says New Year's Eve quite like some bubbly. But sometimes you want to take it up a notch. We asked area bartenders to create original cocktails that you can recreate at your own holiday party. Each of these cocktails is made with a \$20-or-less bottle of sparkling wine (what many would call champagne), so they won't break your party budget.

The Island Bubbilini

Jeff Levy, Tavern on the Hill

Levy loves to add gin to cocktails because he finds the ingredient so versatile, but he knows sometimes gin scares people. "Any time gin is incorporated, a lot of people run for the hills," Levy said. [But] using the blend of citrus flavors allows gin to be incorporated properly." Levy said gin also, "naturally enhances the dryness of champagne." He hopes his cocktail will help partiers ring in the new year right. "It is a fun cocktail that takes typical expectations of 'what to drink' and hopefully gives people new ideas to expand their drinking horizons when making cocktails at home," he said.

How to make the Island Bubbilini

- $\frac{2}{3}$ ounce gin
- $\frac{2}{3}$ ounce Midori
- $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce O3 Liqueur
- $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce limoncello
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces mango syrup
- 3 ounces Woodbridge by Robert Mondavi Extra Dry Sparkling Wine (approximately \$10)

Shake ingredients (except the sparkling wine) with ice and pour into sugar-rimmed champagne flute or wine glass. Top with sparkling wine.

The King of Hearts (punch)

Jon Carroll, Oliver Speck's

Carroll describes himself as a whiskey and beer guy, not a cocktail man. So he when he created a drink for us, he wanted to make something that would appeal to different tastes. He describes the drink as a "holiday-themed Whiskey Smash." It's your perfect party punch. "[The] sparkling wine and pomegranate juice mellow the whiskey, and the rosemary adds a nice earthiness," Carroll said. "But hey, there is still whiskey in it, and I'm cool to that."

How to make the King of Hearts

- 1 liter whiskey — Carroll prefers Bulleit Rye
- 25 ounces pomegranate juice
- 10 ounces lemon juice
- Pomegranate seeds
- 6 big sprigs fresh rosemary
- 25 ounces Pierre Larousse Blanc De Blanc (approximately \$8)

In a large punch bowl, combine whiskey, pomegranate and lemon juice. Add champagne to bowl or to each drink (the carbonation will last longer if you top each drink off). Garnish with pomegranate seeds and fresh rosemary sprigs. Yields about 90 ounces.

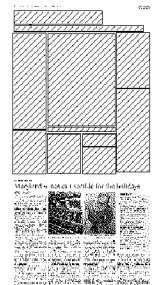
The Eastern Sparkle

Aaron Joseph, Wit & Wisdom

Joseph said he "wanted to put a sexy twist on classic champagne by blending sparkling wine with bright, citrus flavors." What really makes this drink special is Wit & Wisdom's homemade kumquat-coriander syrup. "New Year's is a great time to try something fresh and exciting," Joseph said. This sophisticated flavor palate will fit right in with the glitz and glamour of your New Year's Eve party. "It's fun, festive and chic; everything a special-occasion cocktail should be," Joseph said.

To make Wit & Wisdom's homemade Kumquat-Coriander Syrup (serves four guests)

- 12 kumquats
- $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of coriander seeds
- 1 cup of white granulated sugar
- 1 cup of water



Boil water and add sugar to make simple syrup; stir until sugar dissolves. Add kumquats and coriander seeds; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and let simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Strain ingredients.

How to make the Eastern Sparkle

$\frac{3}{4}$ ounce homemade kumquat-coriander syrup

1 mint leaf
1 kumquat

One of the following sparkling wines: Ferrari Brut Blanc de Blanc (approximately

\$19); Codorniu "Anna" Brut Cava (approximately \$12); Domaine Chandon Brut Classic (approximately \$18)

Add homemade kumquat-coriander syrup. Fill glass with sparkling wine. Garnish with fresh mint and kumquat.

Un Bisou

The staff at Thames Street Oyster House

What's better than that perfect New Year's Eve kiss right at midnight? How about a drink that lets you taste that romanticism all night long. "Un Bisou" is French for "a kiss." "[Un Bisou] has some bite while remaining very drinkable, a floral note without being too sweet, and is good for the ladies and gentlemen alike," said Candace Beattie, owner of Thames Street Oyster House. So cheers to the romantic in you!

How to make Un Bisou

1½ ounce Tanqueray gin
1 ounce St. Germain
1 ounce fresh-squeezed orange juice
1 teaspoon lemon juice
Orange bitters

Sprig of thyme

Charles de Fere Reserve Blanc de Blancs Brut (approximately \$12)

Fill a cocktail glass with ice, add the first four ingredients above and stir well. Add two dashes of orange bitters, top with Charles de Fere, stir and garnish with a sprig of thyme.

The Root Beer Royale

Jay Reese, Beatnik Bar and Restaurant

Reese created a drink that is inspired by a childhood classic — the root beer float. "The texture and flavor make it unique," Reese said. Part of that special texture comes from the Pierre Larousse, which, when added on top, foams just like the ice cream part of a float. It's an adult way to slurp soda. "This is the perfect drink for New Years because it tastes great and is full of life," Reese said.

How to make the Root Beer Royale

1 organic egg (white) *

1 teaspoon simple syrup

1 teaspoon heavy cream

2 ounces Art in the Age "Root" Organic Liqueur

1 ounce dark rum (Beatnik uses Kraken)

Fantinel Prosecco Extra Dry (approximately \$12)

Large ice cubes

Chill large martini glass. Open the Fantinel and have it ready. In a tall cocktail shaker, add the egg, simple syrup, heavy cream, liqueur and rum, in that order. Fill shaker with large ice cubes and shake ingredients vigorously for at least 30 seconds until the metal shaker bottom is frosted and getting too cold to hold. Strain into chilled martini glass 2/3 full and top with the prosecco.

*The Food and Drug Administration offers advice and warnings about consuming raw eggs; visit foodsafety.gov for details.