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## Mixology

### Local Team-Ups And Organic Drinking

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Local produce, local beer, local spirits – new drink menus showcasing products sourced from as close as across the street have quickly gone from the occasional oddity to one of the most popular new approaches to establishing a bar's drink creds. It doesn't always work, although there's an argument to be made that since most of the whiskey coming out of Kentucky is so smooth and well-made, you might get closer to the flavor of a real classic cocktail using some of the often harsh and woody new American whiskeys. That aside, watching how bartenders develop drinks with local products tells you a lot about their skills.



In a unique approach to the concept, two artisanal New England producers, Bully Boy Distillers and Bonnie's Jams, partnered with leading Boston-area mixologists recently to design springtime jam cocktails using their products.

Bartenders from Boston's Eastern Standard Kitchen & Drinks and Island Creek Oyster Bar, Cambridge's Russell House Tavern, and Hyannis-based Pain D'Avignon, the drinks combine the locally-made small-batch spirits and seasonal fruit-based jams, although the jams aren't exclusively regional – while Massachusetts berries are used, other fruits come from Michigan, California, New Jersey and other states. But they are locally-made jams, and seasonal to boot, made with a lot less sugar than most other commercial preserves. One of the company's flavors, raspberry lime rickey, seems custom-made for cocktails.

Bully Boy Distillers, producing for almost three years now, debuted as the first craft distillery in Boston since Prohibition. Today, they produce white whiskey, straight whiskey, vodka, Boston rum and white rum, and having experimented with spirit infusions throughout 2012, founders Will and Dave Willis were looking for their next recipe inspiration when they discovered Bonnie's Jams.



What's the result? At Eastern Standard, bar manager Kevin Martin came up with Toast & Jam - Bully Boy's White Rum, bitters, Bonnie's Strawberry Rhubarb Jam, and Champagne.

Sam Gabrielli, bar manager at Russell House Tavern in Cambridge, developed Secrets That You Keep (white whiskey, applejack and red pepper jelly, lemon). The possibilities, once you've got a preserve with controlled sugar, are endless, starting with versions of Salvatore Calabrese's classic Breakfast Cocktail and building strength, flavor and acidity as you go.

It's this sort of partnership among different purveyors, bars and bartenders, that can really help develop a locavore cocktail scene. Local tastes matter, of course – in New York, for instance, the tendency to serve strong and more bitter and astringent drinks might mean that partnerships with bitters producers and spirit makers would make more sense. In California, where the availability of so much fresh produce, especially citrus, might make jams superfluous, fresh puree combinations might be better team mates for local spirits.

But as so many regions and cities in the US take on their own artisan food ideas – in Brooklyn, for instance, it's not just booze and bitters but also pickles that get loads of local attention - natural team-ups seem to be the next coming thing.

One other way to develop a stand-out locavore menu is through the healthful cocktail trend, based on both "green" products and overall health trends (though it seems to many an unusual concern when paired with alcohol, the general concern with organic products and other beneficial ingredients can't be underestimated).

In Los Angeles, cocktail wiz Marcos Tello has designed a bunch of drinks for Feed Body + Soul, and the seasonal list gives a great example of how to walk the line. The Spiced Pear Toddy (Terquet Armagnac, Peak Spirits Pear Eau de Vie, housemade organic pear cider), the Meyer Lemon Gimlet (Crop Gin, organic Meyer lemon-infused coconut nectar, organic Meyer lemon juice), the Seasonal (Persimmon) Caipirinha (Cuca Fresca Cachaça, organic fuyu persimmon, organic limes), the Satsuma Whiskey Smash (Koval Wheat Whiskey, organic yacón syrup, organic mint, organic Satsuma) and the Celery Root Collins (123 Tequila Blanco, Imbue Vermouth, organic agave nectar, organic celery root juice, Q Tonic), all showcase organic, housemade, fresh and low levels of added sweetness. Which, among other things, should make it easier to enjoy one more.

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