

Quest to find best Bloody Mary ends at Peanut Bar

By Kathryn Reed

Sometimes I hate to stop doing research for a story. Maybe there will have to be sequels to this story.

Friends and I were in search of the best Bloody Mary in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Well, we didn't get that far. Most of the research was done on the South Shore. My apologies to the other regions that were not tapped into as well as they could have been.

Years ago you could not have paid me to drink a Bloody Mary. I grew up not liking tomato juice. Vodka was never one of my favorite alcohols.



Sarah Moss is working on selling her Bloody Mary mix.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

Somewhere along the way my taste buds evolved. I love Bloody Mary's. But this little taste test proved they vary in taste.

My sister, Pam, and I started a tradition where we would have

a Bloody Mary together at the airport whenever we flew together. I like to carry on that tradition with whoever my flying companion is. Sue and I always have one at the Reno airport.

Sue and I have decided the best one we've had during this taste test trial is at Turn 3, also known as the Peanut Bar, in South Lake Tahoe.

Sarah Moss, who bought the bar 13 years ago at age 21, doesn't remember how the recipe came about. But what she did know is that she wanted each Bloody Mary at her bar to be consistently good. That's why she makes up batches of the stuff by the gallon.

She won't divulge what goes in the mix or just how much celery salt, or steak sauce or horse radish is involved.

"Soon, hopefully, you'll be able to buy it," Moss revealed on our repeat visit last weekend to make sure this was our No. 1 choice. "I'm trying to package it. They will be testing acidic levels next week."

Moss is working with a company in Auburn.

It will be made with all natural ingredients. She'd like to sell the BM mix locally and in stores like Whole Foods.

Not only are the Bloody Mary's fantastic – the price will have you ordering more than one. With a beer back they are \$5.25. On Sundays the price drops to \$3.50 – which also includes the beer back.

The bar is in the Kings Trading Post next to Overland Meat on Highway 50.

Across town in the Heavenly Village is another tasty, well-priced (\$4.95) BM. Brenda, Sue and I all recommend the Driftwood Cafe.



Driftwood
Cafe's Bloody
Mary's are
pretty.
Photo/Brenda
Knox

“Asked for spicy and it was,” Brenda said. She also found this to be one of the better-looking BMs she sampled. It was also her favorite.

Sue and I rated the BMs at Blue Angel Café on Ski Run Boulevard (\$5) a hair better than Driftwood.

At the Log Cabin in Kings Beach, the \$6 BM is a wonderful complement to breakfast.

The Beacon at Camp Rich used to be where I would go for a BM all the time. But the last few times the \$8 Burnt Betty – the spicy BM that is 50 cents more than the regular one – has only been average.

Pam found the one at the Beacon a bit nasty, with her guess being they put olive juice in the mix. She doesn't do olives at all.

Though I'm usually a beer drinker on the slopes, I changed that up a bit this season in my quest to sample a Bloody Mary or two on the slopes.

The one that nearly had me crawling down the slopes was at Summit at Northstar.

My notes read, "Oh my, the double is deadly, especially with only a banana in my system."

I read the description on the board about the double Bloody Mary, but mistakenly thought I would have to specifically order it. I thought if I just ordered a Bloody Mary, I would get a single. Wrong. I was a bit loopy as I stood in line waiting to order food to absorb this \$14.88 concoction. Good, but way too much alcohol for me.

My friend Brenda had the \$11.75 BM at Heavenly's Tamarack Lodge. She was complimentary of the concoction, especially that the Worcestershire was added and not just a pre-mix. She also liked the salt around the rim.

The worst BM that Sue, Brenda and I had was at the Tiki Bar at Sierra-at-Tahoe. Flavor was horrible, more ice than liquid, cup was small. And they cost more than \$10 each.

We were super disappointed because Sue and I love the ones at West Bowl at Sierra. Not only are they worth ordering, but at \$8.50 they are less than the ones at the main lodge.

I tend to like my BMs spicy, but the bartender at Alpine said I would be happy without any extras. The \$8 concoction was spicy enough, but I rated it a "fair." Sue liked it better than I did, but was not wowed.

Now the \$7.50 BM at Mt. Rose's Winter's Creek Lodge is one I will order again. It was super spicy. At that time, Sue was leaning toward it being the best one yet.