

Beer cocktail – an old drink is new again

By Troy Patterson, Slate

The big wet story of this incandescent summer concerns your ice-cold beer, America. Ask yourself: Has that pint in your hand been sugared or spiced or juiced up? Repurposed as a mixer? Elevated with a jigger of liquor?



All the papers are onto you. News flows from all corners about happy marriages of stout and bourbon and about elderflower liqueurs fragrantly flirting with pale ales. Last May, Frank Bruni reported on “the advance of beer cocktails” (called such “whether or not the drinks include hard liquor”); this May brought notice of the book *Beer Cocktails: 50 Superbly Crafted Cocktails that Liven Up Your Lagers and Ales* (including the Maru—a fruity booze-up inside your Sapporo). The mass-market gateway to the new frontier stands in St. Louis, where Anheuser-Busch HQ has launched Shock Top Lemon Shandy, a wheat beer “perfectly complemented by spices and natural lemonade flavor.” And meanwhile the kids on happening Hillhurst Avenue in Los Angeles are infusing gin with hops, mixing it to make “Gin & Chronic,” and telling LA Weekly that it evokes a cottonmouthed hint of pilsner.

America, you drink 20 gallons of beer per head per year, and you’re definitely adulterating some of it. Yet, despite the efforts of cunning commerce and supple craft, the beer cocktail has never taken off as a respectable beverage. This is uncharted territory, exciting and dangerous. I sense your keen thirst for helpful hints, pro tips, and historical context.

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