

Local holiday cocktails

By John M. Guilfoil

today

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What is it about the holidays that just makes us want to suck down alcohol like so many candy canes and fatty meals?

Whatever the reasons, there are plenty of fine alternatives to the old brandy-in-egg-nog mixture that I can never seem to think about without throwing up a little in my mouth.

I found some cocktails that not only whet the whistle, but they just give you that warm, fuzzy, holiday feeling. You know, the kind that makes you forget your troubles like that speeding ticket from the Statey who didn't want to hear your lame ass excuses on the Pike, or the hot blonde with the rack that never called you back last week, even though she seemed totally excited when you bought her a drink down at one of the Faneuil Hall bars and gave you her number before her giggling gaggle of girlfriends dragged her to the next bar.

Drink up, my friends.

If you happen to find yourself down in Dot, don't miss the Ashmont Grill. Not only is the food great and the service fantastic, but the drinks shouldn't be missed. The Berkshires Manhattan is a vanilla-infused bourbon mixed with apple cider reduction, Markers Mark, and orange bitters. This one is really different because it mixes the flavors and really hits the pallet. And one for you rummies: The Ashmont Apple Toddy is steamed apple cider, brown sugar, and Captain Morgan.

If you really want to try something wacky, and a little scary at first glance, UNI Sashimi Bar in The Eliot Hotel on Comm. Ave. has a \$17.346 Below. Its Hammer & Sickle Vodka straight up with liquid nitrogen. By the way, if you drank liquid nitrogen straight, you'd die, so don't try to copy this one at your next party.

For a hint of high class, UNI also has the Monarda: St. Remy Cognac, bergamot syrup, whiskey bitters and a splash of Louis Bouillot Cremant de Bourgogne (a pink sparkler).

If you're a fan of pumpkin pies and all those great holiday desserts and need a cocktail to pair with them, head north to Za Za in Saugus. The Pumpkin Patch Martini combines vanilla vodka, pumpkin spice liquor, cream de cacao, and pumpkin pie filling and finishes it with a dollop of whipped cream and a candy corn to create a great spiced after dinner drink that's good with dessert. But let's be real, you're really going to Saugus to scoff down some Sonic burgers. If you class it up at Za Za afterward, we won't tell anyone.



Back on the subject of rum for a minute, I always lumped rum in with tequila as a summer booze. It's in those hilarious buckets of booze you can buy at the supermarket, and you put it in daiquiris. And I do enjoy the occasional Captain and Diet. But I never really thought of rum as something to reach for during the cold weather months. Burtons Grill in Fenway found a way to change my mind. The Burtons Hot Buttered Cider combines Captain Morgan, Stoli Gala Apple, Navan Cognac, apple cider, cinnamon, sugar, and butter and makes something that will warm your stomach. It's \$9 and available through December 31. Here's how you can make it yourself:

For one drink, you need:

75 oz Captain Morgan
.25 oz Navan Cognac
.5 oz Stoli Gala Apple
1 oz Monin Cinnamon Simple Syrup
6 oz Hot Apple cider
1 100 scoop of whipped butter (yes, actual butter)
Cinnamon sugar rimmer

In an Irish coffee mug, rim with cinnamon sugar. Combine all ingredients except butter in mug. Stir to mix. Garnish with a scoop of butter.

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