



COCKTAIL MASTER CLASS:

The Unexpurgated History of the Martini In Eight Glasses with Nathan Gerdes, CSS

Bartender and Host Nathan Gerdes, dubbed America's Most Imaginative Bartender in 2012 by Bombay Sapphire Gin, will lead us through an entertaining and tasteful tour of the entire unexpurgated history of that most iconic of cocktails, the Martini.

For purposes of consistency, Bombay Sapphire Gin will be used throughout our gin-soaked seminar. Thanks to Bacardi USA and Bombay for their gracious donation of spirit.

Grey Goose Vodka will be used in the Vesper. Again, our thanks to Bacardi USA.

Woodford Reserve Double Oaked Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey, donated by Brown-Forman Corporation, will be used for the whiskey in The Manhattan.

Vermouth will also remain consistent with both Martini & Rossi Sweet Vermouth and Martini & Rossi Dry Vermouth, courtesy of Bacardi USA.

1. The Martinez 1864
2. The Manhattan 1872
3. The Martini 1888
4. The Dry Martini 1896
5. The Gibson 1898
6. The Rockefeller Martini 1911
7. The Vesper 1953
8. The Extra-Dry Martini Circa 2014

The Martinez 1864

Hang around bartenders for very long and you'll hear the name "Professor Jerry Thomas" pop up frequently. Dubbed the "Father of American Mixology", Thomas not only created some great cocktails but also collected what were then oral traditions and compiled the first printed cocktail book, *The Bar-Tender's Guide*, in 1862. In the 1887 edition, Thomas told the story of inventing the Martinez, now considered a martini pre-cursor, at the Occidental Hotel, saloon and gambling house in San Francisco. Thomas' original recipe is 2 oz. gin, ¾ oz. sweet vermouth, ¼ oz. maraschino liqueur, dash of Angostura Bitters, stir, and serve up, lemon twist for garnish.

The Manhattan 1872

As with everything else in mixology, there are several foundation myths and legends on the Manhattan. The one that most people agree on is the Manhattan 1872. This basic Manhattan recipe is now considered to be 2 parts American whiskey (Rye, Bourbon or Canadian), 1 part sweet (red) vermouth, and a dash of Angostura Bitters. Maraschino or brandied cherry optional. May be served "up" or "on the rocks".

The Martini 1888

The first known mention of a "martini" cocktail is in Harry Johnson's *New and Improved Bartenders' Manual* in 1888. It may surprise you. First, 1 ½ ounces of Old Tom Gin was specified, along with an equal part (1 ½ oz.) sweet vermouth, with 2 dashes of simple syrup, 2 dashes of Boker's Bitters, and one dash of orange curacao.

The Dry Martini 1896

There's endless debate on everything...everything...involved in a Martini. Nonetheless there is a fairly well accepted standard for what constitutes the original "Dry Martini"---that is, a martini using dry vermouth rather than sweet. The first known mention of the Dry Martini was in the book "Stuart's Fancy Drinks and how to make them" in 1896. Attributed to Wayne Collins, it was composed of "2 jiggers of gin, ¾ jigger dry vermouth, ¼ jigger Cointreau, and 2 dashes of bitters".

INTERLUDE: The Garnish

Another volatile arguing point with the Martini is whether to garnish, how to garnish, and what to garnish with. The standard Martini suggests a twist of lemon peel or an olive (stuffed with whatever you wish). The Gibson was naught more than a martini served with a cocktail onion. The Rockefeller uses both an olive and a lemon twist. You may decide you wish an orange twist, along with orange bitters; if so, ask for it that way. It's your cocktail. One point of observed etiquette: if you order

more than one olive in your Martini, then a bartender might silently scoff at you for dining out of the garnish tray, not drinking. (But it's still your cocktail.)

The Gibson 1898

As with other versions during the evolution of the martini, the Gibson is surrounded by various and sundry origin stories, attributed at various times and places to a writer/artist, an onion farmer, a diplomat and an investment banker. It seems the best story (or at least best documented) is the one from San Francisco in 1898, where businessman Allan P. Gibson made it popular at the Bohemian Club. Why the onion? No one really knows for certain. One story maintains it was to differentiate it from the (then) much sweeter regular martini; another that a savvy banker would ask that he be served with clear water, with the onion letting him know which drink was his, so that he could remain sober while customers and competitors became tipsy. However it went, the Gibson eventually became the preferred drier style...until the Martini gin/vermouth ratios began to evolve to the same drier style.

The Rockefeller Martini 1911

One of the many (perhaps hundreds) of extant variations of the Martini hearkens back to the Gilded Age, when the classic idea of a cocktail was spirit/vermouth/bitters/ice. Still is, or is again, by the way. That's the definition of a cocktail or, as it was originally dubbed, a "bittered sling." The Rockefeller Martini was invented at the Knickerbocker Hotel in 1911 by a bartender fittingly named Martini di Arma di Taggia for billionaire John D. Rockefeller. The recipe calls for gin, dry vermouth, bitters (orange bitters are likely the most popular and appropriate here), stirred, served up, garnished with an olive *and* a lemon twist.

The Vesper 1953—James Bond's Martini

Ian Fleming's creation of "Bond. James Bond." popularized, among other things, a new...um...twist on the classic Martini, which he named for his then-current love interest, Vesper Lynd. Alas, Ms. Lind died, but The Vesper lives on, originally a blend of 3 parts Gordon's Gin, 1 part vodka, 1/2 part Lillet Blanc, shaken by request, up, with a lemon twist.

Okay, now we have to talk about shaken versus stirred. Most martinis are made by stirring the ingredients with ice in a container, then straining into a glass. Professional bartenders, as a rule, do not shake martinis, and consider the agitation of the ice and spirit to cause too much dilution. They stir. So when Bond/Fleming specified "shaken, not stirred" it caused something of a kerfluffle in martini circles. On the other hand, in the current Casino Royale with Daniel Craig, when the rather put upon and preoccupied Bond orders his second

cocktail and the bartender says “Shaken, or stirred?” Bond fires back “Do I look like I give a damn?”

The Extra-Dry Martini Circa 2014

Martini aficionados can be the most precariously demanding of cocktail drinkers (and some might say the most pretentious); some of the greatest debates (i.e., loud arguments) are on how “dry” a Martini should be---that is to say, what the ratio of gin and dry vermouth should be. Which, of course, then leads to precisely which gins and which dry white vermouths should be conjoined. It’s a preference thing, quite honestly. So order what you wish, try what you wish. But no less exalted an expert than the eminently knowledgeable scholar/writer of the spirit world, David Wondrich, has often maintained that if you want straight ice-cold gin, be man enough to order it without resorting to the ridiculous “just wave the vermouth over the glass in passing” jape.

Wondrich’s favorite recipe is based on the design by, um, fiery bartender-personality Albert Trummer, who has led a distinguished though somewhat controversial career. His firm recipe on the Extra-Dry Martini is pretty straightforward: 4 parts gin, 1 part dry vermouth, very cold, stirred, strained, up, with one Spanish olive.

Nathan Gerdes



Nathan Gerdes is a talented and energetic craft bartender devoted to learning everything he can about his chosen profession. He’s a practitioner, a cocktail historian, and a teacher.

He is a member of the United States Bartender Guild, and Vice-President of the Oregon Bartender Guild.

Nathan holds the CSS, and has taught both CSS courses and spirits classes at Mt. Hood Community College in Portland, Oregon. When he’s not making cocktails or teaching about them, he travels incessantly throughout the world, always learning about and experiencing the culture, the cuisine, and the wine and spirits of the places he explores. Many of these elements find their way into his highly imaginative cocktails.

He is known by his peers for being a gifted craft bartender, fiercely knowledgeable about his craft, and competing successfully in numerous cocktail competitions. Most notably, Nathan was selected as Bombay Sapphire’s Most Imaginative Bartender in America for winning the grueling multi-level cocktail competition in 2012 with his final of several imaginative cocktails, the Hanoi Sour, a Bombay Sapphire Gin sour with the concentrated home-made botanical essences of Southeast Asia in general and Vietnamese Phö in particular.