

# COGNAC CONNECTION CHALLENGE 2020



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SPIRIT DRINK  
WITH EUROPEAN  
GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION



The Bureau National Interprofessionnel du Cognac (BNIC)—the entity promoting, protecting and developing the Cognac Geographical Indication and culture—created the online Cognac Connection program to educate and inspire cocktail professionals on the Cognac region and spirit, as well as to provide support during challenging times.

The heart of the campaign, the Cognac Connection Challenge, was a cocktail competition where professional US-based bartenders were asked to submit unique and inspiring cognac-based recipes.

Partners Lynnette Marrero and Ivy Mix of Speed Rack, Cognac Educator Kellie Thorn (Beverage Director of Hugh Acheson Restaurants) and VinePair spirits writer Tim McKirdy had the delicate task of narrowing down 120 entries to 20 semifinalist cocktails to re-create and blind taste.

The ten bartenders who best showcased why Cognac works well in cocktails were selected as the official winners. Their wonderful recipes are included in this e-book for you to mix and enjoy at home.

*Cheers!*

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# SUMMER THYME

*Created by Meghann Allred*

Grilled peach-infused VS cognac\* — 1.5 ounces

Moscatel — ¾ ounce

Lemon juice — ¼ ounce

Saline solution\*\*

Garnish: Fresh sprig of thyme

- 1 | Add infused cognac, moscatel, and lemon juice to a shaker. Long pour from one shaker to the other to aerate and blend, then add ice and stir to chill.
- 2 | Rinse a chilled coupe with the saline then discard the excess.
- 3 | Strain the cocktail into the coupe and finish with 3 drops of the saline solution.
- 4 | Garnish with a sprig of thyme.

*\*Grilled peach-infused cognac:*

*Cognac VS — 4 ounces*

*Peach wedges — 6 (1 wedge = approx. 50 grams), can use fresh, jarred or canned*

*Grill the peaches until you see those wonderful black grill marks, about 4 minutes on each side. Fresh off the grill, add 6 slices of peaches to 4oz of cognac. Let set until room temp or longer for more flavor. Fine strain through cheesecloth or a tea strainer and bottle.*

*\*\*Saline Solution:*

*Hot water — 2 ounces*

*Sprigs of dried thyme — 4 (8 if the herbs are a bit old)  
Fleur de Sel — ¼ teaspoon (sea salt is a fine substitution)*

*Walnut oil — 10 drops (walnut is preferred but you could sub in a pecan or almond if you already have it in the house)*

*Stir all ingredients together until the salt has dissolved and the aroma of the thyme comes through strong. Strain and bottle.*



## MEGHANN ALLRED

 @gem\_cocktail\_creations

Left Bank Bar & Restaurant – York, PA

*Meghann Allred bartends at Left Bank in York, Pennsylvania, a restaurant focused on seasonal flavors and sustainable practices. Meghann previously traveled the world dancing and performing aerial work onboard a cruise line. She finds that bartending allows her the same creativity that performing did and takes particular interest in crafting sustainable and lower-proof cocktails as well as mocktails. A highlight of Meghann's bartending career was earning certification from the International Bartender Association, followed by winning the regional championship of the 2019 Manhattan Experience. She's also BARSMArts-certified and continues to take part in virtual USBG trainings and judge cocktail competitions. Above all, Meghann enjoys meeting and being inspired by those in her industry.*

# CITY LIMITS

*Created by Mara Bethel*

Cognac XO — 1 ounce

Muscadine-infused Dolin dry vermouth\* — 1 ounce

Apricot eau de vie — ½ ounce

Salers aperitif — ½ ounce

Muscadine syrup — 1 teaspoon

Peychaud's bitters — 4 dashes

Garnish: Lemon peel

1 | Add all of the ingredients, except the cognac, to an ice-cold mixing glass.

2 | Fill the glass with ice and top with the cognac. Stir for 20-30 seconds until cold.

3 | Strain into an ice-cold coupe. Express a lemon peel over the cocktail and discard the peel.

*\*Muscadine-infused Dolin Dry (sous vide method):*

*Dolin Dry vermouth — 400 ml  
(de-seeded) muscadine — 200 grams*

*Add vermouth and muscadine to a sealing or zipper lock plastic bag (any name brand will work) and remove as much air as possible from the bag. Sous vide for 2 hours at 140 F (60 C) degrees. Remove from bath and place bag in ice water. Strain through fine mesh/cheesecloth. Refrigerate.*

*\*Muscadine-infused Dolin Dry (cold infusion method):*

*Dolin Dry vermouth — 400 ml  
(de-seeded) muscadine — 200 grams*

*Place ingredients in blender. Pulse 1-3 times, but not more than 3 times (do not blend, we just want to coarsely break up the muscadines in the vermouth very quickly). Seal in a container and refrigerate for 24 hours. After 24 hours, strain through fine mesh/cheesecloth. Refrigerate.*



## MARA BETHEL

 @maradrinkado

Freelance Bartender — Atlanta, GA

*Mara Bethel has bartended for over a decade, collaborating with some of the most talented and insightful people in the hospitality industry. An all-around beverage enthusiast, Mara is also an artist and activist. She believes that a good drink made with warmth, creativity and expertise is not only nourishing for the soul, but can also cultivate relationships and foster a sense of community. Mara's passion for taking care of people can be seen in the commitment and care she puts into her cocktails.*



# ELEGANCE OF THE SEA

*Created by Lance Bowman*

Cognac Napoléon — 2 ounces

Verjus blanc — ½ ounce

Suze — ¼ ounce

Genmaicha syrup\* — ¼ ounce

Salted nori tincture\*\* — 3 dashes

Garnish: Cocktail onion, shaved parmesan cheese

- 1| Chill a coupe glass.
- 2| Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass, add a generous scoop of ice, preferably Kold-Draft, and quickly stir for 25 seconds.
- 3| Using a julep strainer strain into the chilled coupe, holding the spout of the mixing glass as close to the glass as possible to preserve the cocktail's texture.
- 4| Garnish the drink with a skewered cocktail onion and serve the drink with a little shaved parmesan cheese on the side.

\*Genmaicha Syrup:

Steep 8 grams Genmaicha (Japanese Green Tea & toasted rice, available at any tea shop and many grocery stores) in 500ml of hot (~160 degrees) water for 5 minutes. Strain. Measure the volume of tea and add to it an equal amount of white sugar. Stir to dissolve. Allow to cool and then bottle, label, and date.

\*\*Salted Nori Tincture:

In a jar, combine 1 gram sea salt with 200ml brandy and shake to dissolve. Add 5 grams nori (dried seaweed) and let infuse for 4 hours. Strain and transfer to a dasher bottle.



## LANCE BOWMAN

 @thecincinnatiarman

Maya Hospitality Group – Charlotte, NC

*Lance Bowman is the Beverage Director of the Maya Hospitality Group in Charlotte, NC, where he's currently focusing on two new concepts which include an intimate cocktail bar showcasing sustainable and environmentally-friendly practices. A 19-year veteran of the hospitality industry, Lance was Beverage Director at Japp's Since 1879 in Cincinnati, named one of Esquire magazine's "Best Bars in America" in 2016. He also helmed the beverage program at the now closed Yusbo in Chicago, part of Matthias Merger's Folk Art Management Group, and worked at the company's other establishments including Billy Sunday, Old Irving Brewing Company, and Lucky Dorr.*

# SOLACE OF THE SUN

*Created by Jesse Cyr*

Cognac VS — 1.5 oz

Lemon juice — 3/4 oz

White port, preferably Ramos Pinto — 1/2 oz

Jasmine green tea syrup\* — 1/2 oz

Brut champagne — 1.5 oz

Garnish: mint sprigs and a reusable straw

- 1 | To a cocktail shaker filled with ice, add cognac, lemon juice, white port and green tea syrup.
- 2 | Fill with ice and shake briefly, about 3 or 4 seconds.
- 3 | Separate the tins and add the Champagne.
- 4 | Fine strain into a Collins glass with a tall, large Collins cube or Kold Draft cubes.
- 5 | Garnish with mint sprigs and a reusable straw.

*\*Jasmine Green Tea Syrup*

*White cane sugar — 1 cup*

*Hot, near boiling water — 3/4 cup*

*Loose-leaf jasmine green tea — 1 tbsp*

*Add the tea to the hot water and stir to incorporate. Let sit for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Fine strain and discard the used tea leaves. Add the sugar to the tea and stir until fully dissolved. Let cool, bottle, and refrigerate. Use within 2 weeks.*



## JESSE CYR

 @cocktailsbyjesse

Foreign National – Seattle, WA

*Jesse Cyr bartends at Foreign National in Seattle, WA, one of the city's top craft cocktail bars. A former actor, Jesse moved to Seattle from Los Angeles and found his first bar job at the award-winning Rob Roy, where he eventually became General Manager. Jesse then went on to help manage Navy Strength, the company's tropical/tiki-inspired bar. He was also the Beverage Director at downtown Seattle's The Charter Hotel, and ran the rooftop bar Fog Room. Jesse and his cocktails have been featured in numerous print and online outlets, including The Seattle Times, Zagat, Seattle Magazine, Eater, Thrillist and others. His cocktails have been mentioned by Tales of the Cocktail, King 5 News, and KOMO 4 News as well as credited in books such as "The One-Bottle Cocktail" (2018) and "Batch Cocktails" (2019).*



# SMELLS LIKE GOOD LUCK

*Created by Chelsea DeMark*

Cognac VSOP — 1.5 ounces

Chamomile tea\* — 3 ounces

Purple shamrock-nasturtium syrup\*\* — 1.5 ounces

Apple cider vinegar — 1 teaspoon

Garnish: Ground white pepper, fresh purple shamrock leaves and nasturtium leaves and flowers

1 | Add all ingredients to a mixing glass over ice and stir to chill.

2 | Pour over an ice spear in a highball glass or a large ice cube in a rocks glass.

3 | Garnish with a light sprinkle of ground white pepper and a bouquet of fresh purple shamrock, nasturtium leaf and flower.

*\*Chamomile Tea:*

*Heat 3 cups of water to 170 degrees Fahrenheit. Pour over 2 chamomile tea bags and steep for 4 minutes. Remove bags. Chill.*

*\*\*Purple Shamrock-Nasturtium Syrup:*

*In a blender, combine 2 cups of water, 10 sprigs of purple shamrock (aka good luck plant aka oxalis triangularis) with stems, 5 sprigs of nasturtium leaf, with stems, ½ cup cane sugar and a large pinch of ground white peppercorns. Transfer to a vacuum sealed bag, if available, and cook sous vide for 2 hours at 160 degrees Fahrenheit. If sous-vide is unavailable, simmer all ingredients together on low for 5 minutes to achieve similar colors and flavors. Let cool, run through chinois, followed by a lewis bag (or rack with a separatory funnel, if available). When properly filtered, syrup will be a semi-translucent purple color.*



## CHELSEA DEMARK

 @whatparadox

Quill at The Jefferson Hotel — Washington, DC

*Chelsea DeMark bartends at Quill at The Jefferson Hotel in Washington, DC, recently named one of the top ten hotel bars in the US. Her path to bartending wasn't clear cut --after graduating with degrees in Mathematics and Philosophy, Chelsea supplemented her day job with a part-time job as a cocktail waitress, which sparked her curiosity. Quickly promoted to bartender, Chelsea left her day job to pursue bartending full time. She studied diligently to pass top of her class and was awarded Bar Ready with Distinction in January of 2019. A multitasker, Chelsea also passed her level one Sommelier exam and WSET 2 Spirits during this time, the latter also with distinction. After a brief foray into the world of liquor distribution and sales, Chelsea returned to her home in hospitality.*



# STILL LIFE WITH FRUIT

*Created by Jena Ellenwood*

Cognac VS — 1.25 ounce

Pear-infused Pineau de Charentes\* — 1 ounce

Verjus — ¾ ounce

Fleur de Sel — 3 flakes

- 1 | In a mixing glass, add cognac, pear-infused Pineau, verjus, and 3 flakes of Fleur de Sel.
- 2 | Add ice and stir.
- 3 | Strain into a chilled Nick and Nora glass.
- 4 | Garnish with a lavender sprig.

*\*Prior to creating the cocktail, infuse the Pineau de Charentes for 2 days with chopped Williams Pear, strain.*



## JENA ELLENWOOD

 @jena.lane

Dear Irving — *New York, NY*

*Jena Ellenwood bartends at the acclaimed Dear Irving in New York City. Also a cocktail educator and writer, she teaches weekly virtual cocktail classes for Dear Irving and Raines Law Room. With a razor-sharp wit and over a decade of experience, Jena excels at crafting unique cocktails for any occasion. Her cocktails have also been featured at The Sparrow Tavern in Astoria, Queens, as well as on outlets such as Liquor.com, TimeOut.com, PaperMag.com and iHeartRadio.*



# SNAKE IN THE GRASS

*Created by Anna Giordano*

Cognac VSOP — 1.5 ounce

Fermented guava syrup\* — ¾ ounce

Fresh white grapefruit juice — ½ ounce

Lemon juice — ¼ ounce fresh

Sparkling wine, preferably Porta del Vento Vorias Pét-Nat — 2 ounces

Garnish: 3 sprigs of thyme, and a lime snake twist (the peel of an entire lime, cut with a paring knife to resemble a long snake)

- 1 | Add all ingredients, aside from the sparkling wine, to a cocktail shaker and dry shake to incorporate.
- 2 | Add ice and shake for 6 seconds.
- 3 | Pour the sparkling wine into a white wine glass and double strain the shaken ingredients contents over top.
- 4 | Fill the wine glass with ice and garnish with a manicured lime snake twist and three sprigs of thyme.

*\*Fermented guava syrup:*

*Weigh out the guava pulp to about 340g, or a pouch of pulp (I used El Sembrador Guava pulp but any fresh or packaged pulp will work) in a vac bag or ziplock. Add 1% of that weight in salt and vacuum seal (if using a ziplock, you can seal the bag tightly in a warm water bath in your sink). Wait 3 days or until the bag has ballooned. Add equal grams of the fermented pulp and white sugar to a blender and blend until dissolved. Add a splash of vodka to stabilize and store in the fridge. Voila!*

*Add the tea to the hot water and stir to incorporate. Let sit for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Fine strain and discard the used tea leaves. Add the sugar to the tea and stir until fully dissolved. Let cool, bottle, and refrigerate. Use within 2 weeks.*



## ANNA GIORDANO

 @laundrydaycarrybradshaw

Longway Tavern — *New Orleans, LA*

*Anna Giordano is the Bar Director at Longway Tavern in the French Quarter of New Orleans. She was raised in upstate New York, where she spent every day in the garden picking flowers and harvesting fruits and vegetables before moving to New Orleans to start a new life. Her journey in the cocktail world began at a French bistro called Meauxbar, under the same hospitality umbrella as Longway Tavern.*



# A STONE'S THROW

*Created by Britt Ingalls*

Cognac VSOP — 1.75 ounces

Cherry and plum-infused Lillet Blanc\* — ¼ ounce

Benedictine — 1 teaspoon

Pierre Ferrand Dry Curaçao — ½ teaspoon

Jack Rudy aromatic bitters — 2 dashes

Saline (4:1, water:salt) — 3 drops

Garnish: Halved fig

1 | Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass.

2 | Add ample ice and stir until martini-cold.

3 | Strain into a chilled Nick & Nora glass and garnish with a halved fig.

*\*Cherry and plum-infused Lillet Blanc:*

*Handful of cherries*

*Plums — 2*

*Lillet Blanc*

*Pit and slice the fruit, and place into a mason jar. Pour 3 ounces Lillet Blanc over the fruit, seal the jar. Place in the refrigerator for 48 hours. Strain Lillet Blanc out of mason jar.*

*Use within 2 weeks.*



## BRITT INGALLS

 @brittingalls

Silver Lyan — Washington, DC

*Britt Ingalls bartends at Silver Lyan at the Riggs Hotel in Washington, D.C. A queer woman with a winding career path and a penchant for inhabiting traditionally male positions, Britt has been a ski boot fitter, nature preserve land manager, door-to-door pest control sales associate, and wilderness medicine instructor, just to name a few. After inhabiting various corners of the service industry, she got her start behind the stick as an unwanted barback for a music venue in 2014. In hospitality and mixing drinks, she continues to find deep abiding enjoyment, community, and empowerment.*



# I'LL BE SEEING YOU

*Created by Lauren Paylor*

Cognac Napoléon — 1.5 ounces

Yuzu Marmalade —  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce

Lemon juice —  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce

Bittered sling Arabica coffee bitters — 2 dashes

Coconut Aminos — 1 dash

Soda water

1 | To a cocktail shaker filled with ice, add cognac, Yuzu Marmalade, lemon juice, coffee bitters and dash of Coconut Aminos.

2 | Top with ice and shake briefly, about 3 or 4 seconds.

3 | Fine strain into a Collins glass with a tall, large Collins cube or Kold-Draft cubes.

4 | Top with soda water.



## LAUREN PAYLOR

 @lpdrinksdc

Silver Lyan – Washington, DC

*Lauren Paylor bartends at Silver Lyan at the Riggs Hotel in Washington, DC. Born in the Bronx, she attended nursing school at Catholic University of America in D.C., where she met bartender Derek Brown, a leader in the classic cocktail movement. Fascinated by Derek's love for the restaurant industry, Lauren began working at his Drink Company, where she immersed herself in learning about service, cocktails, spirits, and wine. She co-founded, along with Alex Jump, Focus On Health, a company dedicated to health and wellness in the food and beverage industry. Lauren travels the world consulting on cocktail programs and training bar teams. She is a nationally-ranked bartender and a finalist in the United States World Class Competition 2019 and winner of the Hardy Legends Cognac Competition 2019.*



# BANGKOK COLLINS

*Created by Jessica Pomerantz*

Cognac VSOP — 1.5 ounces

Blueberry-lemongrass shrub\* — ¼ ounce

Thai tea syrup\*\* — ¾ ounce

Fresh lemon juice — ¼ ounce

Soda water (preferably Topo Chico) — 2 ounces

Spritz of green Chartreuse

Garnish: Ice nest\*\*\*, one stalk of fresh lemongrass and 3 pickled blueberries

1 | Fill cocktail shaker with: cognac, shrub, Thai tea, and lemon juice.

2 | Add ice and shake for 5 -10 seconds.

3 | Open tins add the soda water into tin.

4 | Strain into a rocks glass over fresh ice.

5 | Garnish with ice nest, topped with shredded lemon grass and pickled blueberries

*\*Blueberry-lemongrass shrub:*

*Combine over medium heat: 1 cup champagne vinegar, 1 cup rice wine vinegar, 2 cups turbinado sugar, 2 cups fresh lemongrass broken up into small pieces, 4 cups frozen blueberries, and 4 cups water. Once sugar is dissolved, fine strain and let cool.*

*\*\*Thai tea syrup:*

*Follow instructions on Ranong Tea Instant Thai Tea Mix tea packet (boil 150 ml water per one packet) and incorporate 150 ml turbinado sugar until combined.*

*\*\*\*To create an ice nest, place crushed ice in a hand juicer and press. This creates the vision of a bird nest.*



## JESSICA POMERANTZ

 @jesspomerantz

Black Rooster - West Columbia, SC

*Jessica Pomerantz bartends at Black Rooster in Columbia, South Carolina, a restaurant focused on combining French technique with fresh, local ingredients. Her ten years of bartending experience ranges from sports bars to cocktail bars. While living in New York City, Jessica earned a masters degree in Forensic Mental Health Counseling, and volunteered with Outsmart NYC, an organization dedicated to the prevention of sexual violence in bars, restaurants, and nightclubs. She relocated to South Carolina to pursue her PhD in Clinical-Community Psychology, with a research focus on interpersonal violence within hospitality spaces.*

# PARADISE BEACH

*Created by Speed Rack's Lynette Marrero*

Cognac VSOP — 2 ounces

Thai basil — 5 pieces

Lemongrass syrup — ¼ ounce

- 1 | Rim glass with Thai basil.
- 2 | Add ice, cognac, syrup.
- 3 | Stir, add more ice.
- 4 | Stir until wash line is achieved.
- 5 | Garnish with Thai basil.



# SUR LE FEU

*Created by Speed Rack's Ivy Mix*

Guajillo chili infused Cognac VS\* — 2 ounces

Lemon — ¾ ounce

Simple syrup — ¾ ounce

Egg white — ½ ounce

- 1 | Dry shake.
- 2 | Add ice and shake.
- 3 | Strain into a coupe and garnish with Angostura droplets.

*\* Chili Infused Cognac:*

1 | Rip up 3 dried chilis per bottle

2 | Allow to infuse for 20-40 minutes depending on spice desired and strain





# COGNAC

FRANCE

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