

COGNAC CONNECTION CHALLENGE 2021 RECIPES



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WITH EUROPEAN
GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION

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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 Consultant & Spirits Educator) 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!

2021 WINNERS



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A Stone's Throw
Lauren Pellecchia



- 2 -

Autumn
Christina Mercado



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Bonne Santé
Gabriel Noble



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A Stone's Throw

Created by Lauren Pellecchia

Cognac VSOP — 2 oz

Lemon-Stone Fruit Oleo Saccharum* — 1 oz

Clarified Lemon-Clementine-Ginger Juice** — $\frac{3}{4}$ oz

Egg White — 1

Almond Bitters — 2-3 dashes

Orange Bitters — 4-5 dashes

- 1 | In a shaker combine VSOP, lemon-stone fruit oleo, clarified lemon-clementine juice, egg white, and almond and orange bitters.
- 2 | Shake, hard for 20 seconds to combine.
- 3 | Add 2 large ice cubes and shake an additional 25-30 seconds to chill, dilute, and aerate.
- 4 | Double strain through a fine mesh strainer into a coupe and garnish with a slice of fresh plum.

**Lemon-Stone Fruit Oleo Saccharum*

Wash and dry 3 lemons. Remove peel, leaving pith behind. Save peeled lemons for juicing. Place lemon peels in a glass bowl, sprinkle with 3 tablespoons of granulated sugar. Muddle to combine. Wash and dry 3 black plums and 2 nectarines. Slice each into 8-10 thin slices, discard pit, and place fruit in bowl with lemon peel. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of granulated sugar, and toss well to distribute sugar. Sprinkle top of mixture with an additional tablespoon of sugar. Cover and let sit at room temperature for 3-4 hours. Gently muddle plums and nectarines to release juices, and stir everything well to dissolve any remaining sugar. Strain liquid into a sealable container and refrigerate until ready to use.

*** Clarified Lemon-Clementine-Ginger Juice*

In a glass container combine 8 oz fresh lemon juice, 4 oz fresh clementine juice and 10 g of fresh grated ginger. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour. In a large measure cup (or bowl with pour spout) add 4 oz whole milk. Pour juice-ginger mixture into the milk. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour. Place a cheesecloth lined sieve over a large bowl, and slowly pour milk-juice mixture into the sieve. Place in refrigerator, undisturbed, until all liquid has passed through the sieve. Move sieve over a new clean bowl, and gently pour liquid into the center of the sieve. Place back in refrigerator, undisturbed, until all liquid has passed through the sieve a second time. At this point, liquid should be clear. If it's not, repeat the previous step of gently pouring liquid into the center of the sieve and allow it to filter one more time. Once liquid is clear, place in a sealable container and refrigerate until ready to use.



LAUREN PELLECCCHIA

 @elvissips

This is Lauren Pellecchia's eleventh year behind the bar. She is self taught, and has implemented a creative craft cocktail program to her beer-and-a-shot home bar. She is inspired by fresh, local ingredients, by travelling, either down the street or across an ocean and by books.



Autumn

Created by Christina Mercado

- Cognac VS — 2 oz
- Honeycomb — 1 inch square
- Peach infused bianco vermouth* — ¾ oz
- Lemon juice, fresh — ¾ oz
- Pink peppercorn syrup** — ¾ oz

- 1 | Place honeycomb into a chilled coupe glass.
- 2 | Shake all ingredients with ice until chilled and diluted.
- 3 | Strain into the prepared coupe.

**Peach infused vermouth*

Pit 3 peaches and slice into pieces no larger than ¼ in thick. Combine with a bottle of bianco vermouth in a container that can remain airtight. Let infuse for one week in the refrigerator. Shake once a day. On the 7th day, strain and seal airtight. Keep in refrigerator.

***Pink Peppercorn Syrup*

Bring 10 oz demerara sugar, 8 oz water and 2 tsp of cracked pink peppercorns to a boil. Remove from heat and let cool to room temperature. Strain and chill until use.



CHRISTINA MERCADO

 @shakestirpour

Christina Mercado is the founder and mixologist for ShakeStirPour. She has her M.B.A. in Hospitality as well as her A.S. and B.S. in Culinary Arts from Johnson and Wales University in Providence, RI. As an award-winning mixologist and experienced pastry chef, Christina uses her passion and experiences to create unique and memorable experiences in food and beverage.

Most recently Christina was the Beverage Manager at The Vanderbilt, Auberge Resort Collection where she created unique cocktail recipes for the luxury boutique hotel and oversaw the comprehensive wine and spirits menus. Additionally she developed a regular cocktail class for locals and hotel guests, entitled “Master Mixology with Christina Mercado” which ran every Saturday at the hotel for 2 ½ years.



Bonne Santé

Created by Gabriel Noble

Cognac VS — 1.5 oz
Toasted fig purée* — 1 oz
Lemon — ¾ oz
Cointreau — ¼ oz
Pedro Ximenez Sherry — ¼ oz

- 1 | Combine all ingredients in mixing glass with ice and stir 30 seconds.
- 2 | Strain into chilled coupe glass and garnish with a basil leaf.

**Toasted fig purée*

Cut 24 black mission figs in half and lay out on a baking sheet. Roast figs at a low temperature (around 250 degrees) for about 30 minutes or until the juices start to be released. Let steep in 16 oz of simple syrup for a minimum of 3 hours. After the 3 hours, purée in a blender. Put into squeeze bottle.



GABRIEL NOBLE

 @gabenoble

Gabriel Noble is a Brooklyn based bartender currently at Dante NYC in the West Village. He came to New York in 2015 to pursue a career in acting but quickly realized that hospitality was his true calling. He first started out as a barista and later became curious about cocktails. Since 2018 he has been absorbed in the industry and is still learning as much as he can. His favorite part about bartending is using fresh ingredients to bring out complex flavors that resemble a meal or dessert and also giving everyone a truly incredible experience.



Boulevardier de Bretagne

Created by Jacob Lesitsky

- Cognac VS — 1 oz
- Beurre Noisette Cognac* — ½ oz
- Gonzales Byass La Copa Rojo Vermut — ¾ oz
- Bittermens Hiver Amer — ¾ oz
- Vanilla-Angostura** — 4 Dashes

- 1 | Combine all ingredients in mixing glass with ice and stir 30 seconds.
- 2 | Strain into chilled Nick & Nora glass and garnish with an expressed orange twist.

***Beurre Noisette Cognac**

Place 200 g of unsalted butter into a heavy bottomed pan over medium heat and heat until foaming. Once foaming begins, turn down to medium-low, swirling and stirring until milk solids, turns a deep golden brown and produces a nutty aroma. Immediately transfer to a heat-proof vessel and weigh out 150 g of now browned butter and whisk into 750 ml cognac VS in a freezer friendly container. Cover and let sit 4 hours at room temperature, then transfer to a freezer overnight. Remove butter cap, and strain through coffee filters, reserving cognac infused butter for other purposes. Cognac will last indefinitely if stored in refrigerator.

****Vanilla Angostura Bitters**

Combine 500 ml Angostura bitters and 5 inches of fresh vanilla bean in a sealed glass container and let sit at room temperature for 2 weeks, shaking occasionally. Fine strain and rebottle in a dasher bottle. Lasts indefinitely.



JACOB LESITSKY

 @lineskier53

Jacob Lesitsky has been in the industry for about ten years, mostly in the Poconos area of Pennsylvania. Despite his rural base, he has made it his mission to actively seek out all kinds of certification opportunities, including: Stave & Thief Society Executive American Whiskey Steward, USBG Spirits Professional, Cicerone Certified Beer Server, and Camp Runamok 2017 Alumnus.

Outside of work, he is an avid skier, and tries to get out on the mountain any chance he gets in the winter. He is also a passionate home-chef, and finds that his time in the kitchen greatly influences his cocktails.



Caribbean Dream

Created by Baylee Hopings

Cognac VS — 1.5 oz

Amontillado Sherry — $\frac{3}{4}$ oz

Pineapple liqueur (Giffard) — $\frac{1}{2}$ oz

Bonal Gentian-Quinal — $\frac{1}{2}$ oz

Bittermen's Burlesque bitters — 1 dash

1 | Combine ingredients in a mixing tin.

2 | Stir with ice and strain into a rocks glass over a large cube.

3 | Express a lemon peel over the top and discard it (don't rub it around the rim!!).

4 | Garnish with a pretty pineapple frond.



BAYLEE HOPINGS

 @cocktails_ala_bayla

Baylee Hopings currently acts as the Lead Bartender at Bon Ton in Atlanta. In the past she has tended bar in a variety of settings—from a Korean family restaurant to Midtown fine dining spots like Hugh Acheson's Empire State South. She is a lover of all things liquid (drinking, researching, crafting cocktails, talking about spirits, etc.) and spends some of her free time indulging in these things. Baylee also enjoys cocktail competitions and has successfully competed in local and national competitions. Outside of work, Baylee loves: exercise "sweatchecks", volunteering for various organizations, reading (fiction or booze related works), exploring new places with her husband David, and spending time with her furbabies (Conan, Brijit, and Cole).



Coming Up Roses

Created by Shannon Brandon

Cognac VS — 2 oz
Rose-infused Zirbenz Alpine Liqueur* — ½ oz
Falernum (ideally Lattitude 29 Formula Falernum) — ¼ oz
Saline Solution** — 2 drops

Garnish: Dehydrated strawberry***

- 1 | Chill a large rock glass.
- 2 | Add Cognac, Rose-infused Zirbenz, Falernum, and Saline Solution to a mixing glass.
- 3 | Add a generous scoop of ice and stir to chill.
- 4 | Pour over a large cube in chilled large rocks glass.
- 5 | Garnish with strawberry placed on top of large cube.

**Rose-infused Zirbenz*

Take 1 cup Zirbenz Alpine Liqueur and add ¼ cup food grade dried rose centifolia buds and petals in a glass container. Stir for ten seconds and let sit for five minutes. Strain through fine mesh into a glass container.

***Saline Solution*

Take 1/8 teaspoon table salt and combine with 1 tablespoon water in a glass container. Shake until salt is dissolved. Transfer to a dropper bottle.

****Strawberry Garnish*

Carve one fresh strawberry into rose shape. Place in dehydrator and leave on a low setting over night. Remove from dehydrator.



SHANNON BRANDON

@shanolito

Shannon Brandon bartends at Jewel of the South in New Orleans under the direction of James Beard Award Winning Chris Hannah. Her career in bartending began in a small town of Bloomington, Indiana where she took advantage of exceptional bar programs around the city. After being admitted to the Tales of the Cocktail Apprenticeship Program in 2018 she moved to New Orleans and began blending up daiquiris at Manolito in the French Quarter.



Dreams for the Future

Created by Carmin Garrett

Cognac VS — 2 oz

Fresh squeezed lemon juice — 1 oz

Marolo Milla Chamomile Grappa — $\frac{3}{4}$ oz

Pink peppercorn honey syrup* — $\frac{1}{2}$ oz

1. Add all ingredients to shaker tin.
2. Add ice and shake until proper dilution is achieved.
3. Double strain into a coupe using a hawthorne strainer and fine mesh strainer.
4. Garnish with an expressed lemon peel and a few pink peppercorns sprinkled in the center of the drink.

** Pink peppercorn Honey syrup*

Start by adding 2 teaspoons of pink peppercorns into a small pot and gently pressing/ muddling them to slightly break them up. Then turn on low heat to release some of the oils until aromatic, stirring occasionally to prevent burning. Add the zest of 1 lemon using a mircoplane. Then add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of local honey. Stir it all together until dissolved, let it cool and then strain through a fine mesh strainer.



CARMIN GARRETT

 @torontelmeaboutit

Carmin Garrett has been bartending in New Orleans for over 5 years from hotels and dives to French Quarter destinations and neighborhood gems. They love the creative aspect of bartending and being able to help folks expand their palate and find new things that they enjoy. Being able to share great drinks and knowledge with people in an accessible, fun way is definitely a perk of the job.



Je ne t'aime plus

Created by Orestes Cruz

Cognac VS — 2 oz
Fresh lime juice — $\frac{3}{4}$ oz
Orange juice — $\frac{1}{2}$ oz
Black cherry infused Lillet Blanc — $\frac{1}{2}$ oz
Tamarind ginger Txakoli syrup* — $\frac{1}{4}$ oz
Hibiscus bitters — 3 drops

- 1 | Add all ingredients in a shaker tin.
- 2 | Fill with ice and shake for 8 seconds.
- 3 | Double strain into a chilled coupe glass.
- 4 | Garnish with a dehydrated lime wheel and an edible flower.

**Tamarind Ginger Txakoli Syrup*

Add 100 g of ginger, 100 g of peeled tamarind, zest of one lime and 400 ml of Txakolina wine to a sealed container and let it sit overnight in the fridge. Strain and add 500 g of sugar, warm up on low heat until sugar is dissolved, let it cool and store in fridge.



ORESTES CRUZ

 @orestesmixdrinks

Orestes Cruz is a bartender and visual artist that lives and works in Atlanta, GA. He grew up between Mexico City and New Orleans and has been working in the hospitality industry for 8 years. He loves art, music, history, films and a nice conversation. He has attended BAR SMARTS and several courses and workshops with top educators.



Mountains to the Sea

Created by Abigail Gullo

Cognac VSOP — 2 oz
Coconut fat washed blanc vermouth* — $\frac{3}{4}$ oz
Amontillado sherry — $\frac{1}{2}$ oz
Alpine liqueur — $\frac{1}{2}$ oz

- 1 | Stir in a mixing glass and strain into a chilled Nick & Nora glass.
- 2 | Garnish with a spring of fresh rosemary.

**Coconut fat washed blanc vermouth*

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup of organic coconut oil per 2 cups of blanc vermouth. Heat oil gently until liquid and add to vermouth. Let sit a room temp a few hours and then freeze a few more. Strain the vermouth through a coffee filter after removing the oil, or poking a hole though the solidified oil.



ABIGAIL GULLO

 @ abigailgullo

Abigail Gullo is a hospitality professional with over a decade in the Spirits Industry. She got her start making neighborhood craft cocktails at innovative bars during the turn of 21st century in New York City. Since then, she has created drinks at award-winning restaurants from New Orleans to Seattle, from Rome to Athens and Puerto Rico. She has been named Bartender of the Year many times, and concocted libations for the Today Show and The Late Show with Stephen Colbert.



The Harvest

Created by Jonathan Stanyard

- Cognac VS — 2 oz
- Lemon juice — 1 oz
- Chai-infused Pineau des Charentes* — ¾ oz
- Apple ginger honey syrup** — ¾ oz
- Cardamom bitters — 1 dash
- Sparkling apple cider — 1.5 oz

- 1 | Shake all the ingredients except the sparkling cider in an ice-filled cocktail shaker.
- 2 | Double strain into a Nick and Nora glass.
- 3 | Slowly add the sparkling apple cider.
- 4 | Take five slices of apple, cover the front apple with sugar and use a torch to brulee the sugar on the apple.
- 5 | Using a cocktail pick to affix the fan together and lay it onto the glass.

**Chai infused Pineau des Charentes*

Add 8 oz of Pineau to a glass container. Add two chai tea bags and steep for 2 hours. Strain and keep in an airtight bottle.

***Apple-Ginger-Honey Syrup*

Add 150 g of chopped apple and 200 g of hot water to a medium saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, and lower to a light simmer for 20 minutes. Turn off heat, muddle the apple, and strain. The result should be 130 g of apple water. To this, add 130 g (equal parts) of honey and 1.5 oz of ginger juice. (Ginger juice is equal parts chopped ginger and water, blended very well, and finely strained.) Stir to dissolve the honey and keep it in an airtight container.



JONATHAN STANYARD

 @thebittergringo

Jonathan Stanyard is a Seattle-based bartender and a veteran of the industry. In 1999, his career started at a friend’s Italian Restaurant in the Bay Area of California. In 2014, Jonathan moved to Seattle to continue the pursuit of excellence in the cocktail world. In 2019, he launched a very specialized education and bitters production, The Bitter Gringo Company. Most recently, Jonathan was the Bar Manager for Brother Barrel, a craft cocktail bar focusing on barrel-aged and sour beers. He is currently bartending north of the city in Kirkland at Feast. From dimly lit jazz clubs to high-end French steakhouses, cafes, and private events, Jonathan has immersed himself in all styles of service. In recent years, he is focusing on becoming the best bartender he can be and creating the most unique and complete cocktail experiences in person and digitally.



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