

Mixing It Up at The Ritz

Written by Nichole Brophy

After that next round, the bar's premium imported draft might seem a bore next to these creative cocktails.



The 19th hole has become a bit of a cliché. Regardless of the impressive selection on tap or margaritas in every flavor under the sun, the 19th hole at many golf clubs has lost its luster. Suds and salt-rimmed glasses are taking a back seat to specialty mixes and signature drinks. At the Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain, certified sommelier and mixologist Todd Brinkman is stepping outside the wine cellar and adding flair to the resort's assortment of cocktails.

Brinkman recently joined the new Ritz property and says that placing a new spin on well-known cocktails is a double-edged sword.

"So many new drinks are being invented that bar customers often have no idea what their order will taste like. The result can be pretty disappointing," Brinkman says. "Perhaps because of this, I'm seeing a return either to classic cocktails or to updates and enhancements of the classics. Consumers are saying, 'I want what I know.' Now, when I design a cocktail, I build it specifically to complement the flavor profile of the spirit being used. A cocktail can be new and unique, but it still has to taste good."

From lemongrass mojitos to ginger-infused margaritas, Brinkman's most well-received creation to date has been the Cherry Cordial cocktail, which features cocoa and raw cacao nut-steeped vodka, with raspberry, vanilla liqueur and maraschino cherry juice. In fact, Brinkman says he was inspired to mix up the tantalizing cherry libation after a visit to the hotel's pastry kitchen. The visit forced him to think like a culinary master, asking himself, "What could a pastry chef do to make this cocktail better?" Brinkman says.

His cocktails are meant for savoring, which means Brinkman's heightened flavor-consciousness plays a great role in the enjoyment of each sip. In addition, Brinkman says utilization of seasonal flavors helps to keep the resort's cocktail menu fresh.

"I like to design updated classic cocktails that are relevant and truly seasonal, just as a chef might do with menu items," says Brinkman. "In fact, my favorite here at The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain is our sparkling rosemary lemonade. I use rosemary just like a chef would, and the resulting freshness and flavor are amazing."

To learn more, visit www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/DoveMountain/Default.htm.