

Top Shelf

Make the trendiest bar in your own living room

I've just come from attending a pair of forward-looking trade shows: the annual Bar Convent Brooklyn (BCB), a behemoth of a drinks conference; and the aptly named Fancy Food Show, hosted by the Specialty Foods Association (SFA), which also includes a hefty beverage component. (Another key trade show, Tales of the Cocktail, takes place later in July.)



I've gotten in my steps (and then some!) walking the aisles, sampling scores of new sips and chatting up key decision-makers—and it's given me some useful insight into how drinks trends are shaping up for the second half of the year. Here are my favorite new bottles, which you can bring home now to keep your at-home entertaining au courant.

A fruity aperitif to splash into everything from Negronis to spritzes

Chambéryzette strawberry aperitif (\$22) straddles the line between vermouth and strawberry liqueur, tasting like summer in a bottle. Although it's an old formula—created in 1902—the bottle has been given a bold graphic update. Made by the Dolin family, already known for their excellent dry, blanc and sweet vermouth bottlings, this versatile expression has quickly grabbed the attention of bartenders. Expect to see more strawberry drinks on menus soon.

Savory gins (and more) to put dirty martinis on overdrive

Attention flavor-maxxers: Savory flavors are everywhere, especially in martinis, and the latest crop of botanical spirits is here to support your ultimate super-extra-dirty cravings. **Taggiasco gin** (\$40) is a satisfyingly briny option, infused with Taggiasco olives from Italy's Ligurian coast. It's available at [Eataly Vino](#) and elsewhere. (I wrote about another olive-infused gem previously, Rachael Ray's [Staple gin](#), made in upstate New York, with a healthy infusion of extra-virgin olive oil too.)

Still making their way to US shelves but worth a mention: **Wolfrest Alba** is a gin made with only three botanicals—juniper, hazelnut and Piedmontese white truffles—for a deliberately intense aroma. Honestly, this was one I smelled just walking past the booth, and you know I hit the brakes to locate the source of that unmistakable truffle scent. By comparison, **Faer Isles Ocean Truffle aquavit** is more subtle and earthy, made on the remote Faroe Islands with a rare seaweed known for its creamy, truffle-like flavor.

A sustainable-minded tequila from an agave legend

Forget celebrity tequila. The real celebrities are the tequileros, or master distillers, and the third-generation Camarena brothers, Felipe and Carlos, are among the superstars. Felipe's latest, **Volans Reposado** (\$65), dispenses with flashy packaging even as it uses the popular buzzwords: additive-free; solar-powered distillation; mindful water usage that mixes rainwater, well water and local spring water for proofing. But it's the taste that plays all the right notes: fruity, floral and with a light hand on the oak that means its delicate baking spice didn't overpower the honeyed agave core. A Still Strength expression (106 proof) was poured at BCB too.

Even as the [agave boom](#) continues to outpace most other spirits categories, some have posited that the bite of tariffs might [take the air out of celeb tequilas](#). Perhaps this is the right moment for a multigenerational family business with a longer view to step in.

A pistachio liqueur to make your Dubai chocolate dreams come true

Unless you've been living under a rock, you've surely heard about the "viral" [Dubai chocolate bar](#). These TikTok-breaking bars mix a core of Nutella-like pistachio cream with crispy kataifi (shards of phyllo pastry), coated with chocolate. At the SFA Fancy Food Show, the treat was [interpreted as ice cream, doughnuts and even little cones](#). My eyes were opened to how savvy marketers now have every component available à la carte—which raised my antennae: How long before these ingredients are interpreted for cocktails?

This fetching olive-green liqueur from Sicily channels the famed Dubai bar. It's rich, creamy, nutty. I can only imagine it with a splash of crème de cacao. **Paesano Crema di Liquore al Pistacchio** isn't yet widely available in the US, but you can order a bottle (\$38) from the [Wine Country](#) in Southern California.

An amaro made with adaptogenic mushrooms for dry days

Real talk: We contain multitudes. Sometimes we crave a stiff sipper. Sometimes we want a bold but zero-proof option. For the latter, I enjoyed **Curious Elixir No. 8** (\$59 for a four-pack). The Black and Blue amaro is a nonalcoholic version flavored with lion's mane, reishi and chaga mushrooms, as well as blackberry, blueberry and blackstrap molasses (hence the name), with a flavor that reminded me of Cynar.

Expect to see more low- and no-alcohol options coming to market to meet ongoing demand. In the US, the no-alcohol market is expected to grow by 18% from 2024 to 2028, according to data analysis firm IWSR.

The Drink of the Summer 2025 is ...

We play this game every year: What will the “drink of the summer” be? Last year, I made the case for the tomatini (tomato martini), and in 2023, it was all about the spicy margarita.

And for 2025? Get ready to break out the bubbles—we’re in for a spritz-y summer.

There were some early contenders that clouded the field: Martha Stewart suggested the vodka-spiked passion star martini, a tamer name for the famed Porn Star martini, which has indeed had a recent spike in popularity. Drinks site Punch nominated Creamsicle cocktails, meaning playful riffs on the nostalgic frozen treat, made with a wide range of spirits.

Delish contacted a poll of bartenders and called it the Naked & Famous, a mezcal- and Aperol-based Last Word riff created by bartender Joaquin Simo. My two cents is that this is wishful thinking on the part of bar pros, though it’s indeed an excellent drink.

It was the *Better Homes & Gardens* poll of 52 drink experts that makes the most sense with my own reporting. They landed on “peak spritz,” whether the can’t-stop-won’t-stop basic Aperol, elderflower-spiked Hugo or their own suggested “spa spritz” with cucumber and Lillet Blanc.

Bryan Schneider, owner of Quick Eternity, a new cocktail bar in New York’s seaport, had a similar assessment and says he’s getting orders for the Hugo spritz in particular. “I know that drink has been around for quite some time, but New York seems to have discovered it recently,” he says. “We’re getting more and more calls for them at Quick Eternity and also the Quality bars.”

Elsewhere, Krissy Harris, owner and beverage director of Chelsea’s Shy Shy, says the drink of the summer should be a 50-50 gin martini, with a split base of dry and blanc vermouth: “refreshing, clean, low ABV and so dang tasty.” But actual drink orders show popular riffs on the martini–vodka dirty and our forever party-starting friend, the espresso—and a Hugo spritz.

A related candidate: easy-breezy highballs. After all, that's *Esquire's* pick—anything mixed with soda. Ben Hopkins, beverage director of Pitt's and Agi's Counter, both in Brooklyn, concurs: "This summer my partner and I cannot stop making chuhai's, or shochu highballs, at home," he says. "So long as everything—including the glassware!—is extremely cold, we can drink three or four of these and cool down and unwind simultaneously."

The common thread between the spritz and the highball: bubbles. Both rely on soda water or another effervescent lengthener to refresh and lower the alcohol levels.

So, as we're headed into the height of summer sipping, it's time to stock up on plenty of fizzy mixers and sparkling wine to carry us through the spritzzy, schvitzzy weeks ahead.

Cocktail of the Month: BB's First Cocktail

Drink something delicious and want the recipe? Let us know at topshelf@bloomberg.net, and we'll try to track it down for a future edition.

This isn't a Hugo spritz riff—Harris created this "prosecco with a glow-up" in 2006, when she was head bartender at Gramercy Tavern. But squint and this Champagne cocktail-style sipper bears a passing resemblance to the suddenly famous Hugo, from its effervescence to the required splash of elderflower liqueur, though it drinks a little sweeter without the club soda to lengthen it.

Shy Shy also offers a more Hugo-like non-alc version, made with Giffard nonalcoholic liqueur and fresh mint.

BB'S First Cocktail

Courtesy Krissy Harris of Shy Shy, New York

Serves 1

3 dashes Fee's orange bitters
½ oz Giffard elderflower liqueur
4 oz prosecco
Orange peel, to garnish

Add elderflower liqueur and orange bitters to a chilled coupe glass. Top with prosecco. Twist a strip of orange peel over the glass to express the essential oils, then use the peel to garnish the drink.